

Evaluation Research Capacity and Priorities at Community Health Centers Serving Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders: Preliminary Results

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The purpose of the survey is to improve our understanding of evaluation research needs, priorities, and gaps for AAPCHO member centers and to guide and strengthen evaluation research efforts and capacity for AAPCHO and member centers. The survey targeted all 22 AAPCHO community health centers (CHCs) providing direct services and 10 AAPCHO CHCs responded (45% CHC participation rate). 13 management/executive staff from 10 CHCs participated in the survey. The methods included online and telephone interviews.

All respondents indicated that research has an important role at health centers, as it can improve patient services and help centers achieve higher standards of care. However, there were some key **barriers to sustaining research** including funding (69%), external and internal, and staff availability to conduct research (62%). Health center research **funding sources** in order of importance include: federal agencies, organizational internal budget, state agencies, and corporations. In addition, only 31% of respondents indicated collaborations with external researchers on health center research (past year). Nevertheless, **92% of all respondents indicated they are 'very interested' or 'somewhat interested' in future research participation.**

In terms of **research activities**, 69% of respondents indicated that their health center is currently participating in research. In addition, 85% of respondents would prioritize research activities and continue to involve their health centers as evaluation research sites. Further, 77% suggested that their health center should establish a research department. However, only 31% indicated that their health center staff has prior research experience (past 5 years). Clearly, the **lack of health center staff with research experience and capacity** limits their ability to carry out evaluation research and to collaborate on research projects with external researchers. The major **technical assistance needs** for increasing health center staff's research capacity according to respondents included research methodology (69%) and data analysis (69%). Additional research activities that health center respondents prioritized included partnering with AAPCHO (or other institutions) on health center research projects (85%), participating on research advisory boards (69%) and becoming involved in health policy research (69%).

Finally, the top health center **priority research areas** (5 = highest priority; 1 = lowest priority) included chronic disease (4.9), outcomes of care (4.6), quality of care (4.5), mental health & substance abuse (4.4), and access to care (4.1). Other priority areas included elder care, maternal/infant child health, adolescent/pediatric care, and adult care. In sum, prioritizing research for AAPCHO health centers is becoming an integral part of the health center mission due to the fact that research can demonstrate and improve quality of care by providers and outcomes of care for patients. However, most health centers currently lack the staff resources with research expertise, and funding to adequately develop, implement, and sustain research projects. Technical assistance and collaboration with AAPCHO and other external research institutions will be an important step to building internal research capacity, and networking with potential funders to support future health center research.