

**Montgomery County – DHHS  
Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI) Steering Committee Meeting  
Tuesday, January 8, 2019**

<b>Steering Committee</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>AAHI Staff</b>	<b>Present</b>
<b>Organizational Members</b>		Perry Chan	X
Christine Kim on behalf of Ji-Young Cho	X	Betty Lam	
Wilbur Friedman	X	Karlie Leung	X
Yuchi Huang	X	Sanjana Quasem	X
Michael Lin	X	Arooj Raja	
Hina Mehta		Samikshya Sapkota	
Mayur Mody		Karen Tan	
Sam Mukherjee	X	Sophia Yoon	
Nguyen Nguyen (Chair)	X		
Tho Tran			
Thomas Tran	X		
Sovan Tun			
<b>Individual Members</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Guests</b>	<b>Present</b>
Nerita Estampador			
Meng K. Lee (Vice Chair)	X		
Sunmin Lee			
Cynthia Macri			
Judy Wang			
<b>Affiliate Members</b>	<b>Present</b>		
Anis Ahmed			

**Welcome (Nguyen Nguyen, Chair)**

- Nguyen Nguyen called the meeting to order at 6:11PM. The meeting did not reach a quorum and no motions could be approved at the moment.
- He asked for permission to audio record the meeting and there were no objections.

ACTION: Audio recording of the meeting is approved with no objections.
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**Steering Committee 2019 Activity Discussion (Nguyen Nguyen):**

- Nguyen wanted to discuss the Steering Committee’s (SC) action plan for 2019 focusing on ideas and projects brought up in previous meetings.
- Nguyen mentioned two ideas that the SC discussed in 2018:
  1. The community has shown great interest in holistic and alternative medicine and its impact on health. What can the SC do to promote this idea?

2. Identify potential activities and subjects related to AAHI's mission that the SC can collaborate with others on and potentially apply for funding together.
- The discussion was then opened to the group to identify short-term and long-term goals related to these areas.
  - Meng K. Lee stated that holistic medicine is very versatile, but one of the most commonly accepted practices is acupuncture, which can be used for pain control or mental health.
  - Sam Mukherjee mentioned that holistic and alternative medicine has the internal and external approach. The external approach has become popular in recent years, which includes reiki, yoga, tai chi, and acupuncture. He also emphasized how they are most effective in addressing the management of chronic health issues, so he suggested that alternative medicine would be well-received among senior populations, approximately 70% of whom have at least one chronic disease.
  - Nguyen asked how AAHI and the SC would define success and what timeline should be implemented if the SC is to focus on promoting the use of alternative medicine for chronic disease and/or chronic pain management.
  - Michael Lin reminded the group that, with the exception of acupuncture, most parts of alternative medicine are not well-accepted among the government. He wants AAHI to identify credentialed health care providers who would advocate for the use of alternative medicine.
  - Yuchi Huang said that, from the Asian American point of view, health is viewed both externally and internally as the mind, body, soul approach. AAHI could run classes or workshops where acupuncture or other alternative medicine approaches are taught or conducted so that the health of the Asian American community can improve before they get sick.
  - Meng reinforced that anything that AAHI or the SC develops has to have three elements:
    1. A demonstrated need;
    2. An approach for how to address such need; and
    3. A method for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. He also emphasized the need for professionals to be involved in any data measures.
      - Sam suggested using surveys, but Meng responded that surveys are not very reliable or well-regarded units of data; he suggested, instead, use measurements like the number of people who visit an emergency room for chronic disease management and the amount of money saved as a result of the AAHI initiatives.
  - Wilbur Friedman reminded the SC that they need to demonstrate to Montgomery County officials that whatever program they create is worthwhile for funding received and the community is engaged by the created program.
    - Yuchi and Sam responded that the SC can rely on previously-created programs, established research, and available data.
  - Thomas Tran stated that the SC remains unaware of the overall cost of using alternative medicines and what procedures are covered by insurance companies.

Sam mentioned that acupuncture is currently included under Affordable Care Act (ACA) and Medicare.

