



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NIH Awards AAPCHO Over \$700,000 to Study Impact of Health Information Technology on Asian Americans Living with Viral Hepatitis
First Study to Evaluate Health Information Technology Strategies for Low-Income Asian American and Pacific Islander Populations Infected with Hepatitis B Virus (HBV)

OAKLAND, January 24, 2013 – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) received a 3-year grant totaling over \$700,000 from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to develop new Health Information Technology (HIT) strategies that increase screening for chronic hepatitis B and reduce the impact of hepatitis B among high-risk Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) populations.

Through its newly awarded project, AAPCHO will work with medically underserved AAPI populations at risk for and infected with the hepatitis B virus (HBV) through one of its member community health centers, International Community Health Services (ICHS). Chronic hepatitis B infection can cause serious liver disease and is the cause of up to 80 percent of all liver cancers worldwide. Many AAPIs with chronic hepatitis B are not receiving the care that they need and are disproportionately impacted by this disease—over half of the estimated 2 million people infected with HBV in the U.S. are AAPI. This will be the first study to research how HIT can improve HBV outcomes for medically underserved AAPI populations.

“We view this project as an exciting step toward utilizing HIT to reduce viral hepatitis disparities among AAPIs,” said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director at AAPCHO. “The results of this study will contribute to enhanced coordination of improved prevention, care, and treatment of viral hepatitis, and serve as an important model in developing culturally appropriate health care for other underserved populations affected by this disease.”

Through this project, AAPCHO and ICHS will use HIT to improve HBV care at the provider and patient level. The project will involve the creation of HIT tools aimed at diagnosing health problems sooner, reducing medical errors, and providing safer more comprehensive care. Among other things, providers would be given HBV testing and vaccination reminders for patients. Patients will benefit through such tools, as they will have improved access to preventative and primary care. AAPCHO will also work with ICHS to conduct interviews, focus groups, and surveys to incorporate community perspectives from underserved HBV patients, family members, and providers. AAPCHO and ICHS will use these findings to develop culturally tailored HBV interventions that incorporate HIT.

“As a community health center, our goal has always been to provide comprehensive, affordable and culturally-competent care,” said Teresita Batayola, chief executive officer of ICHS. “This grant, and its integration of new HIT tools in the clinical setting, enables us to help patients living with hepatitis B get the care they need, and helps us continue to build stronger, more vibrant communities.”

Currently, one in 12 AAPI suffer from chronic hepatitis B. AAPIs are nearly three times more likely to develop liver cancer than non-Hispanic Whites, having the highest rate of liver cancer among all ethnic groups. It is estimated that one in 20 people in the U.S. will become infected with HBV, and one in four chronic hepatitis B carriers will die of liver cancer or liver failure. About 350 million people are infected with HBV worldwide.

MORE

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 Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islanders in the U.S. The project mentioned in this release is funded by the National Institute On Minority Health And Health Disparities of the National Institutes of Health under Award Number R24MD008095. The content of this release is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health. For more information on AAPCHO and its Guiding Principles and Values, please visit www.aapcho.org. AAPCHO can also be found on Facebook (www.facebook.com/aapcho), Twitter (@aapchotweets), and YouTube (www.youtube.com/aapcho).

About ICHS

International Community Health Services (ICHS) is a nonprofit community health center, based in Seattle, Washington. For 40 years, ICHS has provided affordable, culturally-appropriate, and multilingual health care to Asians, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other underserved communities. ICHS began in 1973 as a small storefront clinic in Seattle's International District. Today it is the largest community health center in Washington state serving primarily Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. In 2012, ICHS was recognized by the National Committee for Quality Assurance as a "patient-centered medical home."

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