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PRESS RELEASE

**NEW YORK CITY ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN ORGANIZATION RECEIVES NEW YORK STATE 5-Year PATIENT NAVIGATOR GRANT RENEWAL**

*CACF with 10 partner organizations will provide In-Person Patient Navigator services in 13 sites across NYC and have the capacity to speak a total of 19 languages*

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New York, NY — The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) and 10 member organizations celebrate the renewal of a five-year award from New York State to support multilingual and culturally competent in-person assistants or patient navigators to assist health insurance enrollment in New York City, particularly for the diverse Asian Pacific American (APA) community. This is critical for the Asian Pacific American community that experiences the highest rate of linguistic isolation in NYC and a near 15% uninsurance rate.

Contrary to the Model Minority Myth, the APA community suffers tremendous barriers to accessing and affording quality healthcare. APA groups have some of the highest uninsurance rates and as a whole has the highest poverty rate of any racial group at 26 percent. 14.3 percent of Asian Americans are uninsured in New York City. As a highly immigrant and foreign born community at almost 80 percent, navigating enrollment and understanding health insurance options can be confusing, especially in families struggling with language barriers. For example, in New York City, 45 percent of APAs report they “speak English less than very well”.



(Organizations in attendance: Adhikaar, Arab-American Family Support Center, Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, Council of Peoples Organization, NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center-Immigrant Health & Cancer Disparities, Japanese American Social Services Inc., Mekong NYC, Minkwon Center for Community Action, United Chinese Association of Brooklyn, United Sikhs)



(Speaking: Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Directors of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families)

The New York State of Health awarded another 5-years In-Person Navigator Grant and will enable organizations throughout New York to serve as In-Person Assistors/Patient Navigators for the health insurance marketplace. Of those grantees, the Coalition of Asian American Children and Families is a lead organization and will work with 10 Asian Pacific American led and serving organizations to provide patient navigator services throughout New York City. CACF and 10 subcontractors will join this statewide effort to provide one-on-one enrollment assistance to individuals, families, small businesses and their employees who apply for health insurance through the New York State of Health. Our partners include:

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| <p>Adhikaar</p> <p>Council of Peoples Organization</p> <p>Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center- Immigrant Health &amp; Cancer Disparities</p> <p>Mekong NYC</p> | <p>Arab-American Family Support Center</p> <p>NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health</p> <p>Japanese American Social Services Inc</p> <p>Minkwon Center for Community Action</p> <p>United Sikhs</p> |
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Together, CACF and the 10 partner organizations will be serving NYC's 5 boroughs in 13 sites and have the capacity to speak a total of 19 languages such as Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Nepali, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tajik, Tibetan, Turkish, Urdu, Uzbek, and Vietnamese. CACF and our subcontractor/partners will embrace this renewal and this important opportunity to build upon New York's tremendous work in providing health care access to its residents. CACF looks forward to expanding the number of individuals who have access to quality, affordable health insurance, and reducing the number of uninsured in New York.

"The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families is excited to continue to work with the New York State of Health through the In-Person Assistor/Navigator program. As a lead organization, CACF recognizes the incredible impact Patient Navigators have on the healthcare system and their ability to create healthier communities. Nearly 45% of the Asian Pacific American community speaks little to no English. Linguistically and culturally competent Patient Navigators can serve our APA communities better and meet the needs of community members of linguistically isolated groups. We are proud to help provide access to services and to communities including Arab American, Bangladeshi, Cambodian, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Nepali, Tibetan, Vietnamese and more" said **Vanessa Leung** and **Anita Gundanna, Co-Executive Directors** of the **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families**.

**Pabitra Benjamin, Executive Director of Adhikaar** said, "Adhikaar is the only organization in New York to offer healthcare navigation services in Nepali and Tibetan. Due to our language capacity and proficiency with the navigators program, over 500 people come to Adhikaar every year to receive support. Community members of various language capacities come to enroll in a health care plan and receive support navigating the system. They also stop by for billing questions, payment setup to choosing or making an appointment with a PCP. As a part of our contract, we also provide education for members about the healthcare system and the importance of our health. As a result of our work with the IPA/Navigator Program, over 5000 Nepali-speaking immigrants now have access to affordable care. This has an immense impact on people's everyday lives from ensuring children and elders get regular check-ups to be able to access emergency health care, receive treatment for an overdue issue and receive long term care. As Adhikaar is seen as a reliable source for health care navigation, we also see a rise of individuals and families with health-related issues like women's health, mental health, emergency needs and more that gives us a better perspective on what support is needed in the community."

