



COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS

&

PROTECTING THE RIGHT TO VOTE!

This fall, the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) and its member centers will work with communities across the nation to provide voter registration, voter education, and voter engagement activities for the Asian American & Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (AA&NHOP) community. This is an important effort to uphold the values of community access to health care and protect the democratic principles that community health centers hold.

Valuing Democracy

As community health centers (CHCs), we promote and value democracy. CHCs believe that every patient matters, that every voice counts, and that everyone should be respected. A health center is a community asset governed by the people it serves, especially the underserved and most vulnerable in the community. If CHCs are democratically run, community based, and responsive to the community's needs, shouldn't our government be too?

Engaging the AA&NHOP Vote

The AA&NHOP population is the fastest growing population in America, having grown 46% over the past decade.¹ Which means that AA&NHOPs are an increasingly important voting block in a growing number of states around the country. However, **only 55% of those eligible to vote have registered to do so and only 86% of registered voters cast a vote** in the last election!² If we want our voices to be heard, it is our civic duty to register and vote! CHCs, as trusted sources of information, are an ideal location for underserved, often disenfranchised, and vulnerable members of the community to register and learn about their right to vote!

Protecting Community Health

During this election cycle, access to health care remains at the top of lists of concerns for many Americans. The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling to uphold the Affordable Care Act

¹ Pew Research Center. The Rise of Asian Americans. Washington, DC: PRC; 2012. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/06/19/the-rise-of-asian-americans/>

² Asian American Center for Advancing Justice. A Community of Contrasts: Asian Americans in the United States: 2011. Los Angeles, CA: APALC; 2011. www.advancingjustice.org/pdf/Community_of_Contrast.pdf.

(ACA) means that states are now focused on creating state insurance exchange systems and otherwise implementing the law. However, the Supreme Court also held that Medicaid expansion is optional for the states.³ According to recent AAPCHO analysis, in the 16 states whose leaders have yet to proclaim their intent to expand Medicaid, more than 630,000 uninsured AA&NHOPi residents and 113 medically-underserved AA&NHOPi counties are at risk of not benefitting from Medicaid expansion.⁴ CHCs also rely on Medicaid reimbursements for a significant portion of their revenue. Thus, for CHCs, uninsured AA&NHOPis, and medically underserved communities across the country, the state level decision to expand Medicaid or not could have just as much of an impact on who has access to health care as what happens in the White House.

Know YOUR Right to VOTE!

In a democracy, the most fundamental right is for citizens to choose their leaders in free, fair, and regular elections. The U.S. Constitution gives every citizen the right to vote and the Voting Rights Act further requires many states and counties to provide in-language voting materials and language assistance to Limited-English Proficient voters. Recently, some states have begun enacting voter identification laws, which may make it more difficult for some eligible voters, including the low-income, the marginalized, and the disenfranchised, to cast their vote on Election Day. This makes it more important for eligible members of the community to register and know about their rights to vote. CHCs, as trusted leaders in the community for many of the underserved and most, have a role to play to ensure that all eligible voters can cast a vote on Election Day. Protecting the right for our community to vote is key to keeping our communities healthy!

Join AAPCHO and our partner health centers to raise awareness, register voters, and educate the AA&NHOPi community on the upcoming election!

VOTE ON NOV. 6TH!



For more information, contact Albert Ayson, Jr. at AAPCHO at aayson@aapcho.org.

³ Supreme Court of the United States. *National Federation of Independent Business et al. v. Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services, et al.* Washington, DC; 2012. www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/11pdf/11-393c3a2.pdf

⁴ Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations. *Medicaid Expansion After the Supreme Court's Health Care Decision Impact on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Other Pacific Islanders.* Washington, DC: AAPCHO; 2012. http://www.aapcho.org/resources_db/medicaid-expansion-after-the-supreme-courts-health-care-decision-impact-on-aanhopis