

Montgomery County – DHHS
Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI) Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, November 13, 2018

Steering Committee	Present	AAHI Staff	Present
Organizational Members		Perry Chan	X
Christine Kim on behalf of Ji-Young Cho	X	Betty Lam	X
Wilbur Friedman	X	Karlie Leung	X
Michael Lin	X	Sanjana Quasem	X
Mayur Mody		Arooj Raja	
Sam Mukherjee	X	Samikshya Sapkota	
Nguyen Nguyen (Chair)	X	Karen Tan	
Tho Tran		Sophia Yoon	
Thomas Tran	X		
Sovan Tun	X		
Yuchi Huang			
Individual Members	Present	Guests	Present
Nerita Estampador	X	Wen Chen	X
Meng K. Lee (Vice Chair)	X	Irene Liu	X
Sunmin Lee		Jose Naldo	X
Cynthia Macri		Leslie Graham	X
Judy Wang	X	Kate Lu	X
Affiliate Members	Present	Mo-Ping Chow	X
Anis Ahmed		Yao-Yao Zhu	X

Welcome (Nguyen Nguyen, Chair)

- Nguyen Nguyen called the meeting to order at 6:09PM. He introduced Dr. Wen Chen from the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health (NCCIH) and invited the Steering Committee (SC) members, Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI) staff, and additional guests to introduce themselves.
- Perry Chan asked whether there were any objections to omitting the notetaking of Wen’s presentation as long as access to the presentation was made available in the minutes. There were none.

ACTION: Omission of presentation in minutes is approved with no objections.

- Perry also asked for permission to record the meeting and there were again no objections.

ACTION: Recording of meeting is approved with no objections.
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Presentation: NCCIH and Complementary and Integrative Health Approaches (Dr. Wen Chen, NCCIH)

- Wen introduced herself as the Acting Branch Chief of NCCIH's Division of Extramural Research and expressed her gratitude for being invited to speak to the SC.
- Please see the attached presentation, "NCCIH and Complementary and Integrative Health Approaches" for full content.
- Questions and answers following Wen's presentation:
 - Meng K. Lee mentioned that one challenge with alternative medicines, such as acupuncture, is the uncertainty of the qualifications of the physicians. Meng asked if there was a way to discern which alternative medicine providers are qualified. Wen agreed that this is an important issue because there is currently no federal licensing process for acupuncturists, therefore it is difficult to research the topic more thoroughly.
 - Meng followed-up by asking whether the standard of these providers varied largely. Wen responded affirmatively that a patient's experience is entirely physician dependent. This again affects the research by introducing too many variables. It was agreed between Wen and Meng that this challenge is not unique to acupuncture. All complementary approaches introduce complexities which make research more difficult.
 - Nerita Estampador inquired if Wen's research had concluded anything about physical therapy. Wen and her associate, Irene Liu, responded that those practices would fall under more conventional therapy, but NCCIH did once participate in a lower back pain study comparing physical therapy and yoga and the result showed that they were comparable. However, yoga is more accessible.
 - Nerita mentioned exercise and its positive impact. Wen maintained that exercise is categorized as more conventional therapy and the main distinguishing factor between conventional and unconventional physical therapy is how commonly doctors recommend the practice.
 - Irene also mentioned that practices such as breathing and meditation are what characterize yoga and Tai Chi as 'meditative movements' rather than traditional exercise.
 - Nerita wondered where she could find information on specific exercises to help alleviate pain in various body parts. Wen hopes that NCCIH – through research – will discover more around precision medicine and develop that information.
 - Wilbur Friedman questioned if NCCIH has ever compiled a list of natural remedies and their specific abilities, for example listing what kinds of effects ginseng tea has on schizophrenia. Wen and Irene recommended the 'Herbs at a Glance' fact sheet which does not take stances or make claims, but it does give general information and provides the results of any studies which may have been done. It also lists safety concerns for these herbs. Wen asserted that very few herbs have shown to provide significant change.