"The Arab-American Family Support Center is proud to continue partnering with the New York State of Health and CACF to promote well-being among under-resourced communities by enrolling individuals in health insurance and supporting positive behavioral changes. Our culturally and linguistically competent team is equipped to meet the unique needs of Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim, South Asian, and other marginalized communities throughout New York", said **Rawaa Nancy Albilal, President and CEO of Arab-American Family Support Center**.

"Council of Peoples Organization (COPO) is excited to be working with CACF as a Patient Navigator. Through this partnership, COPO will provide free, culturally competent, linguistically appropriate, and ADA compliant enrollment services at our community center on Coney Island Avenue, which serves the diverse neighborhoods of south-central Brooklyn." **Mohammad Razvi, CEO of Council of Peoples Organization**.

**Chisato Horikawa**, the **Director of the Japanese American Social Services Inc.** said, "We are extremely happy about being a part of this important group to serve our community members. JASSI has been providing health insurance enrollment assistance since 2014 mainly for Japanese-speaking clients. We believe that it is important for us to provide information and convey the importance of health care to the community. As a member of this diverse group, we are excited to expand our work on the enrollment services."

"This program addresses a dire and growing need in the community to have readily available, trusted, culturally and linguistically responsive insurance enrollers to take them through what could otherwise be a daunting process," said **Francesca Gany**, **Service Chief of the Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.**

**John Park**, **Executive Director of the Minkwon Center for Community Action** said, "The MinKwon Center participates in the Navigator program because everyone should have access to healthcare. During the 5 year period after the launch of the Affordable Care Act in 2013, the nonelderly uninsured rate for Asian Americans in New York dropped from 18.1 percent to 9 percent. It's a program that has reduced suffering and saved lives, and community partnerships play an important role in outreach, education, and overcoming cultural and language barriers to increase healthcare access in our communities."

"Mekong NYC values our participation in making sure that New York State residents, including Cambodians, Laotians, and Vietnamese, have access to health care as the safety net of our communities continues to be at risk," said **Chhaya Chhoum**, **Executive Director, Mekong NYC.**

**Nadia Islam**, **Associate Professor at The NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH)** said, "In NYC, the Bangladeshi population is more likely to be uninsured, 10.8% compared to 12.4% for the general population (according to data from an analysis by the Asian American Federation Census Information Center). Bangladeshis also have higher rates of limited English proficiency compared to all other New Yorkers. Challenges such as these make understanding and navigating the health care system a complex and daunting task for this predominantly immigrant community. In addition to providing enrollment assistance, our Navigators, who are fluent in English, Hindi, Bengali and Urdu, provide culturally and linguistically tailored outreach and education about health coverage options. Because they are trusted leaders in their community, they serve as a bridge between Bangladeshi community members and the healthcare system. Continuation of this Navigator program is vital for ensuring that all New Yorkers have access to affordable and essential health care."

"The application process of health insurance is complicated, and people face well-documented difficulties understanding how coverage works both when shopping for a plan and, later, when attempting to use it. At UCA, we aim to provide services that promote one-on-one help in the enrollment process for the Chinese immigrant population in Bensonhurst, in order to better connect people with healthcare coverage and make the community a healthier and happier one!", said **Stephanie Wong**, **Executive Director and President of the United Chinese Association of Brooklyn.**

"We are honored to partner with the Coalition for Asian American Children & Families and its esteemed member organizations to help provide the next level of care for New York's Asian Pacific American community," said **Hardayal Singh**, **UNITED SIKHS Founding Member.** "As our community remains at risk for a disproportionate burden of preventable diseases in the United States, it is crucial we provide better access to health information, screenings and care. Through this partnership, we are able to make a measurable impact for hundreds of members of the community with an innovative, grassroots approach available in multiple languages that cater to historically

underserved populations at gurdwaras, schools, community centers and our local office."

For more information about the NY State of Health, please call 1-855-355-5777 or visit [www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov](http://www.nystateofhealth.ny.gov). For questions regarding CACF's In-Person Assistor/Patient Navigator program, please contact Vanessa Leung at [vleung@cacf.org](mailto:vleung@cacf.org) or call 212-809-4675 x.106.

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