APICHA Accommodates More Patients

Asians & Pacific Islanders and LGBT Receive the Support of Comprehensive Services

In just one year since the official opening of its medical home, APICHA has enrolled 400 new general primary care patients while the HIV primary care clinic has seen a 20% increase during the same period. The launch of this patient-centered medical home, with its progressively broadening range of programs and services, was fueled by the escalating needs of New York City’s Asian and Pacific Islander (A&Pi) and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) populations. While study after study emphasizes the alarming and complex barriers preventing these disenfranchised groups from equal access to health care, APICHA has been facing this reality on their behalf daily for over two decades.

A Haven to Come Home To

Even as it assumes more patient coverage, APICHA adheres to its dedication to HIV related services. Along with other demographic groups, the number of people living with HIV/AIDS undergoing treatment also continues to rise. In his feature story on the APICHA Medical Home launch for the Gay City News, Paul Schindler pointed out, “AIDS services groups see a strong link between discrimination and lack of social and economic support and HIV risk”. That discrimination is also why HIV risk can be neglected by heterosexuals who may erroneously associate it as solely an LGBT problem, as exemplified in cases profiled below. But with APICHA’s more proactive outreach programs in HIV and STD testing, disparate groups of people now realize the importance of knowing their health status.

David, originally from Shenzhen, China and now an accountant in New York, was looking forward to a bright future with his fiancée. He did not imagine that he was in any way susceptible to HIV. But when he experienced a dramatically abrupt weight loss followed by severe fever, he went into an emergency room. To his surprise, he received a positive HIV test result. Overwhelmed by all its implications, he turned to APICHA for help. With sympathetic yet thorough counseling, David gradually came to terms with his situation and was eventually able to take the consequent steps of dealing with it. His APICHA HIV specialist educated him on HIV, his prescribed medication, as well as the importance of adhering to the regimen. He then brought his fiancée into the process, admitting his sexual history to her, and enabling them to move forward as a couple. They’ve since been carefully advised on how they can manage David’s condition, prevent any sexually-transmitted disease and safely start a family together.

Through a scrupulously consolidated system, APICHA patients are ushered through each step of their appropriate testing, diagnosis and treatment course with genuine compassion and concern. And that’s exactly what 22-year old Ayako, discovered when she arrived at APICHA with symptoms of a sexually-transmitted disease. An art student originally from Tokyo, Ayako’s youth and propensity for clubbing had led her to some risky behavior and she was afraid. But she had mustered the courage to come to APICHA, having heard of the agency’s sympathetic handling of cases such as hers. Her initial apprehension and discomfort with the thoroughness of the physical examination were alleviated by the sincerity of the APICHA care provider, who explained that she had a form of human papillomavirus or HPV. She was then placed under regular monitoring to ensure that the HPV would not lead to cancer.

Each patient at APICHA is managed with non-judgmental recognition of human conditions and a purely individualized approach to care. Such a delicate handling was required when 34-year old graduate student James came into APICHA. Already burdened by stress from his graduate studies, James, who relocated here from California, was also beset by a deepening sense of low self-worth. He associated each rejection from a man he would approach for a date as an indictment of what he perceived was the loss of his youth and appeal. James would then use crystal methamphetamine as a way to feel invincible and attractive. But once the stimulant wore off, he would experience severe depression and guilt for having squandered money and time that could’ve been allotted to studying.

At APICHA, his medical provider expressed concern that reduced inhibition associated with the use of the drug could contribute to risky sexual behavior and suggested that James attend a group for crystal meth users. Unfortunately, James refused to admit to having a substance abuse problem and was reluctant to discuss any dangerous situation in which he was possibly placing himself.
APICHA's programs and services are made possible by the following grants, contracts, and the generous contributions of fund, time, and expertise from public and private individuals. On behalf of the vast number of API+, LGBT, and the people of New York City who receive the help they most desperately need, our sincere appreciation goes to:

**GOVERNMENT**
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- HIV Prevention
- HIV Prevention
- Young men of color who have sex with men
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Outpatient Early Intervention Services (HIV)

**New York State Government**
- Health, AIDS, and Income
- Children
- Food and Nutrition for PLWHA
- Foundation
- Community of Color Initiative
- Peer Intervention
- Peer Services
- Peer Services/IV
- HIV Initiative
- Volunteer Services
- Development

**New York State Department of Health, COBRA**
- Case Management
- New York State Program for Adults with AIDS
- Behavioral Health Authority
- HEAL NY-5

**New York State Legislature**
- Community Capital Assistance Program
- Housing
- New York City Community Board
- Community Board
- American Councils
- Asian American Federation
- Filipino National Center of Excellence

**INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS AND GIFTS**
- $50,000 and up
- H. van Amerongen Foundation
- The Paul Rapsoot Foundation
- CAF/Queer Insiatute
- New York City AIDS Foundat
- Community Trust
- $10,000 and up
- Agar-Bernard Foundation
- $5,000 and up
- Astor Medical Group LLC
- $1,000 and up
- Broadway Cares/Equity Funds AIDS Projects Assistance Coalition for Children and Youth
- $500 and up
- The Actors Fund
- National Council of Technology Foundation
- Combined Federal Campaign
- New York University Health Promotion & Prevention Research Center
- New Star Fund

**CORPORATE MATCHING GIFTS**
- American Express
- Gold Sachs & Co.
- KPMG
- Pfizer Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund

**INDIVIDUAL GIFTS**
- $15,000
- Jingle Z. Drott
- $2,000 and up
- John John Manlutac
- Cindy Chan Delano
- John Chin, Ph. D.
- Mark Siemans, R.N.
- $1,000 and up
- Patricia Barone
- Christine Chung
- Sherdar David
- Linet Martinez
- Ciuffo
- Lydia W. Dottin
- Hudson Healthcare
- Mark E. Margarita, Esq.
- Theresa R. Rodriguez
- $500 and up
- William A. Cook, M.D.
- Eliza Ng, M.D.
- Energy League
- Nicky, M.D.
- Philip Donoghue, M.D.
- John-John Manlutac
- Maria Zenaida Marin
- Henry & Ruko: Montague
- Stephanie Ormundo
- Robert J. Powers
- Joseph Rosario
- Nestina & Virginia
- Amelia & Rolando
- Sebastian
- Rajat Shivukar
- Philip B. Spivey, M.D.
- Eliza Tapea
- Nenita & Veronica
- Allen A. Thompson
- Naveen Vasantha
- Shu-Hu Wu
- Frances YU

**HEALTH: Leading the Way to Effective Hepatitis B Treatment Solutions**

APICHA has adopted a progressive method in its ongoing efforts to combat Hepatitis B in its: 

- Infection
- Transmission
- Support from health care providers

APICHA offers a comprehensive approach with an eye towards curing the infection in certain groups of patients. Whenever appropriate, he’s placing patients on interferon, the same injection medication used to treat Hepatitis C.

APICHA is one of very few independent medical facilities that are on par with larger state-of-the-art hospital-based facilities which have implemented this standard of care.

At the forefront of dealing with HIV/AIDS, STDs and hepatitis treatment, APICHA is ideally positioned with highly trained medical professionals and staff already able to administer this aggressive approach as they confront Hepatitis B infections on an increasing basis.

**Core Support**

APICHA’s multi-faceted treatment strategy continues to emerge, advances in the understanding of the differences between a curative versus a suppressive approach have become more evident.

The previously preferred first line treatment was to administer an oral medication that suppresses Hepatitis B virus activity. But this approach has often resulted in the virus rebounding as well as becoming resistant to the medication.

According to Dr. Murayama, the curative approach using interferon, a naturally-occurring protein in the human body that’s released when an infection occurs, is most effective in young people with normal liver function tests. He says, “it helps prevent the hepatitis virus from infecting new cells and boosts the immune system’s ability to fight the virus. The course of treatment is 48 weeks with predictable side effects. Select patients show a durable response rate of up to 80-90% have proven success rates significantly higher among those who are co-infected with HIV, this approach offers an overall improvement in the health status of the patients. Interferon has proven to be not only a more viable option but ultimately a more effective treatment when the goal is cure.”

He adds, “At APICHA, where we often deal with patients who may also be co-infected with HIV, we consider the entire spectrum of patient care from treatment efficacy, safety, disease monitoring and to method of management in a holistic and financial burden.” Under Dr. Murayama’s guidance, developing the latest and most appropriate treatment methods has made APICHA among the most highly regarded and reliable medical facilities in its field.

