



**Speech for Governor Pritzker and Dr. Ezike's COVID-19 Press Briefing**  
**Saturday, May 2, 2020 @ 2:30pm**  
**James R Thompson Center, 15th Floor, Press Room**  
**Neha Gill, Executive Director**

Good Afternoon. My name is Neha Gill, and I am the executive director of Apna Ghar. Our mission is to provide critical, comprehensive, culturally competent services, and conduct outreach and advocacy across communities to end gender violence. Our focus is on immigrant, refugee and marginalized communities.

We are headquartered out of Uptown with locations in Skokie and recently the south side, to ensure that we reach vulnerable community members throughout our area.

Many of the adult and child survivors of domestic and family violence that we serve, live in the zip codes that are the hardest hit by this pandemic, often because generations of families live together due to a combination of economic, social and cultural factors.

We are coming together with groups across the area to provide an intersectional response to the complexities our communities already face, that are now compounded by this public health crisis.

With the help of our state, city, philanthropic and organizational partners, Apna Ghar is supporting community members with safe housing options such as apartments and hotel rooms, food, transportation, household and essential items, financial assistance, masks and hand sanitizers, while providing resources, connection, counseling and emotional support, as well as legal advocacy and immigration support in the language they are most comfortable in. Our staff speak more than 20 languages and we have volunteer support for more languages.

We have created an advisory detailing the social and economic hardships faced by our communities at this time, as well as our response and solutions to address these gaps. This and more information is available on our website at [www.apnaghar.org](http://www.apnaghar.org)

If someone you care about or know, is hurting you emotionally or physically, please call the IL statewide domestic violence helpline at 877-863-6338 and you will be connected to safety and support.

We are grateful for the partnership between the Illinois Department of Health and Human Services, Airbnb, and so many others to provide statewide safe housing.

We also urge survivors to register with smart 911 so that law enforcement are alerted before an emergency, and we are so appreciative of the mental and physical health support that the state has made available and continues to make available.

I want to thank Governor Pritzker, IDPH, IDHS and the entire administration for a thoughtful, coordinated and concerted response to this crisis. And thank you for this opportunity to lift up the experiences of the communities Apna Ghar serves.

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and this year it also marks the holy month of Ramadan. We applaud Attorney General Raoul for denouncing the increase in hate crimes against Asian Americans. Muslim and South Asian communities understand what it's like from our experiences of post 9/11 backlash, and we stand in solidarity with all those who are experiencing violence and trauma.

Ramadan though is about self-reflection and giving back, and our communities are rising up to face this challenge together with all of you across our state.

The Sikh faith to which my family belongs emphasizes unity and equality, and I hope that we can all hold on to these principles, in this moment, and when this crisis is behind us.

Thank you.