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APICHA Turns 20

2009 marks APICHA’s 20th anniversary! Highlighting the commemorative activities will be our gala benefit, “A Thousand and One Champions”, to be held on June 4, 2009 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

You won’t want to miss this special dinner that will honor some of the many people who have been good friends of APICHA, so SAVE THE DATE!

Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez calls on APICHA’s friends to join the effort to make this gala a success. “In view of the increasing number of people who are getting infected, APICHA must remain strong. Our challenge now is to ensure that APICHA will be here for the long haul in this pandemic that portends no end. APICHA’s benefit galas have traditionally been part of our strategy to raise the funds to fill the gaps that are not met by contracts.”

The event is part of the Gift of Caring Campaign that was established to address the significant increases in operating costs incurred, including rent, when APICHA lost its lease at 150 Lafayette Street and after much searching, moved to 400 Broadway, New York City’s real estate trends for building condominiums have put many community-based organizations in great difficulty. APICHA had the misfortune of being in a building that became part of the gentrification of communities as a result of the conversion boom.

The benefit committee is now in formation. For information about becoming a committee member, an event sponsor, or other information about the event, you may call Vicki Shu Smolin at (646) 263-6044, or e-mail her at shu@yahoo.com.

“We have come a long way since a small group of volunteers launched APICHA in 1989,” notes Suki Terada Ports, a founder and Chair of the Development Committee. “It is amazing how APICHA has turned our mid-1980 dreams of being able to help our community into what we now know as our one-stop shop of HIV services from prevention to a comprehensive HIV/AIDS health clinic, the only one of its kind in the U.S. There are so many people and organizations we have to thank for their significant contributions which have helped us to get this far.”

Published by the Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Inc. (APICHA), a non-profit organization providing HIV/AIDS related services, including primary care, counseling and testing, prevention education, food and nutrition, and other support services for the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, especially people living with HIV/AIDS in New York City.
Update: HIV and STI among A&PIs
By Melissa S. Nibungco, Development Associate/Grants Writer

Recent epidemiological data from both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (NYCDOHMH) highlight the need for HIV primary prevention services—especially among A&PI men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2004, a large proportion of A&PI MSM were often not engaging in HIV prevention activities (115.4%). In addition, only 31% of A&PI MSM have ever been tested for HIV, and over 40% of those newly diagnosed are not in care within 3 months of diagnosis.2

When we examine rates of sexually transmitted infections, the picture is not quite as clear. Analysis of data from the NYCDOHMH, Bureau of Sexually Transmitted Diseases is made difficult by limitations within the data set.3 Approximately 50% of gonorrhea and Chlamydia cases, and 33-50% of syphilis cases are missing race/ethnicity data. What is important to point out is that A&PI syphilis case rates are on the increase.

A&PI syphilis case rates are on the increase

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1. Please note that due to the small numbers of Asian/Pacific Islander MSM and the resultant wide confidence intervals (95% CI; 5.0-19.6) around point estimates, the rate of increase in this subpopulation should be interpreted with caution. CDC. “Trends in HIV/AIDS Diagnoses Among Men who Have Sex with Men, 33 States, 2001-2006.” Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) 57(25), 2008, pp. 681-686. Available online at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/mmwr/mmwr5725a2.htm


5. Data from customized report received on January 30, 2008. Limitations indicated by Julia Schlinitz, MD of the NYCDOHMH Bureau of STD Control

Client Navigation Project
By Joey Alkma, CTR Program Manager, and Jarron Magallanes, MSM Project Coordinator

In March this year funding for APICHA’s Client Navigation Project was renewed by DOHMH/ Public Health Services as part of the New York City Council Committees of Color (NYC-CDCH) Initiative. The purpose of the grant is to enhance APICHA’s existing HIV prevention programs. The program was first implemented in 2007 with a grant of $108,163. This year the award was reduced to $54,417 because of the number of grantors.

As a result of the enhancement monies, APICHA staff was able to increase the frequency of outreach sessions conducted at various venues where MSM convene from once a week to three or four times a week. Condoms and HIV prevention materials were provided to over 2,776 individuals in two months. At the end of the grant period on June 30, 2008, this number is expected to go up an additional 4,000. Although this funding is for a very short time period, it provided much needed support for our outreach services that are no longer funded by the city’s Health Department.

