

AAQOL Commission Health Workgroup

Members:

Commissioner Kavita Radhakrishnan (Lead)
Commissioner Vince Cobalis
Commissioner Catherina Conte
Commissioner Molly Wang
Community Member Reshmi Chowdhury (Vice-Chair, AARC Non-Profit)
Community Member Hailey Easley (AARC Non-profit)
Community Member Veena Viswanathan (APH)

Scope of Workgroup: To address health and wellness needs of underserved Asian American communities residing in the city of Austin

Date of Meeting: December 11 , 2018

Location of Meeting: AARC

In Attendance:

Commissioner Kavita Radhakrishnan
Community Member Veena Viswanathan (APH)
Community Member Reshmi Chowdhury (Vice-Chair, AARC Non-Profit)
Community Member Binh Ly (APH)
UT Student Ahn Ly
Community Member Victoria Vailey (APH)
Community Member Vivian Newdick (Language Consultant – APH)

Topics Discussed:

Implementation challenges of Language Access for Asian Americans with Low English Proficiency in Travis county

- 1) UT student Ahn Ly presented her work from her internship with APH Health Equity Unit. She called **28** different city and healthcare institutions as a Vietnamese speaker to test the language line and service quality for persons with LEP.
- 2) Challenges were found a most institutions to access language services. The challenges included
 - a. difficulty navigating the automated Phone system – for example, phone trees were way too quick, having to navigate the English system before the preferred language access is available
 - b. Negative reaction from the frontline staff (hung up, arrogant tone, audible sigh, unwilling to find an interpreter, multiple transfers)
 - c. the wait time while being connected on a 3-way call with an interpreter on line or the system automatically disconnects.

- 3) Staff were in-general unfamiliar with how to provide language services to the callers with LEP.
- 4) Recommendations include training frontline staff including providing resources such as iSpeak, standardizing the phone system, hiring more bilingual staff, informing the LEP community at the onset of availability of interpretation services and ensuring access throughout the process even after the phone call ends such as assistance with completing forms.
- 5) Finally, Ms.Binh Ly shared a resources guide that they developed to test language access which community insitutions can use to test their services.
- 6) Ms.Newdick , one of the 2 language consultants at APH shared ideas on how to test extant language access services
- 7) City of Austin is also placing a Request for Qualifications for video, in-person and telephone interpretation