- Meng suggested starting a public education project about the benefits of holistic and alternative medicine.
- Christine Kim said that she had completed the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) and that the program's focus was not telling people what to do in order to manage their disease, instead, the program provides education and tools for people to be self-sufficient in the management of their health, showing that there are different ways to manage their illness. This program is, in itself, a holistic approach to symptom management.
  - Sam followed-up that parts of CDSMP consist of positive thinking and physical exercise. The program provides various ways for people to manage their illness and everyone's approach is different.
- Nguyen reiterated that the goals for AAHI and the SC will focus on education about holistic and alternative medicine and how it can be applied in chronic disease management. AAHI can develop education program and materials and collect information from other organizations.
- Perry Chan asked the group to come up with a consensus of which alternative medicine approaches they were interested in learning about: yoga, tai chi, acupuncture, and positive thinking, with a focus on evidence-based practices. Yuchi added that AAHI should promote the importance of healthy lifestyle and healthy eating as well.
- Perry also asked which alternative medicine topics AAHI should not discuss. The group agreed that they will not include prescription medications and herbal medications as part of AAHI's focus. AAHI is also not in the position to tell the community which one is more effective.

<p><b>ACTION ITEM:</b> Perry to draft a one- to two-page summary of the above discussion and send it to all members of the SC to review.</p>
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- Nguyen suggested to form a smaller working group to focus on more detailed development of this effort, which will possibly include additional community members and/or experts.
- Perry inquired about including preventative health efforts in this initiative.
  - Sam, Yuchi, and Michael emphasized that prevention is the maintenance of health status. Perry mentioned that prevention efforts may be easier to quantify, especially in terms of return on investment.
- Perry asked the SC to further define AAHI's role in this initiative. Nguyen envisioned AAHI as a resource convener rather than a service provider. For example, AAHI would not conduct activities such as having a physician come in and perform acupuncture for community members.
  - Sam added that the resources could include lists of health care providers who provide these services and/or those who are willing to see patients at a reduced cost. AAHI should also collaborate with other organizations, such as Kaiser Permanente, to utilize their resources as well.
- Nguyen shifted the conversation to identifying collaborative efforts between AAHI and potential community partners and how AAHI can play a role in helping

community partners build their client-serving capacities. He noted that this is not a fundraising effort for AAHI.

- Perry stated that these efforts will be highly dependent on the amount and sources of funding available for the projects. AAHI is open to supporting other community partners or non-profit groups as they lead the effort, as long as the Asian American communities in Montgomery County benefit from these activities.
- Yuchi suggested the Pan Asian Volunteer Health Clinic (PAVHC) as an example where organizations work together to serve the community collectively.
- Christine suggested creating and maintaining a database of all the organizations AAHI works with, the services and resources those organizations provide, and the ethnic groups they serve.
- Nguyen asked all members of the SC in attendance to inform their respective organizations about these efforts by AAHI and the SC, and to brainstorm and propose ideas for the SC to discuss in a future meeting. He hopes that this can speed up the application process when the opportunity for funding arises, allowing the organizations to promptly send in a proposal.

ACTION ITEM: SC to inform their organization and propose ideas where the Asian American community can work together.

#### **Approval of Agenda (Nguyen Nguyen)**

- Nguyen announced that, as of 6:24PM, a quorum was established.
- A motion to approve the agenda was presented. Wilbur moved to adopt the agenda and Yuchi seconded the motion. The agenda was approved.

ACTION: Meeting agenda approved with no objections.

#### **Approval of Meeting Minutes (Nguyen Nguyen)**

- The SC meeting minutes from Tuesday, November 13, 2018 were shared with members.
- A motion to approve the minutes from November 13, 2018 meeting was presented. Wilbur moved to approve the minutes and Michael seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

ACTION: Meeting minutes approved with no objections.

#### **Program Updates (Perry Chan, Program Manager)**

- Perry announced that he sent the SC a link for the job post for the Office Services Coordinator at AAHI. He asked members to disseminate the post to their respective organizations and groups. Job responsibilities would include administrative support, data entry, and organizing outreach efforts. The application closes on Monday, January 14, 2019.

- AAHI has completed two Public Resource Education Program (PREP) workshops. These workshops occur in community locations and aim to teach bilingual leaders in the community about services that Montgomery County provides to residents. As part of AAHI's capacity-building efforts, rather than relying on AAHI, the trained community members will be able to assist others in their communities to obtain county services.
- AAHI's Senior Wellness Program Coordinator, Karen Tan, has confirmed two sites for Friends' Corner project, both of which are at county senior centers. There will be ten sessions in total. The goal is that these sites will allow AAHI to reach senior community members and provide information on health and other outreach efforts in multiple languages.
- Karen has also started a new project, called Speakers' Bureau. The goal of this project is to recruit more bilingual speakers who will talk to seniors about topics other than health. Some examples include using smart phones or other technology and gardening. AAHI wants to have a more comprehensive list of bilingual speakers that can be used as resources for future workshops.
  - Perry stated that this project is still in the preparation stage and that Karen will not have a survey to use as the recruitment tool for another two to three months. The recruitment tool will be sent out to community members via social media and newsletters, to contacts in the federal government, and to include it in AAHI's email signatures.
  - Nguyen suggested contacting community health care providers because they often have contact with community members who have additional unmet needs.
- Karen is partnering with the Aging and Disability Services on a program on respite care, which aims to support and look after caregivers who care for their elderly parents or grandparents. Montgomery County is working on a program to allow family caregivers a short break from their responsibilities as caregivers.
  - AAHI is participating in a summit in order to try to inform more Asian American county residents about this program.
  - The summit is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, March 23, 2019 from 9:00AM – 4:00PM at Bohrer Park in Gaithersburg. Perry will provide the details of the summit to the SC once it has been confirmed.

**ACTION ITEM:** Perry will inform the SC of the date, time, and location of the respite care summit once it is confirmed.

- AAHI has conducted two Mental Health First Aid trainings, through which they trained 47 community leaders. The trainings are provided for free and each participant will educate an additional 30 people to spread awareness on mental health.
- AAHI reached out to the Nepalese community and conducted an education workshop on mental health a month ago.
- The Mental Health Photonovel 5 project is on-going. Perry thanked SC members Meng, Hina Mehta, and Tho Tran who served as our Mental Health Ambassadors for advising the project. It will address loneliness and social isolation.

- AAHI is planning an event with the Asian American Youth Leadership Empowerment And Development (AALEAD) on youth mental health. Additionally, AAHI is working with the Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP) to conduct some domestic violence (DV) prevention programs.
- AAHI hosted an Empowering Community Health Organizations (ECHO) workshop on Thursday, November 15, 2018. Originally more than 70 individuals registered for the event, with some individuals also on a waitlist. However, due to the snowstorm that day, there was poor attendance.
  - AAHI is conducting a survey asking if people would like for the content of that ECHO workshop to be repeated at a future workshop. Yuchi said it was a really good program.
- Perry reported that the Blueprint is moving along well. There is a short delay because one of the consultants had to go out of town suddenly. More than 20 of the planned 25 key informant interviews are completed, and the consultant will send the interview reports to Perry and Harry Kwon, Blueprint contractor, for data mining and review.
  - Harry has completed some theme and population trend analyses from the secondary data, such as age, immigration history, primary language, etc., which will be included in the Blueprint.
  - Perry believes the Blueprint will still be completed by May to be launched in the Asian American Heritage Month, but there will be a small timeline adjustment.
- Perry provided some numbers that reflect AAHI's activity in the last six months. AAHI has:
  - Attended more than 10 outreach events.
  - Assisted more than 800 people.
  - Connected more than 100 people to services.
  - Provided about 120 referrals to services. When AAHI refers clients to services, they also ensure that the individual will be able to attend and participate in the scheduled appointment, so referrals often also include transportation and translation services and that requests for referrals often come in clusters.
- Perry reminded everyone in attendance that clients at the SC members' organizations are AAHI's clients as well, and that AAHI can be a referral source for everyone in the SC.
  - AAHI maintains a database with demographic data on all clients who contact AAHI and AAHI's efforts to respond to the clients.
    - The database keeps records of both successful and unsuccessful attempts to contact and assist clients.
    - There is not enough data yet to identify meaningful trends, but Perry hopes that, within five years, AAHI will be able to use this data to improve system change.
- Nguyen shifted the topic to the advocacy efforts discussed at previous meetings about scheduling meetings with the members of the County Council Health and Human Services Committee to educate the council members about AAHI.

- A meeting is scheduled with Montgomery County Council member Gabe Albornoz on Wednesday, January 23, 2019. Meetings with other council members will be scheduled.
- Perry created two documents with talking points and advocacy information that the SC can use at the meetings. These documents were distributed at the meeting. Perry advised the SC to personalize some of the information on the document and include stories from community members. Perry reminded the SC that the mission and core work areas of AAHI is not finalized until the Blueprint is published. Perry will send both documents to SC members electronically.