APICHA’s Counseling, Testing & Referrals and Prevention Units collaborate to implement the project. Due to the funding cutback, for the current grant period, the NYCDOCHMH funds are dedicated to hiring of additional peers who are instrumental in recruiting clients to access services at APICHA’s off-site events. HIV testing, syphilis screening, gonnorrhea and Chlamydia tests, Hepatitis A and B vaccinations as well as smoking cessation patches are provided at those events. APICHA thus far has participated in the Asian Pacific American Heritage Festival, Philippine Independence Day Parade, and the Pride events in Brooklyn and Queens. At each event, a mobile van was provided. As we are enhancing confidentiality and increase the comfort level of both clients and staff, rental expenses for the van were funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Multi-session program which enhances the skills of the staff and clients in HIV prevention messages. The stories illustrate stages of change that individuals go through as they become familiar with the nature of the intervention. In addition, at different times during the intervention for HIV and STD, two role model stories were used “It’s a Start” has been produced since the program began three years ago, over 600 young people have been reached. It has also motivated young people to get tested and become even more involved in APICHA’s activities, including being part of APICHA’s contingent in AIDS WALK.

Keeping the Youth ‘Street Smart’ and Healthy
By Larry Tantay, Community Health Education Coordinator

The smell of food and the sound of raucous laughter fill the room. About ten young Asians sit around a table discussing the images of Asians in the magazines they are reading. There aren’t many to discuss. In one magazine – queer and based in New Jersey – the only photo of Asian people are three workers in fast food. In another, a large round hat that obscures their faces. In some of the Asian fashion magazines, there are more White faces than Asian. “For queer Asian youth who read these magazines, what is this doing for their self-esteem and their feelings about their own bodies?” one of the Youth Leaders asks. This is just one topic among many that are covered every Friday during EquAsian.

EquAsian is a social support group for queer Asian youth – aged 22 and younger – in NYC. Many other youth groups in NYC seem to focus on either being gay or being Asian but not both. The end result is that queer Asian youth are alienated from both sides. It is one of the evidence-based behavioral intervention models approved for use in NYC.

Community PROMISE in the Making
By Diana Roygulchareon, Women and Youth Program Manager

In 2005, the Young Peoples Project (YPP) embarked on a new way of tackling HIV prevention among young people living in New York City. This approach is known as Community PROMISE, which stands for Peers Reaching Out and Modeling Intervention Strategies. A part of the CDC-approved cumbiforum, Diffusion of Effective Behavioral Interventions (DEBI), Community PROMISE uses role models and Montessori Webbly, Report (MMWR) 57(25), 2008, pp. 681-686. Available online at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/mmwr/mmwr5725a2.htm

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Implementing Community PROMISE typically involves at least 3 full time staff members. However, with limited funding available to APICHA, we are making do with less: one intern, one part time peer educator, and 1 as the full time staff responsible for coordinating and implementing the intervention activities.

The tasks we have to do include a process called community identification (CID) through which we find out where young people are located geographically and where they are at in terms of HIV/STD risk behaviors. And they keep themselves safe. Which risky...
Recent economic forecasts have dashed hopes the country’s economic woes will go away soon. This climate has already set off new rounds of budget cuts from the White House to City Hall. APICHA has already received notices of 2% cuts for all its federal contracts. These contracts fund our HIV primary care services, counseling and testing, and the prevention program for young men who have sex with men. These cuts come on top of flat funding that has been imposed over the years. The New York State AIDS Institute has implemented across-the-board cuts for Fiscal Year 2008; we received a 6% decrease in our Multi-Ser- vice Agencies/Community Development Initiative contract.

As we go to press, we find that the outlook for New York City is even worse. Several cuts have been proposed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, includ- ing a 14% cut in HIV funding. Although the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene does not currently fund any of our prevention programs, we were hopeful there would be new opportunities for funding for such programs in the coming fiscal year. The Mayor’s budget seems to have closed off any chance of getting new fund- ing for prevention. Unless the Mayor and the City Council manage to find the resources to fund HIV/AIDS work adequately, a bleak future is ahead for community-based organizations like APICHA, which often does not have an endowment that could provide cushion from economic downturns. Our challenge is to weather the economic cri- sis without permanently damaging our fragile in- frastructure. Like it or not HIV/AIDS services are needed especially during economic downturns. As the disappointing news that no vaccine for AIDS is in sight we have no choice but to persevere. In this issue of APICHA News, we bring you up to speed with what’s going on in our primary care clinic as well as our progress in delivering evidence-based prevention interventions. We also introduce relevant epidemiological data to help put in perspective our determination to sustain our programs. Finally, we share news about our new LGBT program and an update on our Gift of Caring Campaign. During this challenging time, the Gift of Caring Campaign must play a larger role in sustain- ing our programs and services. We also hope our policy makers will be judicious when considering future budget cuts, beyond the immediate situation. We call on all our supporters, and friends to help make sure this happens.

