



New York Coalition for Asian American Mental Health  
General Membership Meeting Minutes  
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Date of Meeting: April 21, 2011  
Location: Hamilton Madison House

1. **Case Presentation:** Mary Ng, LCSW, from Lutheran Medical Center presented a case study to the Coalition about an undocumented Chinese patient. This patient has been in various healthcare systems (including 10 hospitalizations) since 2001, and has ongoing issues with insulin resistant diabetes, anxiety, lack of compliance with treatment, and history of suicide attempts. She has some support from family (a brother who support her with \$500 per month) and some support from her church; however, these supports have waned due to her lack of treatment compliance and instability. The Lutheran treatment team has followed and tracked her care in the community including setting up for her an ACT team at Bellevue, assigned her an AOT due to lack of compliance, met with her church pastor, and attempted to find suitable housing for her. The case touched on the complexity of issues regarding undocumented individuals suffering from mental illness: 1) the unwillingness of Asian families to get involved in such matters; 2) the tendency to attribute problems to the individual rather than look to social infrastructure; 3) ineligibility of the undocumented to access SSI; 4) inability of the system to care for dually diagnosis patients (psychiatric and developmental disorders), 5) difficulty in finding treatment and placement in residence due to language barrier and immigrant status, and 6) lack of available services/support for low functioning clients. Given that the patient was residing in a motel, there was a subsequent discussion about the politics of home/safe space in Asian/Asian-American communities. Are there feasible institutional ways to open up the home to individuals in need? Members asked how the Coalition can be effective in responding to such cases e.g. offering feedback/support. The Lutheran treatment team was commended for its thoroughness and commitment to procure the best care possible for this client under these extremely difficult circumstances. In addressing the lack of culturally appropriate supervised residence for monolingual Asian patients, and especially for the undocumented, family care program was suggested as a viable option. However, it was also recognized that very few Asians in the community would seek to become family care providers due to the lack of understanding and stigma associated with mental illness. Therefore, community education is needed to overcome this barrier. Another suggestion is to explore the possibility of family members assuming the role of family care providers (kinship care) - this would permit a more cost-effective way for committed family members to care for its own mental ill family members which would not have been possible without compensation for potential income loss. Many agreed that the idea of kinship care as a cost-saving solution to better care for patients who are otherwise not dischargeable to the community due to lack of placement options should be further explored with the Office of Mental Health.

2. **Mental Health Service Career Day Event:** Dr. Teddy Chen discussed the beginning steps of a Mental Health Service Career Day, which was first brought up at the previous month's coalition meeting at the Alzheimer's Association. A committee was formed, and the event is projected to be held in October 2011. The objective of the event is to recruit Asian/Asian-Americans into the mental health field. There was discussion about the demographics for the event. The consensus was that college students would be the target population, but this discussion will be ongoing as the committee plans the event. Location is also to be determined.

The committee thus far, in alphabetical order, with Dr. Teddy Chen heading the committee.  
Mark Byon, Teddy Chen, Yenling Chong, Songye Han, Marilyn Lam, Kin Wah Lee,  
Joy Luangphaxay, Mary Ng, Pamela Yew Schwartz, Tazuko Shibusawa.



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3. **Asian Community Mental Health Needs Assessment:** Kin Wah distributed a summary of the needs assessment survey - which was divided into the following categories of issues/obstacles: 1) Undocumented status and ineligibility for benefits; 2) Language barrier; 3) Lack of resources and advocacy support in the community; 4) Cultural/Society factors; 5) System issues; and 6) Advocacy/Action recommendations. All these areas were discussed and in referencing back to Mary Ng's presentation, the coalition discussed how the law often complicates organizations' capacities to intervene when necessary. Dr. Yen Ling Chong noted that legal issues are beyond the capacity of the coalition at this point, but that other needs that are immediate to the patient can be addressed. A committee (consisting of Kin Wah Lee, Pamela Yew Schwartz, Grace Wong, and headed by Dr. Winnie Kung), was established and will meet to discuss next steps and report at the next membership meeting.

4. **Membership Fundraising Committee:** Steve Zhou, Tracy Luo, and Mark Byon met to discuss, but Steve and Tracy were unable to attend the meeting. This topic will be brought up at the next meeting.

5. **Community Education** - Fanny Lau of the Alzheimer's Association, NYC Chapter, and Marilyn Lam gave a thirty minute presentation on PTSD on Chung Hwah Commercial Broadcasting. The discussion was related to the tsunami in Japan and the Chinatown casino bus accident. Mary Ng gave a three hour presentation on PTSD, insomnia, etc. to about 130 people in a local high school. Dr. Shibusawa reported that JASI sponsored a workshop for Japanese Americans coping with the earthquake disaster in Japan, and she led a support group after the presentation.

6. **Next Meeting** - The next meeting is scheduled to be held on Thursday, May 19, 2011, meeting location to be announced.