Montgomery County – Department of Health & Human Services (MCDHHS)
Asian American Health Initiative (AAHI) Steering Committee Meeting
Tuesday, July 11, 2023

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<th>Steering Committee</th>
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<th>AAHI Staff</th>
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<td><strong>Organizational Members</strong></td>
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<td>Hina Mehta (Chair)</td>
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<td>Muhammad Hasan</td>
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<td>Nguyen Nguyen (Vice Chair)</td>
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<td>Samila Aryal Bhattarai</td>
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<td>Pallavi Gowda</td>
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<td>Tammy Wan</td>
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<td>Michael Lin</td>
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<td>Ji-Young Cho</td>
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<td>Wilbur Friedman</td>
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<td>Tho Tran</td>
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<td>Thao Bui</td>
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<td>Yuchi Huang</td>
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<td><strong>Individual Members</strong></td>
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<td>Shruti Bhatnagar</td>
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<td>Dr. Rolando Santiago</td>
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<td>Nerita Estampador</td>
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<td>Hyun Sun Park (KCSC)</td>
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<td>Cynthia Macri</td>
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<td>Judy Wang</td>
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**Welcome (Nguyen Nguyen)**

- Nguyen Nguyen called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.
- Nguyen briefly stood in for Hina Mehta for the beginning of the meeting.

**Presentation on Behavioral Health and Crisis Services (Dr. Rolando Santiago)**

- Dr. Rolando Santiago, Chief of the MCDHHS Behavioral Health and Crisis Services (BHCS), joined the meeting as a guest speaker. He shared information about BHCS priorities and programs.
- For full details on his presentation, please see the attached presentation slides.
- The strategic priorities for 2023 at BHCS include:
  - Build the Crisis Now model to divert and deflect persons in crisis from emergency rooms and jails.
  - Increase ability to provide telehealth services.
  - Reduce harm from a public behavioral health perspective, including reducing suicides, drug overdoses, and violence towards self and others.
  - Increase behavioral health equity.
- Participate in interdisciplinary initiatives, as defined through the priorities or strategic plans of the Department of Health and Human Services and our advisory committees.

- There are 1.06 million Montgomery County residents. Between 9k-10k clients are served per year by BHCS. Under 7% of the people served by BHCS are Asian, despite Asian Americans accounting for 16% of the County’s population.

- BHCS programs include:
  - Crisis intervention and residential crisis stabilization
  - Assessment, referral, and linkage
  - Outpatient treatment services-Child and Adolescent Services
  - Outpatient treatment services for adults
  - Medication assisted treatment and other substance use programs
  - Prevention/public awareness/harm reduction
  - Forensic programs in jail
  - Mental health and drug courts
  - Trauma services – Victims Assistance and Sexual Assault Program (VASAP) and Abused Persons Program (APP)

- The Crisis Now model
  - Is a well-known approach that includes
    - An integrated regional call center
    - Mobile crisis and outreach teams
    - A stabilization center
    - Crisis care follow-up
  - The goal of this model is to divert people from hospitals and jails.
  - Helps to respond equitably and engages the community.
  - Want to build up to 8 teams to take care of the behavioral health crisis without engaging law enforcement.

- Integrated call centers: There are 4 call centers in Montgomery County, with appropriate calls being routed to the Crisis Center Hotline

- Mobile crisis and outreach teams: The county has 3 teams they can deploy at any given time.

- Stabilization facilities: The purpose of such a facility is to stabilize persons experiencing a behavioral health crisis over the first 72 hours. The long-term plan is to build a diversion center with recliners and beds where persons experiencing crisis can be sent to stabilize their situation.

- Crisis care follow-up: Services and programs are in place to support the individual after the episode – community-based services, residential services, outpatient services with clinical and case management, recovery services.

- Ji-Young Cho asked how many beds were available in the residential service clinic.
  - Dr. Santiago responded that the Crisis Center has 4 beds to stabilize people over an average of 10 days. 
• Ji-Young also asked how the language barrier was addressed for Asian Americans.
  o Dr. Santiago responded that the Language Line is provided. Some programs may have Asian American staff who can speak Asian languages. The concern still is that the population is high in the County, but the Asian Americans served are low.
• Nguyen wanted clarification on data that Asian Americans in the County need mental health services. He asked for further clarification about the 7% that are served. Are they the only ones that are going through county services or the Crisis Center, or is that how many people in the County need services?
  o Dr. Santiago responded that he was not sure of the needs of the community and if the 7% reflects the actual needs or if there are other factors that impact access of behavioral health services. There could be language barriers within the county (example: indigenous groups who do not speak the main Asian languages or English). Each cultural community may have different needs.
• Nguyen shared that common feedback from the community is that it is a challenge to find a mental health provider that speaks their language. This is an ongoing struggle. He asked what activities the department is engaging in to boost the provider network within the county?
  o Dr. Santiago responded that the Local Behavioral Health Authority has a committee working to develop a pipeline that can deliver more diverse providers from younger generations. Through internships and other activities, they try to incentivize students and get them excited to serve in this profession. However, there is still more that can be done in this front.
• Hina Mehta asked how Asian Americans that currently use BHCS services find out about the services?
  o Dr. Santiago replied that many find out through word of mouth. For example, there is a therapist that works with the Vietnamese community and that therapist disseminates information to that community. He explained the importance of strengthening the public messaging to address stigmas and increase shared information.
• Yuchi Huang asked for more information on the major causes of behavioral health issues, and how the Asian American community can get ahead of it.
  o Dr. Santiago responded that there are several factors that contribute to behavioral health issues including genetic makeup (e.g., clinical depression) and environmental factors (e.g., impacts of the pandemic). We need to build up education and awareness about the practices that people can do to maintain their wellbeing. These can be customized through each community. Dr. Santiago shared that he believes that current practices are too treatment heavy and should instead promote wellbeing.
• Yuchi also asked if the county is aware of the behavioral health needs and rates in other, similarly large metropolitan areas.
  o Dr. Santiago replied that data is very critical, and it can sometimes help to dispel myths. While they have not studied other cities, he believes Montgomery County might be similar in other metro areas.