**Prevention is Still the Best Choice**

For the majority of those infected with chronic Hepatitis B, symptoms are rarely apparent until the disease may have already caused critical damage to the liver. The highest risk group for the development of chronic hepatitis B, the likelihood of eventually developing complications including liver cancer or cirrhosis is significantly higher in Asian Americans, the highest rate among any group of Americans. Studies further reflect that nearly 10% of those who have been infected with chronic hepatitis B are co-infected with Hepatitis C.
Several times, he canceled at the last minute the appointment for meth addiction treatment. Eventually, he returned to APICHA one day, admitting with an anguish to his medical provider that one of his dealers had stolen his laptop. A good portion of the research materials he had labored for so long to gather. At present, though, he still refuses any referral to meth addiction treatment, James is mired in a vicious cycle of continued mental health counseling at APICHA.

Mental Health in the Pursuit of Overall Well Being Counseling has always been an important part of helping patients deal with HIV testing whether it results in a negative or positive outcome. To achieve better health outcomes, developing an ongoing dialogue with patients regarding their treatment options is crucial. But continued advances in all areas of medical practice also undeniably indicate that addressing a patient’s overall well-being invariably contributes to the success of treatment regiments. Mental as well as emotional states, from predispositions to addiction, chemical imbalances, acute and chronic traumas and many others are intricately associated with certain afflictions. To alleviate these ancillary causes, arrive at a complete picture, and provide the patient with the right treatment, APICHA has integrated mental health services into primary care. Among the many recipients of this important mental health program, is Malay, a 37 year old woman formerly from Myanmar who came to APICHA seeking help for a persistent lack of sleep and insomnia aggravated by a growing inability to get out of bed in the mornings. As the eldest, she had always looked after everyone else in her family and had therefore felt obligated to immigrate to the United States in order to give for them after she had suffered from financial setbacks. Regrettably the limits of her resources did not allow for her siblings to attend college and this weighed heavily on her. With the help of APICHA, her mental health provider was able to admit her to a hospital where they adjusted his medication regimen to compensate for his chemical imbalance. Using a standardized questionnaire that screens for mental health problems, patients who are determined to have mental health needs are assessed by a mental health professional or hospital Worker who can provide onsite short-term therapy. Aside from several available AMH language-specific support groups, those who may require more intensive psychotherapy, psychiatric or substance abuse treatments are placed with partner agencies that provide suitable treatment including the Asian Mental Health Program at Hamilton-Madison House and the Lucy A. Wick Clinic Post-Graduate Center for Mental Health. Ongoing evaluations are conducted during all appointments for patients with substance abuse problems and when necessary patients may be referred to either partner Health House and Hamilton-Madison House.

Additional Health Support A registered dietician with certification as a diabetes educator is available to oversee all diabetic patients and APICHA provides for non-insulin patients to further support their treatment and healing with nutrition and proper diet. Low income HIV-infected patients may also access APICHA’s Food and Nutrition Program, which is a highly distinguished reputation for community advocacy and medical outreach to Asian and Pacific Islander patients. This program is for patients by the New York State Department of Health AIDS Institute. Proper consideration is given to the patient’s culture and preferred cuisine. Supplemental nutrition seminars are held quarterly while those displaying elevated cholesterol or high blood pressure may access individual nutritional counseling.

For instance, when Kevin Lin, a 56 year old immigrant from the Fujian province in China, came to APICHA, she had been experiencing alternation episodes of sleep, and numbness in her feet. At first, her APICHA mental health counselor pointed out to her that these signs of depression were compromising her health. Through a series of regular short-term psychotherapy sessions at APICHA, the patient learned to relax and name the feelings she had often been suppressing since the APICHA of the guilt she had been harboring and move on with her life with a more positive outlook. While mentally identified in 39 year old Taiwanese native Ken, who was diagnosed with bipolar illness, a condition held in check as long as he followed his medication regimen. But when an inconsistent work schedule forced the restaurant manager forced him to skip his medication, his behavior became increasingly erratic, from cavalierly treating his restaurant patrons to free drinks and running up extravagant credit card bills purchasing electronics to calling up friends in the middle of the night. Once Ken visited APICHA, his mental health provider was able to admit him to a hospital where they adjusted his medication regimen to compensate for his chemical imbalance. Using a standardized questionnaire that screens for mental health problems, patients who are determined to have mental health needs are assessed by a mental health professional or hospital Worker who can provide onsite short-term therapy. Aside from several available AMH language-specific support groups, those who may require more intensive psychotherapy, psychiatric or substance abuse treatments are placed with partner agencies that provide suitable treatment including the Asian Mental Health Program at Hamilton-Madison House and the Lucy A. Wick Clinic Post-Graduate Center for Mental Health. Ongoing evaluations are conducted during all appointments for patients with substance abuse problems and when necessary patients may be referred to either partner Greenhouse House or Hamilton-Madison House.