Riyo Mori, Miss Universe 2007, Takes a Public HIV Test
By Alci Alvarez, Community and Media Relations Manager

“As HIV testing is the only way to find out whether you have HIV or not, I hope that my public test- ing can influence people who have not had HIV testing before.” With these words, Miss Universe 2007 Riyo Mori brought HIV/AIDS awareness to the Asian and Pacific Islander communities in New York during World AIDS Day, December 1, 2007. The public testing event took place at APICHA’s Hall of Honor. Special guests were Andrea Minkov, senior advisor to New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn, LGBTT Community Liaison Jeremy Wilson also of New York City Council Speaker Christine Quinn’s Office, Morisungo Oscar Aquino of the Asian American Health Center, Venerable Beng Kiong of En Temple and Venerable Zhi Kong Yuan Zen Temple. Over fifty guests joined APICHA staff to mark the day.

Miss Mori acknowledged that this is the first time she took the test and added: “We need to work together and encourage people to reduce the taboo. Be proactive to learn more about HIV, and take the test in order to control the illness.”

As Miss Universe 2007, Miss Mori chose to ad- vocate for HIV/AIDS awareness especially among young people. She said she has always been in- terested in this area of work but needed to get proper information. The Miss Universe Organiza- tion partnered with APICHA to get mentoring for Miss Mori. The mentorship provided her with an overview of HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Asian com- munities of New York. To gain first hand experi- ence, Miss Mori spent one week working as a counselor conducted by APICHA peer educators in New York neighborhoods with large Asian populations. She also joined a session of the support group for Japa- nese speaking HIV+ clients, Kazuko Ko, case manager and facilitator of the support group, reported that the session felt like Miss Mori was part of the group.

“The clients shared how they felt when they first got diagnosed, how they are presently dealing with the challenges of HIV and surrounding health issues, and their current concerns relating to their jobs, other non-HIV medical issues, and relation- 

If You Build It, Will They [Continue to] Come?
V incent Inada, M.D., AAHIVS, Medical Director, APICHA HIV Primary Care Clinic

One of the challenges facing our clinic early in its history at our former site, 150 Lafay- ette Street, was to build it to meet the stan- dards of the New York State Department of Health. Now, after a year at our new site, 400 Broadway, we meet the same chal- lenges while continuing care to our 100+ patients. One of many concerns during the planning of our move to 400 Broadway was how this move might affect our patients and clients. In fact, we warned that the stress of this move would cause us to lose patients. After a year at 400 Broadway, we are glad to report that not only were we able to provide timely, uninterrupted care for our existing patients, but through the concerted efforts of APICHA staff including HIV testing counselors, case managers and clinic staff we were also able to bring HIV primary care to new patients in need of our care.

The challenges facing us now that we have settled into our new space include ensuring that our client-centered care is ac- cessible to patients in need of primary care. According to NYCDMMH, 40% of APICHA’s newly diagnosed are not in care within 3 months of diagnoses. Getting more APICHA’s to know their status is also very important. While our HIV Coun- seling and Testing program continues to provide free HIV testing for our community to be aware of their HIV status, APICHA’s Primary Care Clinic looks for ways to make our services accessible to more people in need of them. In 2008, APICHA teamed up with the New York City Health and Hos- pitals Corporation (the municipal hospital and health care system of New York) to provide more HIV testing through an innovative ef- fort to reach out to medical providers serv- ing areas in need of routine healthcare. Often, these provid- ers do not have the capacity to provide HIV tests or have adequate referral information regarding HIV care.

To help out with the project, APICHA cre- ated a multi-disciplinary team composed of staff from the Prevention Unit, Client Services, and the Primary Care Clinic to reach out to providers caring for our community’s patients to access and provide HIV testing. And if needed, expedi- ented referral into HIV primary care.