**Approval of Agenda (Hina Mehta)**

• Today’s meeting agenda was shared with members prior to the meeting. Hina asked if there were any objections to the agenda.
• Yuchi moved to approve the agenda and Nguyen seconded it.

ACTION: Meeting agenda was approved.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes (Hina Mehta)**

• The Steering Committee meeting minutes from May 2023 were shared with members prior to today’s meeting. A motion to approve the May meeting minutes was presented.
• Yuchi moved to approve the meeting minutes. Nguyen seconded the motion. The meeting minutes were approved.

ACTION: May’s meeting minutes were approved with no objections.

**AAHI Program Updates (Sanjana Quasem)**

• Sanjana shared her program updates from May 2023-July 2023.
• She announced that we are on Teams from now on because the County is no longer using Zoom. Additionally, the County has set forth a new policy that does not allow us to video or audio record. AAHI SC meetings will no longer be recorded.
• There was an introduction of the new AAHI team member, Samila Aryal Bhattarai, the Data & Capacity Building Specialist.
• Overview of programs included outreach events, AAPI Heritage Month celebration, Trainings & Workshops, Minority Voices report launch, Senior Community Health And Technology (Senior CHAT), upcoming projects, open position/hiring, and more.
• For the full program updates, please see the attached presentation slides.

ACTION ITEM: AAHI will provide all slides related to program updates.

**Healthy Communities Fund Updates (Muhammad Hasan)**

• Muhammad announced the FY23 cycle of the Healthy Communities Fund (HCF) has concluded as of June 30, 2023.
While final reports are still being submitted, some high-level outcomes can be provided. Though the FY23 HCF the following number of people were served:
  o 5,021 unduplicated individuals were served.
  o 66,223 duplicated individuals were served.

The FY24 HCF solicitation process has begun. While the FY24 HCF application process is very similar to the previous year, there are a few key differences:
  o There are still three main funding categories, but grantees can only apply for a maximum of two funding categories.
  o Grantees still need to identify key outcomes, but this year grantees do not need to include the metrics and measurement systems in the application. Instead, metrics and measurement systems will be determined after award with support from a data collection expert.
  o Eligibility has remained unchanged. However, grantees now need to provide documentation of an audit (which can be billed to the grant). Additionally, automobile insurance is required if grantees use vehicles to provide services.

The submission deadline is July 31, 2023.

Tho Tran asked by when did grantees have to complete the audit.
  o Muhammad said that the audit must be completed by December 31, 2023. The audit will be for the last accounting year – fiscal or calendar.

Nguyen asked if there will be any the lessons learned captured to include the next cycle?
  o That will be part of the final report from the Primary Care Coalition (PCC).

Hina asked if there was any way to monitor the organizations that do not deliver or utilize their funds.
  o Muhammad replied that HCF FY 2024 is letting the organizations know that their performance on this upcoming grant award will impact future funding applications. There is also a question in the FY24 application on organizations showcasing their performance on existing grants/programs.

Steering Committee Retreat (Hina Mehta)

Hina led a discussion about the upcoming AAHI SC Retreat. She wanted to get feedback on the date, timing, and format of the retreat.

Hina shared that we are looking at Saturday October 21st or Saturday November 4th as the potential date of the retreat.

Nguyen noted that it was great to have the retreat in-person and suggested that we continue to meet in-person this year.

Sanjana asked if the SC wanted to keep the same format and focus on the previously identified focus areas, or if they wanted to identify new areas of focus.
  o Yuchi responded that the retreat focus should be to work on direct actions and solutions as opposed to assigning others to do the job. He suggested that the SC think more deeply about the community needs and potential
solutions, and then work with the County to address and implement these. Asian Americans have unique needs which are often excluded from the mainstream understanding of community health needs. The SC needs to actively communicate our unique needs so that they are included in the solutions, supports, and services provided by the county.

- Tho reflected that last year some concrete goals were set forth for AAHI and she sees that those recommendations are being implemented. The SC should continue in that direction and provide concrete direction to AAHI for the next year.
- Yuchi shared that retreats normally have three major objectives:
  - Strategic planning
  - Capacity building and learning
  - Team building

Committee Updates

Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee (Nguyen)

- Nguyen that Healthy Montgomery has released a draft report of the Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA). This report will be the first step in the prioritization of the needs, and may influence the funding from the Council.
- Public Health Services (PHS) has put a of resources and efforts into the report. After several conversations with PHS, they were receptive to the feedback that the AAHI SC had to offer.
- Nguyen thanked the Data Subcommittee for their help in reviewing the report and providing feedback.

OPEN FORUM

- Hina asked for last comments before ending the meeting.
- Yuchi asked if the committee wanted to take action to improve Dr. Santiago’s service to the Asian American community. Hina answered that if you have any suggestions, send it to Nguyen and Hina so that they can have a conversation with Dr. Santiago about next steps. Sanjana added that Dr. Santiago really has an interest in increasing the services in the Asian American community and is meeting with AAHI monthly.

Adjourn

- Yuchi moved to adjourn the meeting. Thao Bui seconded the motion.
- Hina adjourned the meeting at 8:06 PM.

ACTION: Meeting adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Next Meeting: September 12, 2023