The mere presence of APICHA and clinics such as Dr. Eng’s presents Asians and Pacific Islander people with a safe haven to turn to with their health care.

Bowery and Little Italy to Chinatown has always been home to marginalized populations. Location, Location, Location Current US Census data shows that there are approximately 85,000-150,000 people who live in Chinatown. Majority are said to be Asian de-

In the 1990s, 30% of them, according to The American Federation, subsist below the poverty line compared with 21% percent of those who live in other parts of the city. In a 2004 report, The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene cities unhealthy living conditions and the liabil-

In 1980’s the ten most masses boiled hared in consecutive waves of Italian, Jewish, Irish and German people who have all undergone their turns as the target of popular di-

Dr. Eng is making progress through continued men-

His phase was cleared from HIV but was diagnosed with
diabetes, high cholesterol, and spinal stenosis. His diab-

Dr. Eng is especially sympathetic to
to immigrate to the United States in order to give for them after she had suffered from financial setbacks. Regrettably the limits of her resources did not allow for her siblings to attend college and this weighed heavily on her. With the help of APICHA, her mental health provider was able to admit her to a hospital where they adjusted his medication regimen to compensate for his chemical imbalance. Using a standardized questionnaire that screens for mental health problems, patients who are determined to have mental health needs are assessed by a mental health professional or hospital Worker who can provide onsite short-term therapy. Aside from several available AMH language-specific support groups, those who may require more intensive psychotherapy, psychiatric or substance abuse treatments are placed with partner agencies that provide suitable treatment including the Asian Mental Health Program at Hamilton-Madison House and the Lucy A. Wick Clinic Post-Graduate Center for Mental Health. Ongoing evaluations are conducted during all appointments for patients with substance abuse problems and when necessary patients may be referred to either partner Greenhouse House or Hamilton-Madison House.

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APICHA NEWS

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NEWS

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A Thousand and One Champions” Benefit Gala Commemorates the Past, Celebrates the Present and Focuses on the Future

The city’s most prominent business community leaders, policy makers, medical practitioners, local celebrities and a multitude of other valued supporters gathered at the Grand Hyatt Hotel last Fall to join APICHA for its annual Benefit Gala. “A Thousand and One Champions”, Celebrating 21 years of Service to the Asian & Pacific Islander and LGBT communities, the event also marked a significant juncture for the organization in its development as a medical home and its bid to be designated as a federally qualified health center (FQHC).

Champions One and All

A highlight of the evening was the tribute to four heroes representing APICHA’s countless patrons – the Honorable Richard Gottfried of the New York State Assembly; Grace Lyu Volckhausen, president of the Tiger Baron Foundation; multi-award winning actor BD Wong, famed star of film, television and stage; honoree Jorge Ortoll, executive director of the Ma-Yi Theater Company. They were cited not only for their years of significant individual contributions but also for their overall impact in the larger scope of social justice. Hon. Gottfried has actively fought for important legislation in health care for women, uninsured people and those living with HIV/AIDS. Ms. Volckhausen, who serves on the NYC Commission on Human Rights, was among the pioneers in the fight against HIV and has been instrumental in guiding APICHA’s continuing growth. Mr. Wong has been a very visible and vocal advocate for the community in many capacities. And Mr. Ortoll has been responsible for creating vital community projects while reflecting important cultural issues through the theater.

