

**Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities**

**Asian American Health Roundtable
Executive Summary & Recommendations**

October 5, 2006



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Governor

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*Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities
Asian American Health Roundtable
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The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene: Minority Health and Health Disparities (MHHD) intensified its efforts to obtain recommendations from Asian Americans in preparation of Maryland's Statewide Plan to Eliminate Minority Health Disparities. MHHD sponsored an Asian American Health Round Table on October 5, 2006. The recommendations below summarize comments generated from group discussion during the round table meeting. The number of participants at the meeting totaled 80.

RECOMMENDATIONS

DIVERSITY WITHIN THE ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

- Recognize that there is much diversity and difference within the many Asian communities
- Educate health providers that the Asian community is heterogeneous -- one size does not fit all in the healthcare system

LANGUAGE BARRIERS

- Offer school instruction in Asian languages
- Make available interpretation services for physicians and patients who do not speak the same language, but realize that best care will be received when the patient and provider speak the same language
- Identify ways to solve language barrier issues in the event of a homeland security emergency

CULTURAL COMPETENCY

- Educate physicians on the need for cultural competence
- Extend cultural competence and cultural sensitivity beyond health care providers to other public services such as law enforcement
- Offer scholarships for Asian students to encourage participation in health profession education programs

FOREIGN TRAINED HEALTHCARE WORKERS

- Identify ways to utilize foreign-trained healthcare workers who have a difficult time getting certified to practice in Maryland

- Form partnerships with community colleges to provide the needed training for foreign-trained healthcare workers

MENTAL HEALTH

- Recognize that suicide and depression are very prevalent in the Asian communities, especially among the youth, even if not discussed
- Identify ways to overcome the many cultural barriers to seeking mental health care in the Asian American community
- Recognize that mental health is an issue that requires handling in a discrete way
- Train mental health providers on how to treat Asian American patients in a culturally appropriate way

ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

- Provide information to new immigrants and members of Asian communities on how to navigate the health system and where to locate resources (i.e. insurance assistance, Medicaid support)
- Recognize the multitude of barriers to healthcare that exist including; cultural, financial and geographic