



## **APICHA Programs Update**

**November/December 2010 Edition**

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### **APICHA**

400 Broadway  
New York, NY 10013

Infoline: 866-APICHA-9  
Clinic Reception: 212-334-6029

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### Upcoming Events:

#### **Check Your Parts! Cancer Prevention for Bodies of All Genders**

Date: March 2011, exact date and time TBA\*

Location: APICHA, 400 Broadway, 10013, NYC

March is LGBT Health Month! Join us at APICHA when Simone Kolychikina from the American Cancer Society gives a talk about cancer risks in LGBT populations.

#### **You Better Work! : Tips and Tools for Filing Your Income Tax Return**

Date: March 2011, exact date and time TBA\*

Location: APICHA, 400 Broadway, 10013, NYC

Mark Liu is a Volunteer Tax Preparer and Financial Coach with The Financial Clinic's MoneyUp Initiative. He'll be guiding participants through the process of filing a tax return, including common mistakes and potentially missed deductions.

\*For more information and to stay up to date on more Project Connect Workshops, contact us at [projectconnect@apicha.org](mailto:projectconnect@apicha.org) or call 646-744-0990. Or follow Project Connect on twitter [@ProjConnect](https://twitter.com/ProjConnect)

### **APICHA Presents: Mental Health Services**

It's been a year since APICHA Medical Services opened its doors to the A&PI LGBT community by providing personalized medical care beyond HIV medical care. This new direction came into play as a response to the needs of our community and through the vision of our leadership within APICHA. The willingness to listen to the voice of our stakeholders has helped us advance a step further by adding Mental Health Services to our existing primary care model. Jun Matsuyoshi, LCSW, is the new Director of Mental Health Services and has extensive experience working with A&PI LGBT clients, including facilitating the Plus API Support Group for nearly 10 years here at APICHA. Our model ensures close communication and collaboration between the primary care provider and the therapist ultimately benefiting the patients.\*

As a mental health practitioner who has worked with HIV-infected and HIV-affected LGBT and ethnic minority populations since 1990, Jun is very encouraged by APICHA's establishment as a medical home to serve the A&PI and LGBT community. "As health care providers, we must address the barriers to health care that affect A&PI and LGBT clients. The more we understand how identity impacts health, the more we can make culturally competent care available

to all populations," says Jun. The historically limited access to health care and insurance has resulted in uneven health care patterns for many people. Rather than regularly accessing care, people seek care only when health consequences can no longer be avoided. Such limited access usually means that people lack understanding of good health practices, including the need to understand diagnoses and treatment. Some clients, already experiencing stigma and limited receptivity by providers, are not likely to ask about how they might take better care of themselves. Clients with chronic conditions are being assisted in adjusting their daily habits to manage their conditions.

Mental health services will maximize the care delivered at APICHA's medical home. For example, culturally appropriate services will help clients to understand their medical conditions as well as their options for treatment. In the assessment process, certain questions help to get the client's view of the problem. Such questions as "What is the cause of the client's distress?" "How does the client understand the problem?" and "What remedies have been tried?" seem simple enough but are critical in determining how the client understands mental health problems. Client responses to such questions help to deliver services that are culturally appropriate.

The goal is to meet clients' needs at APICHA and within the community. If services are not available at APICHA, staff will refer clients to appropriate resources in the community. Also, by providing training and coaching to APICHA staff, Jun hopes that staff will feel more confident when dealing with difficult issues. The integration of mental health services with medical services will help to advance APICHA's mission of improving the health of our community by providing culturally competent services that enhance the quality of life.