During his acceptance speech, Mr. Ortoll remarked on how he had woken up that morning to an otherwise ordinary day. The exceptions were his being recognized by his peers and how the previous night he had been riveted to his television watching the historic rescue of the Chilean miners following ten weeks of being entombed in an underground chamber. “This,” he said, “is what APICHA does – they rescue people, one by one, pulling them out of the darkness.” He expounded on the importance of APICHA and the gratification of having partnered with the agency on many projects through the years via his Ma-Yi Theater. WDNY-TV reporter and gala master of ceremonies, Arthur Ch’ien; Board Treasurer Sheridan Standish; Board Member Sumittha Kwon; Board Nomination Committee chair, Mary Cristodolo, M.D.; Development Committee Chair of the Board, Therese Rodriguez; APICHA founder, former Board Member, Sue Tai; Board Member, Member Diane N.p., M.D.; Chief Executive Officer, Therese R. Rodriguez; Board Member Alex Chan, Esq.; Board Chair, John Chen; and Paul Huang, president of C.J. Huang Foundation.

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Mr. Wong, on the other hand, opened with a joke: “I’m not a doctor, but I play one on TV.” Perhaps most popularly known for his role as a forensic psychiatrist on NBC’s Law & Order SVU, he drew parallels between his life as an actor and the tumultuous changes APICHA has undergone in serving the A&PI and LGBT populations. Ultimately, he observed, APICHA proves that responsibility for one another goes beyond mere kinship and affects the lives of everyone.

A Call for Unity to Face Challenges

Amidst the festivities, equal considerations were given to recent achievements as well as the very future of APICHA itself. In her closing speech, APICHA chief executive officer Therese R. Rodriguez addressed the challenges ahead – not the least of which are declining public funding and the uphill climb toward official designation as a FQHC. “APICHA is an asset, not a threat to existing FQHCS,” she declared. “We need the support of FQHCS in our shared mission.”

The hon. Deborah Glick of the New York State Assembly for District 66, lauds APICHA for its singular focus in advocating HIV and sexual health-related services for Asian and Pacific Islanders and other communities of color.

Philippine Consul General Cecilia Rabong (LEFT) shows her support for APICHA and accepts the Community Service Award from APICHA Board Chair John J. Chin.

The Hon. Grace Meng of the New York State Assembly for District 62, praised the community-based HIV and primary care services of APICHA.
1. The epidemic is raging in the communities of color. Asian and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of new HIV infection among men of color. Asian and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of new HIV infection among men of color. The epidemic is raging in the communities of color. Asian and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of new HIV infection among men of color. Asian and Pacific Islanders have the highest rate of new HIV infection among men of color.

2. People living with HIV/AIDS are aging, living longer and afflicted with diseases that must be treated. People living with HIV/AIDS are aging, living longer and afflicted with diseases that must be treated. People living with HIV/AIDS are aging, living longer and afflicted with diseases that must be treated. People living with HIV/AIDS are aging, living longer and afflicted with diseases that must be treated.

3. A Federally Qualified Health Center Modifying Prerequisites To Becoming

4. Fighting For You – APICHA Intensifies Public Policy Advocacy

As a member of the New York State AIDS Advisory Council, Ms. Rodriguez also participated in the council’s Legislative Education Day. Together with fellow council members and other community advocates, she met with the state’s senators and assembly members, health and human services committees to seek support for prevention programs, specifically needle exchange programs and the reAuthorization of legislative member items and the funding for the AIDS Institute of the New York State Department of Health.

Ms. Pajaron, on the other hand, also joined fellow HIV/AIDS providers funded under AIDS Institute’s Community Development Initiative (CDI) to advocate for the restoration of the language in the state’s budget’s Aid to Localities initiative that exempts CDIs, Multi-Service Organizations (MSA) and Community Service Providers (CSP) from competitive bidding. The exemption would enable community-based and faith-based organizations to continue their HIV education and prevention services without diminishing their mission.

APICHA CEO Therese R. Rodriguez and Director of Development, Gertrudes Pajaron went to the state capitol in Albany to make a formal presentation before several different state legislators and their staff including Senator Tony Avella, the staff of Senators Malcolm Smith, John Sampson, and Thomas Duane as well as Assembly representatives Michael DenDekker, Richard Gottfried, and Grace Meng. A focal issue was the recent cuts in the state budget of member item grants that sustain operating costs for local medical facilities. The two APICHA executives outlined the health care needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities and made a case for the preservation of these grants, without which the continuum of HIV/AIDS programs and services as well as primary medical care for patients who are at high risk for HIV, STD and viral hepatitis are in jeopardy.

