



**ASIAN AMERICAN QUALITY-OF-LIFE ADVISORY COMMISSION  
RECOMMENDATION 20240319-014**

Date: March 19, 2024

Subject: Recommendation on the FY 2024-25 Budget related to Community Health Navigators

Motioned by: Commissioner Satyajeet Dodia

Seconded By: Commissioner Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan

**Community Health Navigators (CHNs)**

**Description**

Currently, the City has two Master Agreements [MA - 4700 - NG160000053](#) (since 2017) and [MA - 4700 - NG220000094](#) (since 2022) for Community Health Navigator (CHN) services to the Asian American community that is inclusive of recruiting, hiring, training, direct services of translated health navigation and administration. Both contracts are coming to an end with this fiscal year. The current contractor, Asian American Resource Center Inc. dba Asian American Community Health Initiative (AACHI) is currently providing services to some of the most vulnerable Asian subpopulations including Burmese, Korean, Nepali, Vietnamese, Syrian, Iraqi, and other Arabic-speaking communities. CHN services in these languages are not available from any other agencies or non-profits in the Austin area. The loss or gap in the continuation of these contracts or their replacements would have a detrimental effect in the health inequities for the most vulnerable pockets of the local Asian American community.

This recommendation seeks to sustain and increase funding for CHN services to the Asian American community. CHNs provide an essential service for Austin's Asian community, which has language access needs spanning multiple communities. During the pandemic, a Texas A&M COVID contract supported a local provider hiring three bilingual Community Health Navigators who served the Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese-speaking communities. The expiration of the funding period has resulted in less than 150 clients and no dedicated bilingual CHN for the Chinese-speaking community.

Navigating the healthcare system can be a challenging task for native English speakers. For non-native English speakers, this challenge can be nearly impossible to overcome. Yet,



accessing adequate health care services, is an essential service that some may say is a basic human right. Community health navigators assist Austin's non-native English speakers in scheduling appointments, filling out required paperwork, applying for and understanding health insurance benefits, and many more essential services. Austin's Asian community is diverse with many non-native English speakers. The lack of language access services isolates many Austin residents, preventing them from participating in civic life, which can lead to feelings of isolation. The lack of language access services is especially acute when dealing with healthcare. The inability to access adequate diagnoses and care can lead to a multitude of poor, and in many cases preventable, outcomes.

### **Recommendation**

\$850,000 ongoing funding for recruiting, hiring, training, direct services of translated health navigation and administration of Asian-language CHNs

\$150,000 in one-time funding for CHNs providing a new Asian language support that is not currently being served.

### **Department**

Austin Public Health

### **Alignment with Council Strategic Priorities**

Alignment with Council Strategic Priorities: Health & Environment: Enjoying a sustainable environment and a healthy life, physically and mentally.

- A. Health conditions among the public
- B. Accessibility to quality health care services (physical and mental)

### **Vote: 12-0**

For: Chair Hanna Huang, Vice Chair Sarah Chen, Commissioners Satyajeet Dodia, Padmini Jambulapati, Anna Lan, Pierre Nguyen, Sabrina Sha, Zahra Shakur Jamal-Hassan, Nayer Sikder, Sonny Sin, Luan Tran, and Lily Trieu

Against: None

Abstain: None



Absent: Commissioners Mohsin Lari and Kuo Yang

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eric Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Eric Anderson, Staff Liaison