



# Nogales Father, Son Offer Patient/Caregiver View at Spotlight on Stomach Cancer Symposium

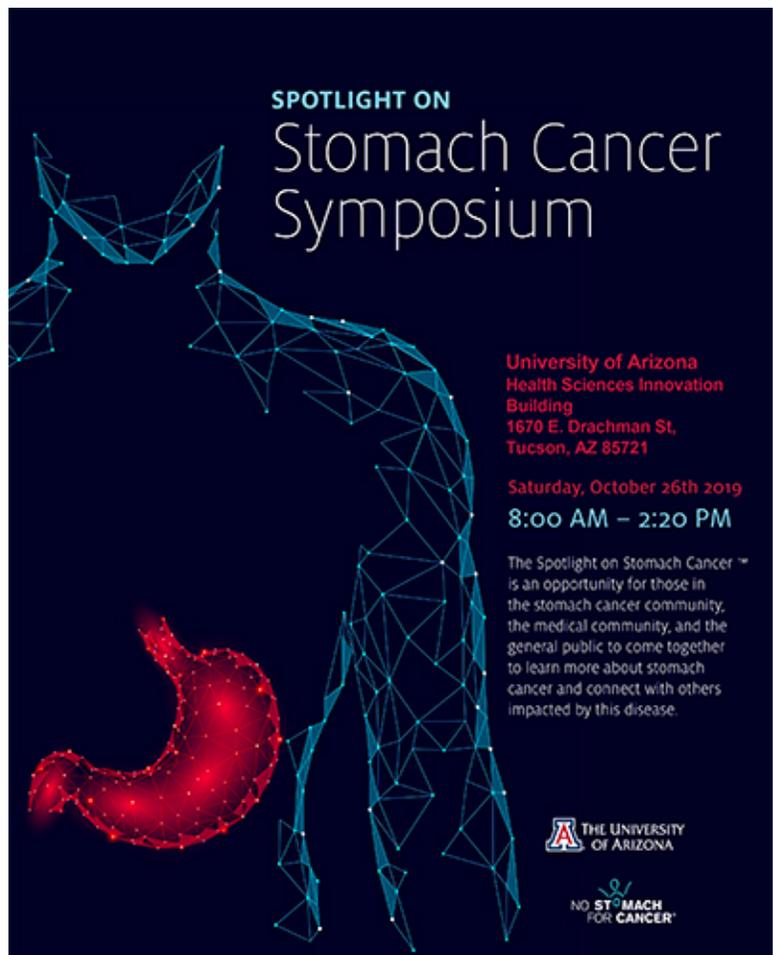
By David Mogollon | Communications Coordinator, UA Department of Medicine

**Atanasio** and **Thano Gatzionis** are among patient and caregiver panelists participating in the **Spotlight on Stomach Cancer Symposium** hosted Saturday, Oct. 26, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., at the HSIB Forum in the Health Sciences Innovation Building, 1670 E. Drachman St., on the University of Arizona Health Sciences Campus in Tucson.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)

[Click here](#) or on the image at right for an earlier news item for this FREE PUBLIC EVENT, where you'll find the program, a flyer and full list of speakers.

This event is hosted by the [University of Arizona Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology](#), the [UA Cancer Center](#) and [No Stomach for Cancer](#), a non-profit organization that provides research and patient/caregiver support for those affected by gastric cancer.



## A Team for Support & Recovery

For the father and son, the Gatzionis' experience with stomach cancer was deeply personal and something that required a business approach to evaluate their options. They're proprietors of C.A.B. Produce, a third-generation family business that's one of the oldest growers/shippers in Nogales, Ariz., of fresh food produce imported from their farms in Mexico. The business was begun by Atanasio's father in 1935.



In February, the then 65-year-old Atanasio went to St. Joseph's Hospital in Tucson to investigate ongoing severe heartburn that medication wasn't addressing. An ulcer was discovered. A biopsy showed the ulcer to be cancerous. He consulted with physicians and family.

"That word, cancer, is a bit strong," the elder Gatzionis said. "For most people, it's about all they can do to focus after hearing it. Talking to family afterward gave me a little more strength."

The eldest of three children, Thano, 38, rallied the family to support their father. Instead of just letting the medical team take over and the process to run itself, as he said many might do, they interviewed the doctors and consulted with the hospital's caseworkers, insurance and financial team. After a second opinion with Banner – University Medical Center and UA Cancer Center staff, they chose to go with them, speaking highly of **Drs. Hemanth Gavini, Aaron Scott** and **Taylor Riall**.

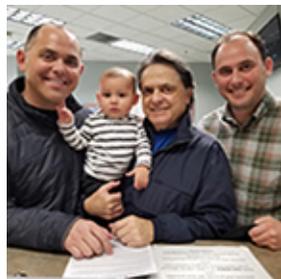


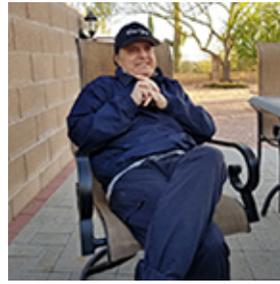
"It sounds weird to interview doctors but, at the end of the day, it's a business decision, too," Thano Gatzionis said.

In June, Atanasio Gatzionis underwent surgery and a third of his stomach was removed in a partial gastrectomy surgical procedure he had been reluctant to agree to at first.

