A multi-sector partnership to reach NYC's diverse Asian American community.

SUMMARY

With guidance and expert input from local Asian American community-based coalition partners, the Center for the Study of Asian American Health and the New York City Department of Health are creating health educational materials that have been culturally and linguistically adapted for diverse Asian American communities and that can effectively reach these communities to share facts, strategies, and tips for preventing and treating chronic disease to live healthier and happier lives.

CHALLENGE

Asian Americans are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S., representing a diverse community of more than 30 countries of origin and various cultures, religions, migration history, acculturation, and socioeconomic status. In New York City (NYC), Asian Americans make up more than 14% of the population at 1.2 million. The NYC Asian American community also experiences a large burden from certain chronic diseases and associated risk factors, such as cardiovascular disease and hypertension. The ability to reach this diverse community with effective educational health messages on cardiovascular disease and hypertension is currently hampered by a lack of materials that are culturally congruent and appropriately translated. For example, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene does not currently develop or disseminate culturally adapted materials targeted to Asian American subgroups.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

If your community lacks access to culturally and linguistically relevant health materials, consider forming or joining a local coalition and identify existing educational health materials that can be translated and adapted to reach your community. Good sources of materials include your local Department of Health, government agencies such as the CDC, and non-profit agencies such as the American Heart Association.

"Healthy and active living educational materials that are translated to Korean and culturally tailored have the best impact. If our community cannot relate to materials on a personal level, the message will not resonate, which defeats our purpose."

- Tracey Denholm

Success Stories

http://nccd.cdc.gov/dchsuccessstories/
SOLUTION

Motivated by the need for health information materials on cardiovascular disease and hypertension that were targeted to NYC’s diverse Asian American communities, the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH) and the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOH) came together with other multi-sector partners to establish the REACH FAR coalition. With support from a CDC Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) grant, the REACH FAR coalition set out to culturally adapt and translate existing DOH educational materials that could effectively reach several of NYC’s diverse Asian American communities, including Koreans, Filipinos, Asian Indians, and Bangladeshis.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

The REACH FAR coalition has partnered with an award-winning Asian American media agency to create images and additional hypertension and healthy living messages that are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Materials include posters, restaurant tent cards, and door decals that will alert customers to locations for healthy food purchases. The adapted DOH educational brochures and additional materials will be disseminated widely to NYC’s Asian American communities with the help of coalition partners through social media, ethnic and mainstream media, community events and venues, and outdoor spaces where Asian American communities live, work, play, and worship. A repository of materials will also be available on CSAAH’s website.

RESULTS

Using a community-engaged and iterative process, several key DOH educational brochures on hypertension, and healthy eating and active living were shared with local Asian American community-based partners who were asked to review, translate, and advise on cultural adaptations, including the use of images and incorporating cultural values, such as examples of culturally appropriate foods and exercises, and use of epigrams. For example, an educational brochure on reading and understanding food labels to manage sodium intake included only examples of high sodium foods such as frozen pizzas and packaged breads that are uncommonly eaten in Asian American communities. Community partners suggested these images be swapped for foods such as soy sauce and frozen samosas that are more typical in East and South Asian Communities.