According to NYCDMMH, 40% of APICHA’s newly diagnosed with HIV or AIDS are not in care within 3 months of diagnoses. As many of you already know, from the results of APICHA’s 2006 Community Mapping Project and in our community seek out HIV testing from their general medical pro- viders (e.g., Internists, Family Practitioners, and Gynecologists), hopefully, by reaching out directly to medical providers, we can make a breakthrough in making more people aware of their HIV status and getting those who are infected into care as soon as possible.

We are also looking into other serious gaps in or barriers to care and info how APICHA can be in step with the healthcare reforms being implemented by New York State. A top priority for us is to find the re- sources to provide primary care services to our current pool of high risk, non-HIV infect- ed clients. Among our more than fifteen hundred clients, a large number have no health insurance or no access to care. An informal survey showed that two-thirds of respon- dents stated they want to access primary care with us. Other programs being con- sidered are expanded prophylaxis for people infected with tuberculosis (TB) or other infectious disease (STD) and outpatient mental health services.

Stay tuned for APICHA’s efforts toward improving health outcomes for our commu- nities.

< Do you know your HIV status?

Skilling Studies: Phlebotomy
By Yoshihiko Otake, HIV Testing Counselor

Can you draw blood? Yes, we can! APICHA is happy to announce that three coun- sultors from the HIV Counseling, Testing and Re- ferral (CTR) Unit became certified phlebotomists last fall. Joe Almeida, Larriey Tany, and I complish a very intense training with MEDEXX which covered vascular anatomy, universal precautions, and different phlebotomy techniques. We actually practiced on each other as a mock blood draw. In the end, we acquired skill in phlebotomy, the CTR staff is now providing free syphilis testing by blood drawing to complement the agency’s rapid HIV testing. This is part of APICHA’s response to the current syphil- is epidemic in New York City. More people have been diagnosed with syphilis since 2000 see according to public health reports.

Syphilis is one of the most common sexually transmitted diseases (STD), especially among men who have sex with men (MSM). Although syphilis is a curable but proper treatment, it is highly infectious and the symptoms are not prof- use. Syphilis is known as a bacterial infection that is transmitted through sexual intercourse and gives body rashes and, in many cases, changes or lesions on the genital area. Although some people do not get immediate symptoms, red dot- like rash on your hands and feet also signs of syphilis.

After the training, our confidence in phlebot- omy was strengthened by Medical Director Dr. Victor Inada. We are able to guide us to be better phlebotomists. We are now pro- viding tests for HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea and Chla- mydia Mondays through Fridays. Call our toll-free number at 1-888-APICHA (1-888-274-2429) to make an appointment.
New Project: Program Connect

Since its founding, APICHA has been a safe space for API& Asian, gay, bisexual, trans- gender, queer/questioning and intersex (LGBTQI) individuals, their families and communi- ties. Over the years, we recognized the need for services that could address the unique needs, beyond HIV, of the API& LGBTQI com- munity. In May 2008, we received great news that APICHA’s proposal to the NYS Department of Health, Division of Family Health, Center for Community Health, Bureau of Child and Adoles- cent Health was awarded a 5-year grant. Project Connect consists of a skills building workshop, mentorship program, community awareness campaign, and service provider trainings.

APICHA Website Gets a Makeover

On January 15, 2008 APICHA’s website, apicha.org, took on a new look, the first make- over since it was launched in 2001. The rede- sign reflects the organization’s growth and improve how information on HIV/AIDS is communicated to the general public. We streamlined the look and structure of the website, so that viewers can find the information they are looking for as quickly as possible. APICHA staff can also easily update pages to provide new information to clients as well as reflect the expanding services APICHA offers.

Executive Director Theresa R. Rodriguez stressed the importance of immediate access to information: “HIV infection is destroying communities of color, including our own API& communities. We need to lead the way in get- ting information on how to prevent the spread of this infectious disease and where to receive the best possible care and treatment if they are HIV positive.”

Director of Programs Yumiko Fukuda pointed out that the new website for the API& is “easy to navigate by both clients and people in the com- munity.” The highlight of the new structure is APICHA’s integrated model of services. Those who log on will find warm and soothing floral images and tabs for the following basic information: “I want to learn how to pro- tect myself from HIV/AIDS”, “How can’t get HIV counseling and testing”, and “I am HIV+”.

