

Indianness Podcast: Host Sanjay Puri Interviews Dr. Meena Seshamani on Leadership, Identity & Public Service

On the Indianness Podcast, Maryland Health Secretary Dr. Meena Seshamani shared her journey from immigrant roots to healthcare leadership.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, June 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On the latest episode of the [Indianness Podcast](#), host [Sanjay Puri](#) welcomed [Dr. Meena Seshamani](#), Secretary of Health for the State of Maryland, for an in-depth conversation about her remarkable journey from the daughter of Indian immigrants to one of the most influential healthcare leaders in the United States. Broadcast on the Indianness Podcast, a platform dedicated to sharing stories of successful leaders and changemakers of Indian origin, the discussion explored Seshamani's upbringing, career-defining decisions, and lessons in leadership, service, and personal growth.



Born to parents who emigrated from Tamil Nadu, India, Seshamani grew up in a small New Jersey town where diversity was limited and Indian families were few. Reflecting on her childhood, she described navigating the dual identity familiar to many first-generation Indian Americans—embracing traditional Tamil culture at home while adapting to life in mainstream American society. She recalled experiences that shaped her understanding of identity, including feeling different from her peers and witnessing cultural misunderstandings. Over time, however, she came to

“

If you love what you do,
you'll never go to work a day
in your life.”

Dr. Meena Seshamani

view this duality as a strength that broadened her perspective and later became a valuable asset in healthcare and public service.

Seshamani credited her parents, an engineer father and pediatrician mother, for instilling a strong work ethic and appreciation for opportunity. Academic excellence was encouraged, but equally important were community service, extracurricular activities, and personal development. Demonstrating exceptional academic drive, she completed both high school and college in three years. Her time at Brown University proved transformative when an introductory economics course sparked a new passion. What began as curiosity about managing money evolved into a deep interest in health economics, ultimately altering the trajectory of her career.

The healthcare leader described several pivotal moments that redirected her professional path. Although she entered Brown through a combined medical program and initially expected to follow in her mother's footsteps as a practicing physician, economics opened new possibilities. Later, while pursuing medicine, she discovered that her interests lay less in laboratory science and more in understanding healthcare systems and improving patient outcomes. Winning the prestigious Marshall Scholarship allowed her to pursue doctoral studies in health economics in the United Kingdom, where her research contributed to policy discussions surrounding the National Health Service. Throughout these transitions, Seshamani emphasized that major career decisions often brought anxiety rather than certainty, despite appearing logical in hindsight.

Another defining chapter came when she chose surgery over internal medicine after receiving guidance from mentors who recognized her strengths. She ultimately specialized in otolaryngology while continuing her work in healthcare policy and economics, forging an unconventional path that combined clinical practice with systems-level reform. During her residency, she was recruited to help shape healthcare reform efforts in the Obama administration and later contributed to the development and implementation of the Affordable Care Act. Her career continued to expand through leadership roles in federal healthcare policy, including serving as the head of Medicare under President Joe Biden, before returning to Maryland to lead the state's health department.

Throughout the interview, Seshamani highlighted the importance of mentorship, faith, hard work, and trusting one's instincts. She encouraged young professionals to remain open to unexpected opportunities while staying grounded in their values. Discussing parenting and leadership, she stressed the importance of helping individuals discover their own talents rather



than forcing them into predetermined paths. Looking ahead, she said she remains motivated by continuous learning and public service, while still maintaining a deep affection for patient care. Concluding the conversation, host Sanjay praised Seshamani's ability to bridge medicine, economics, and public policy, describing her journey as a powerful example of how purpose-driven leadership can create an impact far beyond individual achievements.

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