



August 22, 2013

Charles J. Rothwell
Acting Director, National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Rd
Room 5419
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Dear Mr. Rothwell:

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) has been a critical source of population health data and a leader in implementing strategies to increase the collection of data about the health of Asian Americans in the U.S. We thank you for your work, and request that you continue to oversample the Asian American population for the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) 2015-2016 data collection cycle and future data collection cycles.

The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) is a national nonprofit association representing 33 community health organizations that provide quality, comprehensive health care services to medically underserved Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander populations. Accurate and robust data collection is extremely important for our member centers to better understand diseases and health issues that specifically and disproportionately affect the Asian American community. Continuously through AAPCHO's programmatic and policy work, we encounter difficulties in being able to find comprehensive data sets that reflect the disparities seen in smaller studies with disaggregated data, conducted by community groups and academic institutions. In the past, data on Asian Americans has been inadequate or missing due to small sample sizes. The lack of disaggregated data by AA & NHPI subgroup masks disparities in health status and access that may be present for specific subgroups. By oversampling this population, NHANES has taken a major step toward addressing the data inadequacies and gaps for the Asian American community. This data is critical and provides the foundation to develop strategies to target, monitor, and eliminate health inequities.

Data collection for the Asian American population is also necessary for an accurate representation and assessment of the health of the U.S. population as a whole. Based on data from the 2010 U.S. Census, Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial group in the United States. When comparing data between the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census, the Asian American population grew by about 46% during those ten years - approximately 4 times the growth of the U.S. population as a whole (9.7 %). Additionally, the Asian American population grew by at least 30% in 49 of the 50 states.

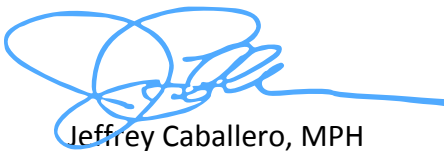
We commend NCHS for its efforts to oversample Asian Americans during the 2011-2012 and 2013-2014 NHANES data collection cycle. During the 2007-2010 cycles of NHANES, Asian Americans constituted less than 2% of the sample, with the expectation of increasing to 14% of the sample by 2014. The Asian American oversample provides an important step toward giving a more accurate picture of the health of Asian Americans. We also appreciate NHANES providing translated materials and interpretation services in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese during the 2013-2014 oversampling. In the future, we recommend increasing the number of Asian languages to capture additional information from the many Asian ethnic subgroups to provide a more robust picture of the Asian American population.

We also recommend an oversampling of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPs), who are among the most vulnerable and underrepresented racial groups in the United States. To date, health data on NHPs have been collected mostly in the two states with the largest NHP populations—Hawaii and California—or in localized surveys. Oversampling of the NHP population will lead to a better understanding of the health and health care access needs of NHPs.

We applaud the work of NCHS and look forward to continuing our collaboration to collect data that accurately represents our communities and will guide our future efforts to address health inequities.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Harley (charley@aapcho.org) or Isha Weerasinghe (iweerasinghe@aapcho.org).

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Caballero, MPH
Executive Director

Cc: Kathryn Porter, NHANES
Kiran Ahuja, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders