

# AAPCHO, HRSA Address Health Disparities Among Pacific Islanders

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The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) and the Bureau of Primary Health Care (BPHC), Health Resources and Services and Administration (HRSA), recently took steps to respond to the primary health care issues and concerns of Pacific Islanders in the Pacific Basin.

As a result of discussions between these two organizations, a larger effort to identify and address the health disparities of Pacific Islanders is now underway, including an initiative to assess community-based care in the Pacific Basin and a conference to address the health concerns of this underserved area.

AAPCHO and HRSA's efforts occur alongside a renewed interest in Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) concerns and issues—an interest that stemmed in part from national directives that were implemented as recently as last year, as well as the renegotiation process that is occurring between the U.S. and freely associated compact states.

The collaborative effort between AAPCHO and HRSA to address Pacific Islander primary care issues began last summer when Dr. Marilyn Gaston, director of BPHC/HRSA, asked AAPCHO to support the community health center (CHC) program in the Pacific Basin.

The project's objectives include:

- Obtaining input from Pacific Basin community-based organizations about current primary care and community health activities in their respective areas.
- Prioritizing the needs and issues for CHC programs in the Pacific Basin.
- Developing a strategic plan, as appropriate, to address community-based primary care services in the region.

Overall, AAPCHO supports the development of a primary care community infrastructure to address the health disparities of AAPIs in the Pacific Basin, as well as a coordinated response from the government in support of these local communities.

A meeting will be convened this year between key government officials, community stakeholders, AAPCHO, and its member agencies. Representatives from HRSA, BPHC, Region IX, the Pacific Island Health Officers Association (PIHOA), an associated state, a U.S. jurisdiction, and the Pacific Basin Medical Association, will determine the goals and objectives for the meeting.

AAPCHO hopes the meeting represents a firm step toward relationship building that is respectful of Pacific Islander people and their issues, and builds trust among those who have interest in the region.

The organization also hopes the meeting will lead to potential collaborations between AAPCHO and Pacific Basin representatives, such as meeting follow-up and/or participation in AAPCHO technical assistance services and other joint ventures.

AAPCHO is a national association representing community health organizations dedicated to improving the health status of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the U.S. and its territories.

AAPCHO's mission will be accomplished by increasing the quality, accessibility and availability of comprehensive community based health care that is linguistically and culturally appropriate for these populations.

*AAPCHO staffers Stacy Lavilla and Jeffrey Caballero contributed to this article. ❖*

