

## CEO MESSAGE



Dear Patients and Friends,

The simplest moments that many of us take for granted, such as communicating with our doctor, fixing our teeth, or finding counseling when we are depressed, remain major obstacles for our communities who face language, cultural and financial barriers.

As we view these needs through the lens of our patients, we are committed to continue to work tirelessly towards our dual mission of providing quality health care AND giving voice to our patients to ensure that unmet health care needs are addressed.

In this past year, we have done a lot. We successfully enrolled thousands of uninsured patients onto health insurance. To meet the needs of the growing Asian American and Pacific Islander population, we added a new specialty mental health division. We are building a new dental site, due to open in 2017. We also received a generous anonymous donor gift to expand greatly needed pediatric and urgent care services for low-income children, youth and families.

Through the changes and expansion, we remain ever committed to providing our patients with quality health care.

Thank you,

Sherry Hirota  
Chief Executive Officer



Asian Health Services  
818 Webster Street  
Oakland, CA 94607



# ASIAN HEALTH SERVICES NEWSLETTER

818 WEBSTER STREET, OAKLAND, CA 94607



## NEW SPECIALTY MENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

By Jorge Wong, PhD, Specialty Mental Health Division Director

Greetings from AHS' new Specialty Mental Health Services Division! AHS has recently expanded its mental health services programs to include a Specialty Mental Health Services division. As of July 1, 2016, AHS provides mental health services to Medi-Cal clients in Alameda County. Our hope is to increase access to mental health services within the Asian American community, and reduce the stigma that still exists around mental health conditions.

Children, youth and adults experiencing moderate to severe mental health illness can now access a range of services, including: assessment, therapy, medication, case management, crisis intervention, hotline response, prevention and education, advocacy, support and referral services. We work collaboratively with AHS medical and dental providers.

Our staff is bilingual and bicultural in Burmese, Cantonese, Japanese, Karen, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Mien, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and English. We are conveniently located at 310 8th St., Suite 200A. Please call us at (510) 735-3900 for more information, or to schedule an appointment.

We look forward to serving you, your loved ones, and our community.

## FLU SEASON IS HERE!

The influenza ("flu") viruses typically spread widely from the late fall through early spring. Those most at risk for developing serious illness or even death are very young children, pregnant women, older adults and those with chronic medical conditions.

### How can you protect yourself?

Get immunized with the flu vaccine. Everyone over 6 months should get the flu vaccine. At your next provider's visit, ask your doctor for the flu vaccine. It is also available at many local pharmacies. Public Health nurses are also going to certain elementary schools to vaccinate students. Please remember to let your doctor know if you have gotten the flu vaccine somewhere other than our doctor's office. (Due to the decreased effectiveness of the nasal spray form of the flu vaccine, it will not be available this flu season.) Protect yourself from getting sick by washing your hands with soap and warm water often, especially after being out in public spaces.

- Stop the spread of germs that make you and others sick!
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- Cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.

Get protected and stay well!

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF ADVANCE DIRECTIVES

By Tervina Moy, Wendy Cai and Connie Chang, Board of Directors  
George Lee, MD, Chief Medical Officer

### What is an advance directive?

An advance directive is a document that allows you to make your own health care choices if you become very sick. For example, this document allows you to appoint someone you name to execute health care decisions and wishes for you on your behalf if you become incapable of making your own decisions due to illness or injury. You can also choose the intensity of health care interventions that you want. You have the right to revoke or replace advance directive at any time.

### Why is it important?

An advance directive defines the goals of your health care wishes from returning to good health to creating a natural and comfortable end of life. An effective document helps your appointed agent(s) be your advocate. By sharing your values and hopes with your agent, (s)he will be able to use his/her best judgment to act in your best interest and to adjust to circumstances according to your wishes. Filling out the advance directive will help reduce the feelings of burden and guilt among families and friends to make the best health care decision for you.

### What is AHS doing to offer it to our patients?

**Clinic Changes:** AHS began providing information about advance directives to patients over age 70 since August 1, 2016 and encouraging them to complete the relevant forms. There are 2 important forms to complete. Materials are available in Burmese, Chinese, English, Khmer, Korean, Mongolian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Please talk with your provider if you have any questions. As your health care provider, we want to make sure that your wishes are carried out. If you would like, your provider can make an appointment with our behavioral health staff who can assist with completing their advance directive forms. However, remember that an effective advance directive requires communication between you, your family and your provider so everyone understands your wishes.

**Educational Sessions:** AHS is exploring ways to offer additional in-language workshops that would provide more education and assistance with advance directives. We will let patients know when these sessions may become available in the future.