Gift of Caring Update

With lead grants from an anonymous private foundation and from the New York State AIDS Institute, APICHA’s Gift of Caring Campaign has received over $400,000 in cash and pledg- es. The campaign was established in Septem- ber 2006 to raise $1.6 million toward operating costs associated with APICHA’s move to 400 Broadway and additional outfitting costs. The campaign has raised $172,000 since our kick- off report in APICHA News last summer. Gifts came from various sources, including Board and staff initiated events. In October 2007 a benefit was held at Grand Harmony which raised over $30,000 and a farewell party for former CTR Project Manager Bria Bemis raised close to $3,000. Staff, peers and their friends dedicated the 2007 AIDS Walk pro- ceeds of $5,230 to the campaign.

The last two years have been quite challeng- ing for APICHA. Aside from managing program changes, we had to deal with the unanticipated move. After a frantic search for a new space and construction we managed to move our op- erations into 400 Broadway. Although it took awhile to settle into our new space, we have been providing services, keeping in mind that our move should not become a barrier to cli- ents needing care. In fact we have made major progress in integrating our services that will make our client-centered care a reality. There are a number of people who helped us through the last two difficult years. We want to take this opportunity to acknowledge their support.

Grants and Contracts

Grants and Gifts Make Our Programs Go Round

New York University Chinese Students Society

New York City Council Member John Liu back, far left posed for APICHA News with some of the guests at the 18th Anniversary event.

Grants and Contracts

New York City Council Member John Liu back, far left posed for APICHA News with some of the guests at the 18th Anniversary event.
Keeping the Youth ‘Street Smart’ and Healthy (continued from page 1)

by Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
vention-funded programs.

The sessions – again for YMSM under the age of 25 – provide not only practical and technical skills and information regarding HIV risk reduction, but they also include activities aimed to build the self-efficacy of the partici-
ants and empower them in the realization of how they can begin to make their own deci-
sions. The program also includes an individual counseling session with the program coordina-
tor to personalize the lessons of Street SMART for each participant. Although the program was originally tailored for homeless and runaway youth, APICHA saw how the program could be adapted to successfully reach the YMSM Project’s target population through its highly empowering approach to behavior change. The first adaptation addressed an issue within the original structure of Street SMART which had participants graduate from the pro-
gram without any follow up. With the second adaptation we added a 3-month minimum successful participation in the food pantry program. Before they apply for food vouchers, they must pass a nutritional quiz administered by Mr. Lee. Although we focus on nutritional education, we often find that many of our clients depend on our food pantry as their primary source of nutritious food due to their limited income. Because of funding limitations clients are re-
quired to graduate from the program after 18 months. During that period they would have gone through the training curriculum and a 3-
month nutritional monitoring that tests clients’ abilities to utilize skills learned from the pro-
gram. Clients who have difficulty accessing an alternative source of nutritious meals during the monitoring period are referred to other or-
ganizations that also provide meals and food services. At graduation clients are expected to make wiser decisions about grocery purchase and how to balance a nutritional diet following the principle of “eating well, living well” and within a budget. For their issues (i.e. gender and sexual identity and stress from various environmental fac-
tors, such as school and work) they can ask questions and access HIV testing counseling services. Recruiting possible participants for the work-
shops has been difficult. Conflictic orientations – with school and work – make it challenging for them to set aside time to attend. However, we’ve tried to mitigate this by offering three separate cycles of workshops throughout the year so if a participant has to miss a session, he can make it up later on.

Street SMART participants have been great-
ly affected by the program. One participant has now become a regular member of EquAsian and many of the participants have become HIV+ and are currently enrolled in the program after students left for summer vaca-
tion. We learned later from an expert on Commu-
nity PROMISE that the identification of a role model story was the result of skipping certain steps such as the stagi-
ing of the creation of a role model story and who would help distribute the role model stories. Skipping steps was the team’s attempt to continue the project after students left for summer vaca-
tion. We learned from the CDC, we learned how
to rework our plans.

Indeed, the Community PROMISE project is a huge success, a bit overwhelming,” exclaims Ly.

But our team is upbeat. The program offers a lot of valuable experiences interacting with the community and pears on matters concerning HIV/STI prevention. We refined our strategy and now eighteen stagiing sessions have been completed and are in the interview process from which we expect to develop 2 role model stories per interview.

