



Asian American Health Conference
Commitment to Change:
Exploring Health Disparities in
The Asian American Community



May 5, 2006

SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

Noilyn Abesamis, MPH

NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH)



Noilyn Abesamis, MPH is the Deputy Director of Outreach & Program Development for the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health (CSAAH). In her capacity, she creates, coordinates, and oversees key outreach, educational, and community-based initiatives for CSAAH. Noilyn also fosters and strengthens relationships with Asian American and immigrant-serving organizations and is integral in the development of CSAAH's community partnerships and advisory committees. Noilyn has previous experience in the areas of coalition development, capacity building, health profession pipeline and training, substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and immigrant health advocacy. In 2004, Noilyn co-founded the Kalusugan Coalition (KC), a Filipino health collaborative, where she currently serves as a Co-Chair. Additionally, she is a member of the Executive Committee of the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health and the Action Council

of the Coalition for Asian American Children & Families. Noilyn was a 2005 fellow for the New American Leadership Program sponsored by CORO NY and the New York Immigration Coalition. She is currently a 2006 Senior Fellow for the United Way of New York City <http://www.unitedwaynyc.org/?id=48> Nonprofit Leadership Development Institute. Noilyn received a BA Environmental Analysis & Design from the University of California, Irvine and an MPH, Socio-medical Sciences from the Columbia University, Mailman School of Public Health.

Betty Lee Hawks

Office of Minority Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



As Special Assistant to the Director, Betty Lee Hawks provides advice and makes recommendations on a variety of health issues to the Director and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health, Dr. Garth Graham, in the Office of Minority Health (OMH)/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). In the past decade, her main areas have been cancer, women's health, cultural competency, and coordinating the HHS response to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Ms. Hawks has also served as the OMH Program Officer for External Coordination and as the Program Director for the Minority Community Health Coalition Demonstration Grant Program/OMH.

Ms. Hawks was a principal founder, first Chairperson and former President of the Organization of Pan-Asian American Women, the first national public policy organization focused on Asian American and Pacific Islander women's issues. Ms. Hawks represents HHS on the federal Coordinating Committee for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, serves on the HHS Coordinating Committee on Women's Health, and serves as federal liaison to a number of organizations such as the Intercultural Cancer Council and the American Diabetes Association's Asian Pacific American Diabetes Action Council.

Ms. Hawks is second generation Chinese American, who received her bachelor's degree from Vassar College and master's degree from U.C. Berkeley, both in socio-cultural anthropology, and graduated from the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Management Intern Program.

Lisa Hasegawa, MPH

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development



Lisa Hasegawa is the Executive Director of the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (National CAPACD). The mission of National CAPACD is to be a powerful voice for the unique community development needs of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities and to strengthen the capacity of community based organizations to create neighborhoods of hope and opportunities. National CAPACD is the first national advocacy organization dedicated to meeting the housing and community development needs of AAPI communities. They focus on four key community development areas: affordable housing development, economic development - including workforce and business development, community empowerment and cultural preservation, and neighborhood revitalization. In 2003, Lisa was a Fellow in the Rockefeller Foundation's Next Generation Leadership Program. Prior to joining National

CAPACD, Ms. Hasegawa was the Community Liaison for the White House Initiative on AAPIs where she was responsible for ensuring that AAPI community groups from across the country were involved and informed about Initiative activities. She also worked for the U.S. DHHS Health Resources and Services Administration and the Office of Minority Health. Previously, she worked at two community health centers serving low-income AAPIs in Los Angeles and Oakland, California. Lisa is a fourth generation Japanese American from California, and is a graduate of UCLA and the Harvard School of Public Health.