Modifying Prerequisites To Becoming
A Federally Qualified Health Center

Under the auspices of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families, APICHA CEO Therese R. Rodriguez appeared before a panel of officials of the White House Initiative on Asian and Pacific Islanders to engage the community for input and feedback on the provision of the New Affordable Care Act (ACA) otherwise known as the healthcare reform law.

For her presentation, Ms. Rodriguez enumerated several factors that prevent HIV organizations from achieving the goal of the National HIV/AIDS Initiative to integrate HIV/AIDS services providers like APICHA into becoming federally qualified health centers (FQHCs). Current FQHC guidelines, for instance, presents disadvantages to providers due to reimbursement rates that do not adequately compensate for services to people with HIV. Additionally, FQHCs already currently pays patient-provider ratios at 1.50, a very high ratio when compared to HIV of 150–200 patients per HIV specialist provider. And, FQHC applicants are scored based on travel time it would take for patients to reach the clinic. Ms. Rodriguez proposed recommendations to the policy makers: 1) Converting the threshold visit payment method to the ambulatory patient groups method so that reimbursements are commensurate to the level of care provided (HIV/AIDS patients require intensive care for their HIV in addition to other diseases associated with or exacerbated by the HIV infection such as diabetes, hypertension, renal disease, osteoporosis, cancers, cholesterol abnormalities and heart disease); 2) Reducing patient visit limits for HIV specialists due to the severity and complexity of the illnesses being managed; 3) Achieving parity of recognition for HIV specialists; 4) Ensuring coverage for related medical conditions of HIV patients; and 5) Granting special waivers to FQHC applicants in urban centers related to travel time and location of facility. These recommendations should they be implemented would make the designation as a FQHC more achievable.
The Acacia Fund in collaboration with the Ma-Yi Theatre Company recently staged a benefit matinee performance of “Flipzoids” at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater on Broadway to raise funds for APICHA. Gilda Sambajon, a registered nurse and former APICHA board member, founded the volunteer-run initiative to support Filipino immigrants living with AIDS. Inspired by the dying words of a Filipino AIDS victim who asked to be buried under the shade of an acacia, Ms. Sambajon named the initiative after the tree, which she believed could help represent the immigrant experience in the lives of three generations of Filipino Americans in a Southern California suburb. Time Out New York’s Paul Menard praised the latest performance in the way it “combines poetic metaphors with sly comedy— and paints a triptych of ethnic assimilation” as “a communal expression of cultural alienation.” Director Loy Arcenas’ deftly minimalist staging along with lead actress Ching Valdes-Algin’s Obie Award-winning portrayal of painful isolation exemplifies the kind of ground-breaking Asian American theater being produced by Ma-Yi under executive director Jorge Ontol.

Sambajon named the initiative after the tree, Ms. Sambajon recommitted to APICHA to bring together old Acacia Fund supporters and new ones. Attendees agreed that Ralph B. Peña’s critically-acclaimed “Flipzoids” is as relevant today as it was when the play originally opened here in 1996. Through its runs, the play has been hailed as an illuminating look at cross-cultural identity and the immigrant experience in the lives of three generations of Filipino Americans in a Southern California community.

Another member named Erica posted her comment: “It is so important to actually get over the fear and just get tested! The more open we are about our fears and concerns, the easier it is to deal with them because we know we are not alone.” The MTV Staying Alive Foundation is a youth-based global mass media platform that fosters HIV prevention, safer lifestyle choices and fighting against discrimination and stigma that fuels the HIV epidemic. It uses its international reach through cable television programming, concerts, documentaries, public service announcements, film competitions and a website accessible in 13 different languages to encourage and inspire the next generation into public awareness and involvement. View the video online under Blogs “Staying Alive” at: www.stayingalive.org.

APICHA SPECIAL EVENTS: Awareness is the Beginning of Prevention

APICHA marks National Asian & Pacific Islander HIV/AIDS Awareness Day this month with a series of events that endeavors to bring renewed attention to the persistent spread of HIV/AIDS. Diana Menard, Women and Youth Program Manager will be leading the APICHA Team, designated number 0066, with the able assistance of co-captains Monica Wat, Justin DeConcept, William Yee, Mallory Lee and Xin Huang. At a time when public awareness of HIV is diminished, AIDS Walk is one event where the HIV community and its allies can bring visibility to the issue. Having rallied together around a hundred a team members, the APICHA continues its work to inspire the next generation of warriors against AIDS and pull in about $8,000 in donations. As a community partner, APICHA receives $48 per participant, and up to $59 per fundraising team – funds that help sustain the "Red Flamboyant" by Don Nguyen. APICHA will also be offering its comprehensive programs and services.