One participant also noted how a workshop exercise really helped him understand the chain of HIV infection....
May: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Executive Director Theresae R. Rodriguez was a panelist at a discussion on Asian Pacific American women and leadership held on May 13, 2008 marking the 2008 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. The other speakers were: Dr. Leena Doshi, President and Founder of Doshi Diagnostics Imaging Services; Kumbak Kaye Min, President of YWCA of Queens and Vice President of Capital One Bank; and Michelle Yu, Sports Reporter with NY 1 Time-Warner Cable Television. Six Leadership Awards were also presented to students following the discussion. The event was sponsored by New York City Council Speaker Christine C. Quinn with Council Member John Liu, Vincent J. Gentile, Alan J. Benson, Sara M. Gonzalez, Robert Jackson, and the Black, Latino and Asian Caucus.

Ms. Rodriguez traced her involvement in community activism during the 1970s through the 1990s when she was a volunteer organizer in the Filipino-American community. Disenfranchisement and political and human rights were dominant issues of the time, particularly around the struggles for restoration of democracy in the Philippines. The country was under martial rule from 1972 to 1986. “Living, working and organizing in the U.S. for close to two decades had an impact on my decision on whether to return to the Philippines or to stay in the United States,” she said. The decision to stay led her to explore the not-for-profit world and eventually taking the leadership in APICHA. She gave the audience a taste of the responsibilities of running an organization, from adhering to the mission and vision to keeping the programs running. “There are obligations that must take precedence over our individual agenda. By accepting non-profit status, those of us who manage non-profit organizations become responsible to the government as trustees or stewards of people’s money,” she concluded.

Testimony Before NYC City Council

The New York City Council Health Committee held a hearing on May 11, 2008 to address the crisis in the MSM of color communities. Larry Tantay, Community Health Education Coordinator, responded to the request for comments from the Council on behalf of APICHA.

On behalf of my East Asian, South Asian, South East Asian, and Pacific Islander brothers and sisters, I am here to testify to the fact that our government is neglecting us. The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene currently does not fund any prevention services for Asian and Pacific Islander Men Who Have Sex with Men. In fact there is no funding through the Department for HIV prevention services for Asians and Pacific Islanders at all. In the face of a 115% increase in HIV infection for Asian and Pacific Islander Men who Have Sex with Men (APIMS), this neglect is unacceptable. To the Honorable Joel Rivera and Council Members, and members of the Emergen- cy Response for MSM of Color Coalition, thank you for this opportunity to be heard.

My name is Larry Tantay, and I work for the Asian and Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, APICHA. Our mission is to end stigma on HIV/AIDS and those affected by it, to prevent the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the Asian and Pacific Islander communities, and to provide care and treatment for APIs living with HIV/AIDS and their families. APICHA is one of the 15 members of the Emergency Response for MSM of Color Coalition. I work with four young API gay men to reach out to the thousands of gay, bisexual, queer, and questioning Asian and Pacific Islander teens in New York City. But I first started my tenure as APICHAS client and peer educator. Growing up in a strict Filipino Catholic household, it was hard for me to express myself at all, let alone my sexual orientation. I always felt like an outsider, constantly on the fringes of whichever school group or organization I joined. And it was this fear and rejection – this fringe mentality – that put me at risk. The longing for an intimate connection, for some understanding, led me to have unprotected sex – so I could feel the acceptance of my peers, feel close to someone. The need for that connection became more important than anything else – including my health – and that fact is not relegated to me. Since coming to APICHA –and being surrounded by people with whom I could identify, who could see my face and hear my story—I’ve witnessed the same fear and rejection I felt in the faces of young gay men we help.

Young gay and bisexual Asian and Pacific Islander men all over New York are being infected – from Chinatown to Little Manila, Flushing and Jackson Heights. We are all affected. Within this past year alone, over 21 year old Chinese gay male tested HIV-positive at our agency. Thankfully, we can still help him with medical care, alternative therapy, counseling, and case management. But how can we prevent the multitude of others from succumbing to this disease which is still rapidly engulfing the Asian and Pacific Islander community?

We need to revive HIV education and prevention services for adult men who have sex with men. We need a safe space where people can discuss these issues with their communities in Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Hindi, Bengali and more! We must restore outreach services and educational materials and add more peer educators to our team. For the community and society that by the wayside is there a place where people will truly accept them for their entire self – where they won’t have to choose which identity is more important to them. I call on the City Council to allocate funding, to repair the neglect the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene has already wrought upon my people. Honorable Joel Rivera and Council Members, I urge you to end this injustice and support this proposal made by the Emergency Response Coalition. Thank you for hearing us. May our efforts not be in vain.

