



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 19, 2011

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AAPCHO in Collaboration with the Congressional Tri-Caucus Convenes Health Equity Summit

Leaders from Obama Administration with community-based organizations, direct service providers, and policy advocates address health disparities in minority communities

OAKLAND, September 19, 2011 – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) in collaboration with the Congressional Tri-Caucus, the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF), and members of the Summit Host Committee convened the 2011 Health Equity Summit on Saturday, September 17th. The summit brought together national, local, and community minority health leaders to discuss policy initiatives toward equity in health care. The Congressional Tri-Caucus is comprised of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressional Black Caucus, and Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

The Summit featured Representatives Barbara Lee, Judy Chu, Mike Honda, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Donna Christensen, Donna Edwards, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Dr. Garth Graham. Summit participants discussed effective policies for eliminating racial and ethnic disparities that exist within the nation's health care system.

"Our communities are still disproportionately affected by a broad range of diseases and continue to lag behind in many health outcome measures," said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director at AAPCHO. "This Summit demonstrates our collective dedication to confront the many factors that contribute to health disparities, and reasserts our commitment to helping all persons reach their full health potential as we work together to build healthier communities."

Nationally, racial and ethnic minorities are less likely to get preventive care and are more likely to suffer from serious illnesses including diabetes, viral hepatitis, cancer, heart disease, and HIV/AIDS. In addition, these medically underserved populations have less access to affordable, high quality, and culturally and linguistically proficient health care.

"Ensuring health equity is central to fulfilling a core promise of the Affordable Care Act: that every American deserves access to quality health care, regardless of their background, race, or means," commented Minority Leader, Nancy Pelosi. "The Health Equity Summit reaffirms and builds on the progress of health reform – addressing ongoing challenges for underserved and minority communities, working to close the gaps in our health care system."

The Summit comes as the Congressional Tri-Caucus recently introduced the Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2011, which builds on the Affordable Care Act to address these health inequities and works to eliminate them.

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of 29 community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration, and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Americans, and other Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO and its Guiding Principles and Values, please visit www.aapcho.org. AAPCHO can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/aapcho.

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