APICHA, in conjunction with The Ma-Yi Theatre Company and Orasure Technologies, presents a reading of Don Nguyen’s play “Red Flamboyant”, 6PM at APICHA 400 Broadway, New York, NY 10013. The reading is part of APICHA’s “Have You Done IT Lately?” HIV/AIDS awareness campaign as well as Ma-Yi’s LabFest. The reading will be followed by a reception, followed by the main event, and a panel discussion. Mr. Nguyen and other distinguished guests.

MTV’s Staying Alive Vox Pop program. Since it went live in February of this year, the video blog has been played some 735 times with over 800 logged on comments. The partnership began when MTV media and events producer Sarah Fulton approached APICHA LGBT Project Manager Jarron Magallanes with the aim of doing a project together. Mr. Magallanes brought the proposal before the APICHA team who all concurred that it was an exciting opportunity that could be incorporated into the agency’s three-part World AIDS Day awareness campaign that also included week-long HIV testing and an outreach strategy of widespread distribution of complimentary safe sex kits around the block of Broadway, Lafayette, Canal and Walker where APICHA’s facility is located. APICHA organized a two-day shoot of agency staffers and their peers in HIV prevention to candidly share having faced their own fears and hesitations and the importance of HIV testing and taking that first empowering step toward knowing one’s health status. Even though a severe thunderstorm eventually forced APICHA to withdraw its previous plans, the video was successfully shot for MTV. The positive reaction to the video short has been enthusiastically received. A website member named Joey commented: “I’m glad to see MTV’s Staying Alive Foundation giving young adults information about why it’s important to get tested and practice safe sex. MTV…enlisted the advice and the stories from real people and got real answers. Everyone is afraid of getting tested including myself. We don’t need to be so scared because so many of us feel the same.”

Mr. Nguyen’s play opens in the aftermath of a suicide attempt by one of Mrs. Hue’s board members, reflected in the most noteworthy emerging Asian American playwrights into a full-fledged LabFest Series of developing the works of Asian American playwrights. Mr. Nguyen has attended several theatre productions that endeavors to bring together old Acacia Fund supporters and new ones. Attendees agreed that Ralph B. Peña’s critically-acclaimed “Flipzoids” is as relevant today as it was when the play originally opened here in 1996. Through its runs, the play has been hailed as an illuminating look at cross-cultural identity and the immigrant experience in the lives of three generations of Filipino Americans in a Southern California community.

Our Community

A Tale of Three Immigrants

The Acacia Fund in collaboration with the Ma-Yi Theatre Company recently staged a benefit matinee performance of “Flipzoids” at the Peter Jay Sharp Theater on Broadway to raise funds for APICHA. Gilda Sambajon, a registered nurse and former APICHA board member, founded the volunteer-run initiative to support Filipino immigrants living with AIDS. Inspired by the dying words of a Filipino AIDS victim who asked to be buried under the shade of an acacia, Ms. Sambajon named the initiative after the tree, which she believed could help represent the immigrant experience in the lives of three generations of Filipino Americans in a Southern California community.

Another member named Erica posted her comment: “It is so important to actually get over the fear and just get tested! The more open we are about our fears and concerns, the easier it is to deal with them because we know we are not alone.” The MTV Staying Alive Foundation is a youth-based global mass media platform that fosters HIV prevention, safer lifestyle choices and fighting against discrimination and stigma that fuels the HIV epidemic. It uses its international reach through cable television programming, concerts, documentaries, public service announcements, film competitions and a website accessible in 13 different languages to encourage and inspire the next generation into public awareness and involvement. View the video online under Blogs “Staying Alive” at: www.stayingalive.org.

