

North Star

Background

- ▶ The Asian Health and Social Service Council, Inc. (AHSSC) is a nonprofit community service agency with over 40 agency members in addition to individual members throughout the five boroughs of New York City. It is located in New York and facilitates monthly lecture series throughout the three boroughs at member agencies. Originally founded in 1978 as the Chinese Community Social Service and Health Council (CCSSHC), CCSSHC advocated various health and social issues relevant to the local Chinese community. With increasing and far-reaching success in leveraging change and progress, CCSSHC evolved over the years to address issues relevant to the pan-ethnic Asian community in New York City. In 2009, CCSSHC committed formally to this evolution and took on the mantle of AHSSC. This change allowed an expansion of membership to service agencies serving all Asian communities. The mission of AHSSC is to improve services to all Asian American communities in New York with better health access, and culturally effective engagement with social services. Achievements included the successful and forceful advocacy of the Human Resource Administration (HRA) to hire bilingual workers to effectively serve the needs of monolingual Chinese immigrants and the opening of a station in Chinatown in 1986. In 2009, AHSSC held a conference, Suicide Prevention in Elderly Asian Women, on November 20, 2009 to raise awareness of depression in the elderly Asian community with a specific emphasis on the high risk of suicide among elderly Chinese women. More than 100 agencies and social services workers participated.

The Board of Directors consists of 10 AAPI social service, behavioral health, and medical providers with demonstrated histories of service and expertise with the concerns in the Chinese and AAPI communities. All Board members are affiliated with major service agencies and educational institutions within NYC. Student volunteers include 3 from Baruch College who assist with public events and community advocacy.

AHSSC provides an equally broad array of learning seminars that offer skills training, education of population needs, advocacy action plans, and access to community resources to address barriers and culturally appropriate solutions. While all of the collaborative agencies are effective in their prospective and distinctive services, AHSSC links these providers and offer knowledge and opportunities to advocate for the larger AAPI needs in NYC.

With the continued growth of the AAPI community in NYC, as documented by the 2010 U.S. Census, the continued disparity of health and social service access as documented by the CDC and HRSA, and the overwhelming disadvantages of AAPIs living in poverty in NYC as documented by a 1.4% increase from 2007 to a overall rate of 18.5%, it is

essential to address the need for workforce development that is a cornerstone to building service access and service competency. Showing the largest ethnic growth by 30% in NYC, AAPIs are now 13.9% of the NYC population. The provision of increased service access, cultural competency and cultural congruency would help to address the many health and mental health needs ranging from a high prevalence of liver disease among Chinese immigrants, the highest risk of suicide among Chinese immigrant females from

ages 65 to 85 when compared to all other ethnic female groups, the highest prevalence of depression found in AAPI girls in grades 5 to 12 when compared to

all other ethnic females in that age group, and the lowest level of service access for end of life care as well as public mental health care by AAPI communities.

Additionally, the 2011 statistics from the Department of Labor indicating AAPIs have the highest rate of long-term unemployment at 50.1%, is striking and emphasizes the need to provide support, resource assistance and network opportunities to engage and educate potential AAPIs about the dynamic opportunities in joining the social service and behavioral health employment sectors in the local NYC area.