- Mo-Ping Chow opined about the genesis of the opioid epidemic and how it developed in the United States. He commented that in Hong Kong narcotics are rarely given after surgery, whereas in the U.S. he has received Percocet from his dentist when a Tylenol would have sufficed. Mo-Ping was curious about the assessment of pain and the remedies used, and if it related more to ethnicity or environment, than actual pain. Wen commiserated and commented that the opioid epidemic can be labeled as a man-made problem because drugs have been used as the solution to pain, which became more prominent once it was established as a vital sign.
- Irene added that NCCIH is trying to get the word out that not only are there other solutions to pain, but also that opioids may not be an effective tool to combat chronic pain. Complementary health approaches are less addictive, have less side effects, and work better long-term.
- Sovan Tun asked if NCCIH has researched the effects of marijuana on pain. Wen announced that just yesterday NCCIH published a notice for a funding opportunity to research some of the non-regulated components of marijuana. These chemicals might have pain treatment properties.
- Irene mentioned that NCCIH is sponsoring a workshop in December to determine how to, what specifically, and why it would be beneficial to study those components of the botanical.
- Wen invited all to attend a free workshop on acupuncture on Monday, February 11, 2018 and Tuesday, February 12, 2018. The topic will be looking at the signs and clinical applications of acupuncture for cancer symptoms, pain, and substance abuse.

ACTION ITEM: Wen will provide acupuncture workshop information to interested SC members.

- Meng brought up evidence that ear acupuncture is equally effective as body acupuncture. Wen told of her recent visit to the Department of Defense (DoD) and the study of battlefield acupuncture which is completely ear based. She cited that the approach works eighty percent of the time to reduce pain instantly.
- Irene emphasized that this is why NCCIH has partnered with the DoD, because they are already moving forward with alternative health practices due to higher pain and higher opioid usage in their active military and veterans.
- Yao Yao Zhu observed that the pain epidemic may be the result of several factors including more physical activity and more surgeries in this country. There is so much more accessibility to pain medication than there was in the past. Wen agreed with the many negative influences Yao Yao listed.
- Michael Lin, Wen, and Irene summated that the problem with alternative medicine is knowing which practices and standards are best. This information is difficult to come by because of many complexities, but mainly the subjectivity of pain. It is important to be able to measure pain

for those who cannot communicate it themselves such as infants and the elderly and for those who may not be in pain at all.

- Nguyen thanked Wen for her work and suggested continued correspondence.

Approval of Meeting Minutes (Nguyen Nguyen)

- The SC meeting minutes from Tuesday, September 11, 2018 were shared with members prior to the meeting.
- A motion to approve the minutes from Tuesday, September 11, 2018 meeting was presented. Nerita moved to approve the meeting minutes and Sovan seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

ACTION: Meeting minutes approved with no objections.

Approval of Agenda (Nguyen Nguyen)

- The meeting agenda was shared with members prior to the meeting. Nguyen asked if there were any objections to the agenda. There were none.

ACTION: Meeting agenda approved with no objections.

Program Updates (Perry Chan, Program Manager)

- Perry announced that the Empowering Community Health Organizations (ECHO) workshop will be held on Thursday, November 15, 2018. Over 70 people registered and a few are on the waitlist. He hopes that the weather will not affect the event.
- Perry reported on AAHI's participation in a few health fairs over the past few months and its involvement in helping to find funding for a few community-based organizations with food insecurities.
- Perry provided updates around AAHI's senior health effort. The new Senior Wellness Coordinator, Karen Tan, is in the process of meeting with managers from Aging and Disability Services and conducting site visits at senior centers in preparation for Friends' Corner.
- Perry relayed the success of a recent resource education workshop on Saturday, October 27, 2018 with the Coordination Council of Chinese American Associations (CCCAA). There were 30 participants and the responses were so positive that another training is being planned for Saturday, December 15, 2018. A similar workshop is being planned for Spencerville Korean Church sometime in December or January.
- Perry congratulated the SC for an award AAHI received that morning for the mental health photonovels. The National Association of Counties (NACo) honored AAHI largely because they know its work is a collaborative effort between the county government and the community.

- Perry informed those who were not aware that Uma Ahluwalia, Director of Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), is leaving the department at the end of the month after 12 years of service.
- Sam Mukherjee suggested a joint effort among the three minority initiatives for some kind of celebration whether it would be a potluck, a dinner at a restaurant or a symbolic gift. Nguyen supported the idea.
- Betty Lam wondered if there would be enough time to plan something before the end of the month. Meng agreed that the timing should be more dependent on Uma's schedule.
- Perry will gather more information from Uma and follow up with the SC in order to plan something appropriate.

<p>ACTION ITEM: Perry will contact Uma on availability and report to the committee.</p>
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- Nguyen suggested a fund to which SC members would contribute to purchase Uma a gift.
- Meng suggested the SC find a way to get Uma involved in the committee as an advisor so she can still be a resource. Sam liked the idea but did not want to take further action for the time being and Michael mentioned that involving Uma could create an awkward situation with a former director advising on the work of a DHHS program.
- Perry asked the SC if they were all fine with any day of the week and any time of day so that Uma could have more options. Sam responded that evenings or weekends would be better.