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APICHA Accommodates More Patients

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life a female in Spain. Growing up as Manuela, he regularly faced shame, ridicule and even physical abuse from his own family as he tried to pursue his own path. After several attempts to run away, he was able to reach New York, determined to start anew as Manuel. By working with providers at APICHA, Manuel learned about the complex process of gender re-assignment from addressing the emotional aspects of the transition and the details of hormone and surgical interventions to the practicalities of changing his identity cards and other legal documents. The APICHA mental health and medical providers treated Manuel with the respect and dignity he deserved. And he has begun his transformation confident that he has professionals who continue to support him.

Over the years, APICHA has served the Transgender population in its HIV programs. But while majority of the newly-installed programs in the medical home expansion were complementary to most of their needs, it became apparent how imperative it was to address more requisite factors in their complete health care. APICHA envisions a Transgender Program that offers transgender-specific primary care including Hepatitis services (screening for Hepatitis A, B and C, vaccinations against Hepatitis A and B and treatments for Hepatitis B and C), STI screening, chronic disease management, disease prevention and the initiation and maintenance of hormone therapy. Additionally, essential mental health and social support services will be made available to them such as mental health assessment, short-term psychotherapy, substance abuse treatment and counseling and wellness-oriented workshops. Though most of these services are already available, a final phase is being sought to achieve the complete Transgender Program.

Responding to Barriers and the Needs of the Most Vulnerable

Statistical reports from numerous private corporations, data gathering organizations and public institutions all show that LGBT, ethnic and low income individuals’ access to health care is glaringly disproportionate in comparison with the rest of Americans. In findings compiled by the Kaiser Family Foundation, up to 17% of the A&PI in the United States was shown to be uninsured. Estimates by the Center for American Progress show 5% of self-identified lesbian and gay adults and 28% of transgender people are uninsured due to one or more impeding factors. And unfortunately, declining budgets earmarked for public health often impacts these groups the most. In the decade between 1995 and 2005 six of the eight hospital closures in New York were in or adjacent to low-income neighborhoods or communities of color. Most recently in the last three years, three hospitals closed

**With APICHA’s more proactive outreach programs in HIV and STD testing, disparate groups of people now realize the importance of knowing their health status.**

in Queens followed by the fourth and latest casualty in lower Manhattan - Saint Vincent’s, which served the predominantly LGBT neighborhoods of the West Village and Chelsea.

It was in the course of APICHA’s initial focus on HIV/AIDS that the need for primary care became clear. Founded upon a dedication to civic and social responsibility, APICHA was duty-bound to take decisive action in creating an alternative health care model better attuned than most conventional hospital facilities to the cultural, political, psychological, financial and even linguistic nuances of tending to the patient needs of these groups. Funding from the Health Care Efficiency and Affordability Law (HEAL) Phase 6 Capital Grant Program of the New York State Department of Health eventually enabled the agency to open the medical home. APICHA has installed enhanced programs to afford vitally necessary, comprehensive and continuous care consisting of Primary Care for high-risk HIV negative patients, HIV Rapid Testing, Comprehensive STD Screening and Sexual Health Services, comprehensive clinic for Hepatitis B and C screening, immunization and treatment, and Mental Health Services.

The expansion was guided by the tenet of combining firmly demonstrable evidence-based medical practice with a comprehensive continuum of health care in a welcoming environment for underserved and vulnerable people especially immigrant A&PIs and other communities of color, the LGBT community and individuals living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. To that end, APICHA has earned Level 3 recognition as a Physician Practice Connections – Patient Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance, the highest level attainable. This status affirms the agency’s commitment not only to providing superior health care but a dependable medical provider-patient relationship that extends beyond episodic treatment to cover a meticulously coordinated and collective overall healing experience from APICHA’s highly-trained team. Since then, APICHA has been able to open its doors to an even more diverse mix of minority groups, both racially and economically, that have extremely limited resources and fewer alternatives. From its historical expertise with predominantly A&PI, LGBT, ethnic and low-income patients, APICHA is constructing a truly distinctive and crucial health center.

For more than twenty years, APICHA has played an indispensable role in New York City’s struggle with HIV/AIDS. The substantial new programs and coverage that characterize this stage in APICHA’s evolution has been an exceptional addition to the city’s health care component by caring for its acutely underserved populations. Today, A&PI, LGBT, other minority groups and low-income individuals are finding a welcoming environment and outstanding health care and at APICHA.

ALL Patients’ identifiable features have been changed to ensure confidentiality.