Henrietta Ho-Asjoe, MPS

Community Development Center for the Study of Asian American Health



Henrietta Ho-Asjoe is the Administrator and the Director of Community Development for the NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health. As the Center's Administrator, Henrietta directs the development and operation of program activities; provides fiscal oversight and management; collaborates with community-based partners; markets the Center's services and programs, as well as organizes seminars and conferences. As the Director of Community Development, she oversees the outreach activities and partnerships building with the community-based organizations, local and national healthcare agencies, and government entities. Formerly, Ms. Ho-Asjoe was the Director of the Chinese Community Partnership for Health at New York Downtown Hospital. She led a multi-culturally diverse professional team that was committed to assisting Chinese Americans overcome barriers to healthcare access and

addressed the special needs of the Chinese community. In addition, Ms. Ho-Asjoe's contribution to the community at large has been recognized by the following awards. She received the 2002 California Pacific Award for Excellence in Patient Education and in 1998; she was awarded a proclamation from the New York Manhattan Borough President's Office for her dedication in the field of health care.

Chiehwen Ed Hsu, PhD, MPH
University of Maryland



C. Ed Hsu is Assistant Professor of Public Health Informatics, University of Maryland College Park, Department of Public and Community Health. He was Director of the health needs assessment research for the Asian American Health Initiative of Montgomery County, MD. He is currently involved in a Hepatitis B education and screening program for 7 Asian communities of Montgomery County, Maryland. Hsu completed several publicly-funded research projects on minority health, and co-authored journal articles and a book chapter related to the use of information technology and applied quantitative methods in health disparities surveillance. He served on several health disparities panels. Hsu graduated from Fujen University Medical College in Taipei, Taiwan, and received his graduate training in health policy and management, health services research, and health informatics from the University of Texas

Houston Health Science Center.

LK George Hsu, MD, FRCPsych
Tufts University School of Medicine



Dr Hsu was born in Hong Kong and graduated MBBS from the University of Hong Kong. He obtained his postgraduate training in Psychiatry at the University of London where he also completed his MD thesis on "The Outcome of Anorexia Nervosa". Currently Dr Hsu is Professor of Psychiatry at Tufts University School of Medicine and Director, Asian Psychiatry Services at The Tufts-New England Medical Center in Boston. His research interests are the Eating Disorders and Asian Psychiatry.

Carlessia A. Hussein, R.N. DrPH
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities



Dr. Carlessia A. Hussein graduated from the Freedmen's Hospital School of Nursing in Washington D.C. and completed graduate studies in Nursing, and a Public Health Doctorate at the University of California, School of Public Health, Berkeley. Her professional career has included public health policy and administration, university lecturing, health system regulation, direct nursing care, and public health nursing in a variety of settings. From 1977 through 1988, Dr. Hussein directed health planning and regulatory agencies in Santa Clara and Los Angeles, California and in Washington, D.C. Prior to that time, she served as Associate Dean at Berkeley School of Public Health and Chairperson of the Community Health Nursing Program, where she recruited minorities into the graduate program. In 1996, Dr. Hussein joined the

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene where she managed a major portion of traditional public health programs in 23 counties and Baltimore City, with a budget of \$250 million.

Dr. Hussein was appointed Director of the Cigarette Restitution Fund Program (CRFP) in 2000. In this capacity, Dr. Hussein oversees the statewide dissemination and monitoring of an \$80 million annual allocation of tobacco settlement funds aimed at reducing smoking and controlling cancer in Maryland by 2010. Dr. Hussein also directs the recently established Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities (MHHD) in the Office of the Secretary of Health (2004). The MHHD office is responsible for instituting programs that will reduce and eventually eliminate health disparities among minorities in Maryland.

Betty H. Lam

Montgomery county Office of Community Affairs



Ms. Betty Lam joined the Montgomery County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) in the summer of 2004 as the Chief of the Office of Community Affairs. Prior to that, Ms. Lam was appointed as the Community Liaison for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in 2002, and was later detailed over to work on special assignments at the Office of Civil Rights for the Federal Department of Health & Human Services. Before coming to the Greater Washington D.C. area in 2002, Ms. Lam had lived and worked in Boston, Massachusetts for 19 years and held various positions in the public and private sectors including the Director of Interpreter Services and the Asian Health Initiative for New England Medical Center, Director of Community Relations for the Metropolitan District Commission, and the Managing Editor of the Sampan Newspaper, a bilingual publication based in Boston. Ms. Lam received her

