



New York Coalition for Asian American Mental Health  
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, December 16, 2010

Location: Lutheran Medical Center, 150 55<sup>th</sup> Street, Brooklyn, New York

1. *The meeting was called to order by Dr. Irene Chung, President.*
2. *Lutheran Medical Center: Dr. James Wolberg, Clinical Director of Lutheran Medical Center, presented a brief introduction to the Lutheran Medical Center's Behavioral Health Program, which provides a variety of inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance-abuse services. The inpatient services include a 35-bed, acute care psychiatric unit, and an 8-bed detoxification OASIS unit, as there is a high psychiatric and substance abuse comorbidity among the population served. The inpatient unit has 3 full-time attending physicians and 3 social workers. The average length of stay is around 11 to 12 days. Patients with longer terms psychiatric needs are referred to South Beach Psychiatric Center. He stated that Lutheran Medical Center services a very diverse population and there has been a tremendous increase in the Asian population over the recent years with a great deal of family involvement. Mary Ng, Chinese Outreach Liaison, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioral Health Sciences, stated an Asian Wellness Group was started in 2009 to help monolingual Asian patients manage and cope with their stress with daily living, work, and transition to a new country. Patients discharged from inpatient are required to come to this group, which meets every Thursday, and there is also an Asian family group which meets every Monday evening. Mary also conducts community education and outreach. Dr. Ellen Tsui is the first Chinese-speaking clinician at the Lutheran Family Health Center and the number of multilingual clinicians have been increasing to meet the demand of the changing population (the neighborhood has changed from 1/4 Chinese to 1/3 over the recent years). There is also a wellness group at the Health Center and soon a mandarin speaking group will also be started. Criteria for admission to the program include: unemployment, no age or diagnostic criteria, can sustain concentration for 30 minutes, no mental retardation or traumatic brain injury. The goal of the program is to improve well being and skill-based rehabilitation. For client referrals, contact John Maroley at 718 431-2627. There is no catchment requirement, but for reimbursement purpose, clients cannot be enrolled in two OMH licensed programs at the same time. Steven Zhou stated that there might also be a problem if a client is already being treated by a private psychiatrist, because upon enrollment at the clinic, they would also be assigned a psychiatrist. Everyone should be aware that treatment is not free, especially for the undocumented.*
3. *NY Asian Women's Center (NYAWC): Julie Kim Richard, Director of Client Services from the NYAWC, informed members that NYAWC operates an emergency shelter in Brooklyn. The shelter has 40 beds and in addition to serving domestic violence victims and their children, it also provides assistance for crime victims. This project started a year ago in partnership with Lutheran Family Health Center, which runs a domestic violence screening program to identify victims. However, victims do not have to be clients of Lutheran Medical Center to receive services. The shelter accepts walk-ins during business hours, and all calls go to an on-site counselor at Lutheran. During non-business hours, as part of NYAWC's Safety First Project, a hotline (1-866-630-3159) is available to provide assistance in more than 12 languages including multiple Chinese dialects, many South Asian languages, Korean and Japanese.*
4. *Health Care System and Key Mental Health Issues of Korea: Dr. Myung Soo Lee, Director of Suicide Prevention from Seoul, Korea, who has been participating in the training at the Columbia University Public Psychiatry Program in the past 6 month will be returning to*



New York Coalition for Asian American Mental Health  
General Membership Meeting Minutes

Korea, presented an overview of the mental health system in Korea. Korea has a population of 50 million with 1/5 of its population or 10 million live in Seoul. It has a suicide rate of >30 per 100,000 which is much higher than the US with a rate of 11 per 100,000. In Korea, there are 16.8 psychiatric beds per 10,000 and the number is rapidly increasing. Most of the psychiatric beds (80%) in Korea are privately operated and with 15% public beds, the governing has little control over de-institutionalization. Korea has 97% of population covered under its national health insurance; however, the out-of-pocket cost is high (about 30%) and there is no reimbursement for community services. The total health expenditure is 6.8% of GDP in 2007, while the US is 18% of GDP. Dr. Lee stated that 25 to 30% of those suffer from depression seek mental health care. Korean Americans in the US also have a higher rate of suicide, although there is no definitive data collected. Suicide rate among Korean males is 2 times the rate of females, but rate of suicide for young females is similar to young males. After the recent suicide of a famous Korean actress, suicide rate surged 2 times higher. Medication treatment is the major mode of treatment and it is quite current in terms of its psychopharmacology, but overall mental health care is not as comprehensive in comparison to NY, which is much more diverse in the type of available services. Korean patients often complaint that they are not given sufficient opportunities to speak to their doctors. The members thanked Dr. Lee and wished him the best in his return to Korea.

5. *Charles B Wang Community Health Center Employment Opportunity:* Dr. Teddy Chen stated that his agency is seeking a licensed Chinese-speaking social worker and a supervisory level social worker with 3 to 5 years of experience.
6. *NYCAAMH Membership:* As 2010 come to a close, Dr. Irene Chung reminded all to renew or join the Coalition membership for 2011 to support the ongoing work of the Coalition and to take advantage of the membership benefits which include: conferences/workshops discounts, participating in mentorship programs, networking, employment opportunities or job seeking postings, etc.
7. *Clinical Skills Mentorship:* There have been suggestions for the establishment of a mentoring group for new mental health practitioners or interns who work with Asian clients. It was proposed that portion of time could be devoted during alternate monthly meetings for such a mentoring group, where selected clinical topics can be discussed and explored. Further, listserv for posting of questions and discussion threads can be set up for interested individuals. A workgroup will be set up to work out the particulars.
8. *Community Mental Health Workshops:* Marilyn Lam who attended the community workshop in Flushing in November, has expressed interest in volunteering her service to conduct similar workshops in the future for the community. She has recently attended an early intervention and prevention workshop in California and interested in conducting similar program for the community in NY. It was suggested that she can share what she learned this with the members at the next general meeting.
9. The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m. with the announcement that the next meeting will be held on Thursday, January 20, 2010, possible location - NYS OMH Regional Office.