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AAPCHO Responds to Passage of Senate Immigration Bill Through Senate Judiciary Committee

OAKLAND, May 24, 2013 – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) commends the Senate Judiciary Committee for their strong work to develop a bi-partisan immigration reform bill, the *Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013*, which was voted out of committee this week. The legislation, which will now be debated and voted on the floor of the Senate, is a valiant effort to reform our nation’s immigration system and be more responsive to the changing needs of our modern world.

However, AAPCHO and our member community health centers, are concerned that members of the “Gang of 8” and other Senators continue to undermine the rights to health care for immigrants and their children. In particular, amendments that would either decimate health care options for children and pregnant women, or penalize low-income immigrants that seek health care services. AAPCHO firmly believes that everyone living in this country has the right to basic health care services, but that improving access to primary and preventive health care for immigrants is a cost-effective, efficient, and beneficial policy to protect our individual and public health.

To that end, AAPCHO commends and thanks Senator Mazie Hirono for her amendment to restore health care to Compact of Free Association (COFA) migrants, which was approved by the committee, as well as the principled and courageous amendments to protect health access for other immigrants as they transition to full citizenship, which will now be debated on the floor of the Senate.

We continue to hope that the Senate will remain faithful to the goals of the Affordable Care Act, which seeks to eliminate the ranks of the uninsured, by extending health insurance options to tax-paying members of society, such as immigrants. AAPCHO and its members, will continue to work with the House, Senate, and Obama Administration to protect health care for our most medically underserved and vulnerable residents in America. Finally, we strongly support extending family reunification visas for all immigrant family members, including siblings, adult children, and same-sex couples.

About AAPCHO

AAPCHO is a national association of 33 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. 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).

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