Master of Arts degree in Journalism from the Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

Grace Xueqin Ma, PhD

Temple University, Department of Public Health, Center for Asian Health



Dr. Grace Xueqin Ma is Professor in the Department of Public Health and Director of the Center for Asian Health at Temple University. Her research interests focus on cancer prevention and early detection, health disparities intervention, patient navigation and smoking cessation in medically underserved Asian American and other minority populations. Dr. Ma's current NIH-funded ATECAR-Asian Community Cancer Network, focuses on smoking cessation and lung cancer prevention, cervical cancer, Hep B-liver cancer, breast cancer, and colorectal and stomach cancer interventions among Asian American populations. Under Dr. Ma's leadership, the first Asian Community Cancer Coalition was established in the US Eastern region in 2000, with a current membership of fifty-three (53) community-based organizations located in PA, NJ, NYC and

Washington DC areas. The ATECAR network collaborators also consist of over 30 primary healthcare providers and oncologists, research institutions and governmental and non-governmental agencies. Dr. Ma and her research team have conducted bilateral research on tobacco in China. Dr. Ma is actively involved in community and national health advisory boards, and is currently a charter member of an NIH study section. She is an active member of several professional associations, journal editorial boards, and committees of national and statewide tobacco and cancer control plans. Dr. Ma has authored or co-authored several books and over 65 publications in peer reviewed journals and delivered over 280 professional presentations at regional, national and international conferences. The impacts of these publications and presentations are reflected in public health academics, research and practices, as well as in Asian and minority health care policies and programs. Dr. Ma is a nationally and internationally recognized scholar, who is a mentor of many minority junior researchers and she has received numerous distinguished awards from academic institutions, scientific associations, and government agencies that include the 2005 NIH's Martin Luther King Award in Reducing Health Disparities, the 2004 NCI-CRCHD Community Healthcare Leadership Award, and the 2001 NCI's Atlantic Region Cancer Information Service award.

Ranjita Misra, PhD, CHES

Department of Health and Kinesiology, Texas A&M University



Ranjita Misra, Ph.D., CHES is an Associate Professor in the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University. Dr. Misra's research interest focuses on health promotion and disease prevention (specifically diabetes and cardiovascular disease) activities. She has several national and international studies to examine prevalence of type 2 diabetes mellitus (T2DM), risk factors for diabetes and CVD, and effectiveness of diabetes intervention programs for high-risk groups - Asian Indians, Mexican Americans, and African Americans in the United States, and Indians in India & Mexicans in Mexico. She is interested to enhance theoretical and intervention models for community-based health promotion/disease prevention programs. She has authored and co-

authored many research articles in referred journals and has supervised undergraduate, masters, and doctoral students for research projects.

Arnab Mukherjea, MPH

School of Public Health at the University of California at Berkeley



Arnab Mukherjea is currently a Doctoral Student in Public Health (DrPH) at the School of Public Health at the University of California (UC) at Berkeley.

Arnab also received his Masters Degree in Public Health (Health & Social Behavior) and Bachelors Degree in Molecular & Cell Biology at UC Berkeley.

Arnab has recently been elected as Chair-Elect of the Executive Committee of the Asian Pacific Islander Caucus for Public Health (API Caucus) as recognized by the American Public Health Association (APHA). The goal of the API Caucus is to conduct policy advocacy to improve the health and well-being of Asian American and Pacific Islander (API) communities and to disseminate emerging and relevant health research and promising intervention strategies through APHA's Annual Meeting and Exposition in order to facilitate the elimination of API health disparities. Arnab is also the