"It was good they changed my mind," he said. "Everyone was very professional and here I am ready to live the rest of my life."

Both father and son are thankful to all of their physicians and the caregiver and support teams at both hospitals. Theirs are just two of the many perspectives people will hear at Saturday's patient-caregiver-physician-researcher interactive program.





(Rollover images above to view captions; click on images to enlarge.)

## A Multidisciplinary Program



For the Spotlight on Stomach Cancer Symposium, the agenda has been finalized. The speakers and panelists are set. The only thing left is for prospective attendees to register.

You can do that and add the event to your personal schedule (via *iCal*, *MSOutlook*, *Google* and *Yahoo!* calendar) at [this link](#).

Organizers of the symposium, led by UA Gastroenterology Chief **Juanita Merchant, MD, PhD**, say they have a healthy list of registrants. Still, they would like a full house. A reception will follow at 5:30 p.m. at the Arizona Inn, 2200 E. Elm St.

Among patient/caregiver panelists are: **Katherine Smith**, a Navajo tribal member from Flagstaff, Ariz., **Lionel Corral**, of Tucson, and the Gatzionises.

Clinical moderators/presenters/panelists include (in their order on the agenda): **Robin Harris, MPH, PhD**; **Dorothy Long Parma, MD, MPH** (UTHealth San Antonio); **Gregory Jarrin, MD** (Winslow Indian Health Care Center); Dr. Juanita Merchant; **Adam Bass, MD** (Harvard/Dana-Farber Cancer Institute); **Lauren Maynard, MS, CGC**; **Rachna Shroff, MD**; **Aaron Scott, MD**; **Hemanth Gavini, MD, MPH**; and **Michelle Bratton, RD**.



This free event is open to the general public, patients and caregivers, as well as health care providers and other interested clinicians. The interactive program offers an excellent opportunity for those in the medical community, cancer support community, patients and their caregivers, and the general public to come together to learn more about stomach cancer and connect with others impacted by this disease.

# Questions?

For questions about the program, please contact Jon Florin, executive director, No Stomach for Cancer, at [jflorin@nostomachforcancer.org](mailto:jflorin@nostomachforcancer.org).

Other questions can be directed to Katherine Sepulveda, administrative associate, Division of Gastroenterology, [ksepulveda@email.arizona.edu](mailto:ksepulveda@email.arizona.edu).

ALSO SEE:

**["UA Gastroenterology, Cancer Center Partner to Put 'Spotlight on Stomach Cancer'"](#)** | Posted Sept. 18, 2019

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**Media Contact:** [David Mogollon](#) | Communications Coordinator, University of Arizona Department of Medicine

Department of Medicine | University of Arizona College of Medicine  
PO Box 245035 | 1501 N. Campbell Ave. | Tucson, AZ 85724-5035  
Tel: 520-626-6349 | [Email Us](#) | [Admin Login](#)



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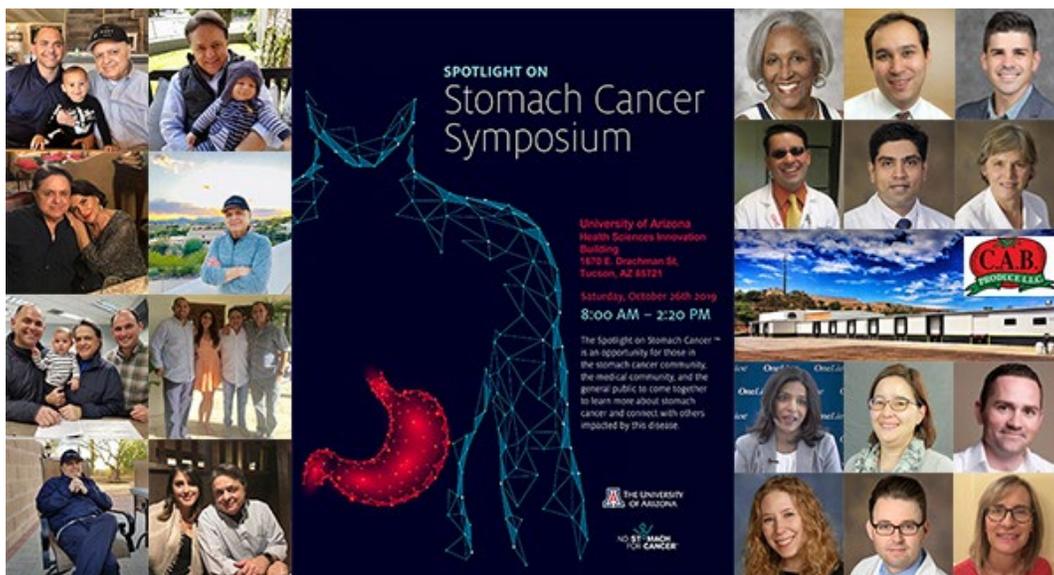
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## **[Nogales Father, Son Offer Patient/Caregiver View at Spotlight on Stomach Cancer Symposium](#)**

October 23, 2019

Atanasio and Thano Gatzionis, who run a Nogales, Ariz., food distributorship, are among patient and caregiver panelists participating in the Spotlight on Stomach Cancer Symposium hosted Oct. 26, 8 a.m.-2 p.m., at the HSIB Forum in the Health Sciences Innovation Building, 1670 E. Drachman St., on the University of Arizona Health Sciences Campus in Tucson. Learn about them and register for Saturday!...



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