June: Pride Month

On a bright and sunny day, APICHA staff were out in Jackson Heights, Queens to celebrate Pride. We offered HIV and syphilis testing in a mobile health van, free nicotine patches, and safer sex kits. The event was attended by the audience a taste of the responsibilities of running an organization, from adhering to the mission and vision to keeping the programs running. “There are obligations that must take precedence over our individual agenda. By accepting non-profit status, those of us who manage non-profit organizations become responsible to the government as trustees or stewards of people’s money,” she continued.

Continued on page 11

APICHA provided HIV testing, comprehensive STI screening (Chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis), free nicotine patches and safer sex kits. Our peer educators enthusiastically outreach all day while staff provided 78 HIV tests, 65 Chlamydia and gonorrhea, and over 50 syphilis screenings.

At the NYC Pride march, staff, peers, clients, and volunteers will be joining the march and will distribute safe sex kits.

Honor from NYSDOH AIDS Institute

APICHA was presented the 2007 Quality of Care Award for Achievement in Quality Improvement Activities, for developing an innovative quality improvement program and participation in the Part C Learning Network. The ceremony was held on December 13, 2007 at St. John’s University in New York City. Dr. Victor Inada, head of the quality improvement team received the award on APICHA’s behalf.

Two mobile health vans picked up staff and supplies at 8:30 in the morning on June 14 and headed to Park Slope, Brooklyn. Theresae R. Rodriguez, Executive Director, was there to greet clients, staff, peers and volunteers.

In and Around Our Communities
Renewal of Old Friendship

Dr. David Ho, Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center visited APICHA on March 18. The visit in a sense was a renewal of an old friendship. Dr. Ho has been acquainted with APICHA. He was an honoree at APICHA’s 1998 “Other No More” gala, a tribute to his genius in scientific achievement. APICHA’s staff led by Executive Director Therese R. Rodriguez and Medical Director Dr. Victor Inada, and APICHA Board members Suki Terada Ports, Dr. Mars Custodio, Dr. John Chin, and Sherida David hosted the visit. Dr. Ho learned for the first time the different aspects of our “one-stop shop” model of community-based HIV/AIDS care which now include free, rapid HIV testing and HIV Primary Medical Care to the community. He was particularly interested in APICHA’s peer-led outreach to young persons at risk for HIV infection.

Speaker Quinn’s Reps Visit APICHA

Jeremy M. Wilson, LGBT and HIV/AIDS Community Liaison; Megan Annitto, Counsel to the Committee Youth; and Jennifer Cult, Policy Analyst, on May 30, represented NYC Council Speaker Christine Quinn at a roundtable discussion with staff, peers, and volunteers of APICHA’s Young People’s Project and Young MSM Project. Our young people described how they do outreach and peer-to-peer networking. They also pointed to the lack of comprehensive sexual health education in schools. When asked by the guests what they thought about fear and the notion of HIV prevention fatigue, a few spoke eloquently that these are not relevant to A&PI youth since lack of information is their greatest problem. Most if not all present in the room nodded in agreement.

Word-of-Mouth

Indonesian Consul General Madame Trie Mulyani came to visit APICHA on December 12 to commemorate World AIDS Day. She brought along Mrs. Luky Hadibrata, who came on behalf of the General Manager of Bank of Indonesia, and their respective staff members. The visit was inspired by an APICHA client who had spoken to her about APICHA’s services. Madame Mulyani wanted to see the space, and to get to know our programs and services. The 18-member visiting group was hosted by Ms. Rodriguez and several APICHA staff members who made presentations about their respective programs and gave a tour of the facility.

“I appreciate all you have done,” Madame Mulyani opened her remarks. She said that people who are infected with HIV are part of us. “One thing they really need is attention.” The conversation with staff was dynamic as the guests asked questions about HIV prevention in NYC’s high schools, approaches to sex education and the use of condoms. During the tour, Madame Mulyani noted that the facility is so clean. The visit was capped by a presentation of gifts (in cash, painting, and gift bags) from both the government of Indonesia and the Bank of Indonesia as well as from Madame Mulyani personally.

Visitors from Kazakhstan

Medical Officers from the Kazakh Ministry of Health on December 3, 2007 spent part of their...