## IMPROVED PHONE SYSTEM TO START NOVEMBER 2016!

By Linda Okahara, Grants and Special Projects Administrator

AHS improved our phones so patients can better reach us. It is available in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. Here's a guide to talk with a live staff member.



**Step 1:** Call the right number for your clinic or service.

**Asian Medical Center:** 510-986-6800

**AMC Pediatric Clinic:** 510-986-6815

**Frank Kiang Medical Center:** 510-735-3888

**Rolland & Kathryn Lowe Medical Center:** 510-318-5800

**Dental Clinic:** 510-986-6888

**Member Services, AMC Medical Records, Billing, Recorded AMC Clinic Info:** 510-986-6811

**Step 2:** Listen to the message and choose your language. Don't hang up!

**Step 3:** Listen to the message and choose the service you need. Keep holding to speak with an AHS staff. Don't hang up!

**Tip 1** Not sure what to do? Keep holding to keep your place in line. Don't hang up! When it's your turn, you'll talk to a staff member.

**Tip 2** Leave a voice mail message. We now check for messages several times a day.

**Tip 3** Try the call-back option! You'll be asked to say your name, birthday, and medical record number. Confirm or enter the number you want us to call you at. Then relax. We'll call you when it's your turn!

## DENTAL EXPANSION TO COME IN 2017

By Huong Le, DDS, Chief Dental Officer



Asian Health Services will be having a major dental expansion with a new site projected to open in early 2017. Our main clinic and College of Alameda (COA) sites are heavily impacted by high demands. Due to limited capacity, we have not been accepting new patients at our main site since May of 2014. Although COA is still accepting new patients, there are specific requirements, such as being a resident of the city of Alameda, a student at COA, and an Alameda Head Start participant. The average wait time for appointments for both clinic sites is about 8 months. Given the high demands and limited capacity, the new clinic is greatly needed.

The new dental clinic will be located on the corner of 11th Street and Jackson, across from Lincoln Elementary School and the Social Security Administration building. We will have 9 dental stations and one counseling room. We will be bringing on new dental staff to serve our patients.

We look forward to welcoming staff and patients when the office is completed. More information will be coming in the future.

## WHY WE SHOULD ALL VOTE ON NOVEMBER 8TH

By Thu Quach, PhD, Director of Community Health and Research

The Asian American and Pacific Islander population is the fastest-growing racial group in the United States. As such, we can really impact the nation, especially if we exercise our voting power. When we vote, we can: 1) influence which elected officials are placed in government, 2) encourage elected officials to pay attention to the needs of the Asian American and Pacific Islander population, and 3) help influence what laws are passed that can affect our community.

To be eligible to vote, you must be a U.S. citizen and at least 18 years old. You also must have registered to vote by October 24, 2016 to be able to participate in the November 8, 2016 elections. Once you have registered, you will remain a registered voter, but if you change your address and other contact information you may need to re-register with the updated information.

You can vote by mail (through absentee voting) or go to your designated polling station to cast your vote. There are different voter guides available if you want to learn more about what is on the ballot. If you need language assistance, the law states that you can bring one or two people into the voting booth, or you may request assistance from a bilingual poll worker.

No matter how you do it, it is important for your voice to be heard! It is your right to vote as a U.S. citizen, so please exercise this right to be heard.

## OPEN ENROLLMENT FOR 2017 IS COMING

By Vanessa Fong Quach, Member Services Manager

The annual Covered California Open Enrollment period for this year is November 1st, 2016 through January 31st, 2017. If you want your health insurance coverage to start January 1st, 2017, you need to enroll by December 15, 2016.

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires most people to have public or private insurance or pay "Individual Shared Responsibility Payments (penalties)." It is important for patients to keep your insurance coverage updated. Medi-Cal is a form of public insurance. If you qualify, you can enroll anytime during the year. However, in order to keep your Medi-Cal, you have to complete an annual Review/Redetermination/Renewal process called RRR.

Covered California is the health insurance marketplace in California. It enables individuals and small businesses to purchase private health insurance at federally subsidized rates. Covered California announced the statewide average weighted increase of 13.2 percent for its health plans in the individual market for 2017; this increase is more significant than the last two years. However, at last year's Open Enrollment, we assisted many people using the Shop & Compare Tool which helped to identify affordable options for each consumer. As before, our staff will work with you to identify affordable options that meet your needs.

We would like to assist you in keeping your Medi-Cal or to shop for the affordable private insurance coverage. Our office hours are Mondays - Fridays from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM, and Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Please call us at (510) 986-6880 to make an appointment with our staff before the time runs out.