immediate-past Co-Chair of the Executive Board of Directors of the South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA). Arnab is also a staunch advocate of cultural competency and diversity in health care education, practice, and delivery. His primary interests include looking at how cultural behaviors, values, and stigma play a direct role in disparate health outcomes. His research includes analyzing South Asian specific tobacco patterns and the risk imparted to South Asian subgroups for various health conditions, such as cardiovascular disease and oral cancer. Arnab believes that active community participation and quality education, both academic and grassroots, coupled with evidence-based programs, are the best remedy in reducing and eliminating health disparities in communities of color, behavior, and sexual orientation. His current academic training is geared towards the creation of a locally-driven, sustainable, and comprehensive community-based organization which will provide support and empower South Asians to take ownership of their own health prospects in a culturally-competent fashion, to ultimately enable the reduction and elimination of South Asian health disparities in collaboration with other Asian Pacific Islander community leaders and health advocates.

Hannah Sin

Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project

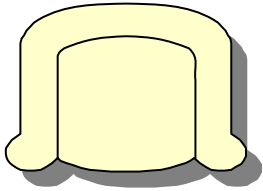


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Hannah Sin is native of Decatur, Georgia, and has been working with communities of color for over eight years. She is currently the Community Outreach Director at the Asian/Pacific Islander Domestic Violence Resource Project (DVRP), a local non-profit organization that works to address and prevent domestic violence in Asian/Pacific Islander communities in the metropolitan Washington, DC area. In her capacity as Community Outreach Director, Ms. Sin engages community members in discussing the problem of domestic violence and ways that individuals and communities can respond. She has worked with youth, professionals, faith-based institutions, and community-based organizations through local workshops, regional trainings, and national conferences. Ms. Sin received her Bachelors of Foreign Service from Georgetown University in International Politics and has spent time in South Korea, Mexico, and Cuba. Other community work experience includes coordinating an ESL tutoring program in Washington, D.C. and program evaluation for community development corporations and multicultural coalitions.

Grace Tsai, Ph.D

Hep B Initiative



Grace Tsai is the Development Director for the Hepatitis B Initiative-DC (HBI-DC), a grass-roots Asian American organization dedicated to eradicating hepatitis B. Dr. Tsai received her doctorate from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and worked as a postdoctoral training fellow in Psychiatric Epidemiology at Johns Hopkins. After her postdoctoral training she combined her undergraduate background in communications and her graduate work in public health to write for a 24-hour web-based health channel. Dr. Tsai is passionately interested in all components of wellness and health, and in particular, Traditional Chinese Medicine and spiritual/shaman healing techniques. Dr. Tsai lives in Sterling, VA with her husband and three young girls.

Walter Tsou, MD, MPH

Tsou Consulting



Walter Tsou, MD, MPH is the Immediate Past President of the American Public Health Association. Currently, he is on the visiting faculties of the University of Pennsylvania and Drexel School of Public Health. He served as Health Commissioner of Philadelphia from April 2000 to February 2002. Prior to his appointment, he was the founding Deputy Director for Personal Health Services and Medical Director of the Montgomery County (PA) Health Department from 1991-2000. Before 1991, he was the Clinical Director in the Division of Ambulatory Health Services for the Philadelphia Department of Public Health. He has extensive experience in public health and has lectured widely on health disparities. He is founding member of the National Board of Public Health Examiners and the board of Physicians for a National Health Program.

Locally he is on the boards of Philadelphia Physicians for Social Responsibility, the Philadelphia Area Committee to Defend Health Care, the Institute for Social Medicine and Community Health, the Section on Public Health at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia and the Chestnut Hill Healthcare Foundation.

In the past, he has served on the boards and committees of the Maternity Care Coalition, the Philadelphia HIV Commission, Bridging the Gaps, the Asian American Health Care Network, and the United Way of SE Penna. He was named the Practitioner of the Year by the Philadelphia County Medical Society in 2001. He also received the 2001 Leadership Award of the Delaware Valley Healthcare Council. In 2006, he received the Public Health Recognition Award from the College of Physicians of Philadelphia. His medical degree is from the University of Pennsylvania; his MPH is from the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health, and he has an honorary Doctorate in Medical Sciences from Drexel University.