ACTION ITEM: Perry will send the two advocacy documents to the SC.
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ACTION ITEM: The SC will send feedback on the advocacy documents to Perry.
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### **Updates from Organization Members**

- Sam reported that the signup period for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has ended. He reported that the contractors for the Maryland Health Benefit Exchange (MHBE) had better marketing returns than in 2017, indicating more success in reaching hard-to-reach populations to help them sign up for health insurance
  - The Asian-American Inter Community Service (AICS) partnered with Kaiser Permanente to help people who were otherwise ineligible for insurance or undocumented people to sign-up for Kaiser’s “Gold Plan”. This is a program by Kaiser which provides comprehensive insurance to individuals who are unable to get insurance.
- Christine announced that the Korean Community Service Center (KCSC) health fair is scheduled for Saturday, April 27, 2019. The KCSC health team is working on a hepatitis B project and a breast cancer awareness program that provides free mammograms to women in the community. They are working in partnership with the Susan G. Komen Foundation and are referring women for follow up care to the Cancer Center at the University of Virginia.
- Yuchi shared that the Montgomery Cares has changed their policy on health insurance. Starting on January 1, 2019, individuals who are eligible for ACA, even if they do not have health insurance, will not be able to get services at the Montgomery Cares Clinics. In addition, starting in the middle of the year, Montgomery Cares will be changing their policy on how they verify individuals’ eligibility. To qualify, the client will need to go to a centralized location to be verified before visiting a clinic. Currently, clients will be able to have their first two appointments at the clinic before they need to be certified to ensure continuity of care.
  - Meng elaborated that if individuals qualify for any insurance plans, they are unable to receive care under Montgomery Cares, but Montgomery Cares will help patients apply for a health plan.

- Yuchi also announced that the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) will have their Lunar New Year Festival at Lake Forest Mall for two weekends – on Saturdays February 2 and February 9, 2019. There will be an entire day of performances but if the SC knows anyone who would like to perform, let Yuchi know.

ACTION ITEM: The SC will let Yuchi know of individuals interested in performing at the Lunar New Year Festival.

- Thomas shared that the Association of Vietnamese Americans (AVA) did not receive a grant for ACA outreach but they provided the service regardless because the Vietnamese community still approached them for help. AVA did receive a small grant to help with the citizenship process. They provide a free 12-week class with civics lessons and mock interviews. Classes will be held in Gaithersburg and Silver Spring. Perry mentioned that he may know someone who would like to volunteer for the class. He will send the information to Thomas.

ACTION ITEM: Perry will send volunteer information to Thomas for citizenship class.

- Thomas announced AVA is hosting a Lunar New Year Festival in Silver Spring on Sunday, January 20, 2019 with a full day of events.
- Nguyen shared that the Viet Nam Medical Assistant Program (VNMAP) has finalized the medical mission trip, with 15 people selected to go to Vietnam. These people are both college and medical students from both local universities and some from further away. The first training session occurred this past weekend to help the students prepare educational activities that they will conduct on the trip, including their individual research initiatives.

### **Updates from Liaisons and Members**

- **Commission on Aging (Tho Tran)**
  - Tho was not present, therefore no update was available.
- **Healthy Montgomery (Nguyen Nguyen)**
  - Nguyen reported that there is not a lot of clarity on what Healthy Montgomery (HM) wants to do at this point and the committee is still struggling to decide on what direction they want to go in, though they are starting to take input from community and group members.
  - Dr. Chunfu Liu shared with HM some updated county data. At the meeting Nguyen pointed out that there is still a need for better community level data in the Asian American community than just hospital data.
  - Dr. Travis Gales also mentioned that two more reports, the Infectious Diseases Report and the Zip Code Ranking Project Report, are now available on the HM website.
- **County Executive’s Asian American Advisory Committee (Sam Mukherjee)**

- Sam reported that the new executive decided to keep Office of Community Partnerships which includes the advisory committees.
- Thomas inquired about the status of the Montgomery County Department Health and Human Services' (MCDHHS) Director position. Perry responded that the county has not selected a replacement for Uma Ahluwalia and is in the process of conducting a nationwide search for full time replacement; in the interim, Victoria Buckland, Chief Operating Officer of MCDHHS, is serving as the Acting Director.
- **The Governor's Commission on Asian American Affairs (Sovan Tun)**
  - Sovan Tun was not present, therefore no update was available.
- **The Governor's Commission on South Asian American Affairs (Mayur Mody)**
  - Mayur Mody was not present, therefore no update was available.
- **Leadership Institute for Equity and the Elimination of Disparities (Meng K. Lee)**
  - Meng had nothing new to report.
  - Sam mentioned that prior to Uma's leave, she met with new county leaders and discussed whether LIEED should be redone or improved.

**Adjourn:**

- Nguyen adjourned the meeting at 8:10 PM.

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.
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**Next Meeting:** Tuesday, March 12, 2019.