



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 4, 2020

## **AAPCHO Cautions Against Discrimination and Misinformation in Response to Coronavirus**

**WASHINGTON** – The Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), a national organization of health centers serving Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders, today released the following statement in response to the increase of diagnosed cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the United States, emphasizing the importance of combating discrimination and misinformation. The organization cautioned against targeting these and other historically under-resourced populations already experiencing increased hardships amid the country's current tense political and social climate—calling on the general public and respective officials to push back against harmful prejudice stemming from fears surrounding the virus.

"While the rise of COVID-19 confirmed cases in the United States is a valid and pressing public health concern, we urge health care providers and all individuals sharing information about the disease to combat misinformation and discrimination that put patients and broader communities at risk," said Jeffrey Caballero, executive director of AAPCHO. "We urge common sense and following practical safeguards as recommended by the CDC and your local and state public health departments. This is a global emergency that should be met with both urgency and also cultural awareness that COVID-19 is not isolated to a single ethnic population. Xenophobic attacks and discrimination towards Asian American communities are unacceptable and will not make our families safer or healthier."

"Viruses do not discriminate. Stigmatizing or discriminating against particular groups only creates barriers to those who need care," added Teresita Batayola, AAPCHO board member and president & CEO of International Community Health Services in Seattle. "Speak out against bias and harassment. The best way to protect everyone continues to be wash your hands, don't touch your face, cover your cough or cold, social distancing, stay home if you are ill, and call your doctor or community health center if you exhibit respiratory symptoms."

AAPCHO and its member health centers strongly encourage all members of the community to seek and promote accurate information about COVID-19, and to continue to provide in-language and culturally responsive materials when providing care to these vulnerable populations. We also urge Congress and the Trump administration to make additional federal resources available for state public health departments and health care institutions, including community health centers that are on the frontlines of addressing this public health concern.

For more information and resources related to responding to COVID-19, visit [AAPCHO's website](#).

#MORE#

**About AAPCHO**

AAPCHO is a national association of community health organizations dedicated to promoting advocacy, collaboration and leadership that improves the health status and access of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. For more information on AAPCHO, please visit [www.aapcho.org](http://www.aapcho.org).

**About ICHS**

International Community Health Services (ICHS) is the largest federally qualified health center (FQHC) in King County, Washington, serving nearly 32,000 patients in more than 50 languages in the Seattle area. Deeply rooted in the Asian Pacific Islander community, ICHS provides culturally and linguistically appropriate health and wellness services and promotes health equity for all.

**Contact**

Kristine Cecile Alarcon, MPH, (510) 671-5054, [kalarcon@aapcho.org](mailto:kalarcon@aapcho.org)

###