Updates from Organization Members

- Nguyen introduced the Korean Community Service Center's (KCSC) new staff member, Christine Kim. Christine remarked that she is happy to be a part of the group.
- Sam mentioned the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and asked committee members to spread the word and get people involved. There is plenty of confusion and questions due to politics, but premiums are going down for some so now is a good time to get enrolled.
- Meng stated that the Pan Asian Volunteer Health Clinic is providing acupuncture treatment for pain management. He invited anyone who would like to experience acupuncture to come.
- Christine announced that KCSC is having a health fair in Maryland in April, 2019 and that the enrollment process will be open until Saturday, December 15, 2018.
- Nguyen announced that the Viet Nam Medical Assistance Program (VNMAP) is preparing for its Medical and Culture Program, a mission trip to Viet Nam. He asked the committee to encourage any students and young professionals interested in international health to sign up for the two-week program on the VNMAP website.
- Sam shared that Kaiser Permanente has re-opened a simplified 'Gold Plan,' which they used to offer in the past, and the Asian-American Inter Community

Service (AICS) is licensed to assist in enrollment for free, whether for documented or undocumented people. Sam asked all committee members to send their community members who could benefit from this.

- Meng discussed concerns community members have voiced around the public charge rule. Stories have been shared among community members about individuals who have been denied return visas to the US or who's immigration application may be affected if they use public medical assistance programs.
- Sam mentioned a rumor that individuals who have applied for Medicaid and then apply for citizenship will not be accepted. However, when he asked the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange about the legitimacy of this, they responded that nothing is certain until a law is in place.
- Betty confirmed that this policy has not changed for the time being. The changes suggested are still in a public comment period, so there is no law yet. Also, this will not have a retroactive effect, thus now is a good time to sign up for assistance.
- Meng commented that since Montgomery Cares is not federally funded, Primary Care Coalition wants to emphasize that it is safe to visit the clinics. Nguyen and Perry reminded him that Montgomery Cares Clinics are meant to be a safety net not an insurance plan.

Updates from Liaisons and Members

- **Healthy Montgomery (Nguyen Nguyen)**
 - Healthy Montgomery (HM) is discussing its new identity, goal, and mission. There have been brainstorming sessions and surveys and many discussions to see what its members think about its direction. Nguyen is glad that Dr. Travis Gayles is taking input from all the committee members to ensure HM is serving its members' needs.
 - HM is pausing the process of becoming a charter group and they plan to start meeting more often.
 - Jose Naldo asked about low voter registration among Asian Americans and what the SC can do about this.
 - Nguyen explained that the role of AAHI and the SC are to advise on, assist with, and advocate for issues related to health. He agreed that voting was an important issue, but that it is not their charge. AAHI hopes in the future to have the capacity to be more active in voter registration.
- **County Executive Asian American Advisory Committee (Sam Mukherjee and Sovan Tun)**
 - Sovan shared that there was a reception on Sunday, November 4, 2018 honoring Ike Leggett and Bruce Adams, Originally it was planned by the Asian Pacific American Advisory Committee but later included many members of various advisory groups. The reception was held at Montgomery College and each advisory group received a certificate.

- Sovan lamented that the Advisory Committee recently changed their meeting schedule to Tuesdays which presents a conflict with AAHI's SC meeting schedule. This is dependent on the new county executive.
- The new county executive will be sworn in on Monday, December 3, 2018.
- **Governor's Commission on Asian American Affairs (Sovan Tun)**
 - Sovan was grateful that the Governor's Commission meeting was postponed until early 2019 so he was able to attend this meeting.
- **LIEED (Meng K Lee)**
 - Meng had nothing to report.

Other Business

- Sam and Meng supported the idea of setting up meetings with the three County Council members who are on the Health and Human Services Committee, Craig Rice, Gabe Albornoz, and Evan Glass, to let them know who we are and what we do.
- Nguyen asked which date their terms start and Betty responded that they will be sworn in on Monday, December 3, 2018.
- Perry is already prepared with materials and talking points. Nguyen will contact their chiefs of staff.

ACTION ITEM: Nguyen will reach out and coordinate meetings with Craig Rice, Gabe Albornoz, and Evan Glass.
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Adjourn (Nguyen Nguyen)

- Nguyen adjourned the meeting at 8:14PM.

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 8:14PM.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 8, 2019.