### Program Highlights:

#### **APICHA Hosts Dr. Alexes Hazen for Presentation on Transgender Surgery and Health Access**

*By Charles J. Solidum, Project Connect Coordinator, LGBT Program*

On December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2010, Dr. Alexes Hazen, a plastic surgeon at New York University Langone Medical Center, arrived at APICHA (straight from the operating room) to speak on a topic that is scarcely discussed in a large public forum: FTM (Female-to-Male) top surgery. This event was presented by APICHA's Project Connect as part of its "A Healthier Me!" Workshop Series, aimed at providing health information that is pertinent to the lives of Asian & Pacific Islander LGBTQI adults. The event, titled, "Ask a Surgeon: What to Consider When Planning Your Top Surgery," packed APICHA's clinic waiting area with 21 participants, the vast majority of whom self-identified as transgender or genderqueer.

Dr. Hazen's presentation consisted of an overview of the different surgical options available to someone seeking top surgery. Dr. Hazen offered a thorough road map through the process of top surgery, from the surgical consult to aftercare considerations. She offered the pros and cons of each surgical method, as well as the criteria that some surgeons use to decide which procedure is the most appropriate for any given person. She provided candid responses to a variety of questions concerning transgender surgery and issues with insurance coverage: including providing FTM lower surgery, the lack of published research on trans medicine, post-op skin pigmentation issues for patients of color, and the reluctance of insurance companies to cover gender-related procedures.

With participants young and old, APICHA hopes to provide the API community at large an open space for communication, understanding and education. By providing a forum to share information and discuss these matters, APICHA hopes to help break down the barriers that so many trans individuals face within the healthcare system.

**APICHA Commemorates World AIDS Day 2010**

*Here's a look at what we did:*

## **Have You Done IT Lately?**

MTV's Staying Alive Campaign has put together a video blog series called Vox Pop that seeks to put HIV awareness at the fore with individuals and communities that may overlook the importance of getting tested for HIV. The most recent Vox Pop got intimate with the HIV educators of APICHA and other Community Based Organizations such as Gay Men's Health Crisis, NYC Anti-Violence Project and NY AIDS Coalition. Six educators were put under the spotlight and were asked the all-too-important question – Have you done it lately?

With the guidance of public health educator and MTV correspondent Francisco Ramirez, APICHA staff answered intimate questions on why –or why not- they get tested for HIV regularly. Filming was conducted here at APICHA and features familiar faces from APICHA's prevention and development departments. Stay tuned for the upcoming video by checking out the Staying Alive website at <http://www.staying-alive.org/en/>

## **UN-UNICEF Hosts APICHA's CTR Program**

On December 10, 2010 APICHA's Counseling, Testing and Referrals Program collaborated with community partner United Nations UNICEF to provide free, confidential HIV screenings to United Nations staff and their dependents.

Held at UN Plaza UNICEF House- Labouisse Hall, the CTR staff screened a total of 75 persons with the majority being recent immigrants. Regarding the importance of this testing event, Prevention Associate Malvin Vien remarks, "When you are new to New York, it can be difficult to know what resources are available to you and in terms of potential HIV infection, to know where one can get tested and to discuss how at risk one can be." Each HIV test was accompanied by an individualized risk assessment and appropriate referrals that helped to familiarize the clients with other citywide healthcare services.

Overall, the World AIDS Day testing event was favorably received and strengthened an important alliance in promoting HIV testing to reduce transmission rates. The CDC estimates that there are more than one million people in the United States currently living with HIV. One in five, do not know their status. ([www.cdc.gov/hiv](http://www.cdc.gov/hiv))

## **Sex is Sex, Right? Wrong.**

*By Justin Demafelis, Advanced Peer Educator, Women & Youth Program*

To honor World AIDS Day, the Women & Youth Program held a workshop series on December 4<sup>th</sup> revolving on one central question: "Have you done *it* lately?" The 11 peer educators in the program each contributed a lot of their time and knowledge to ensure the launch of the series which brought in over 20 participants. The curriculum, which was tailored to target API youth and women, focused on 5 important and interesting workshops on:

- "How safer sex can be more fun,"
- "HIV/AIDS information, the pressures of an HIV test,"
- "How to communicate having safer sex"
- "Everything you wanted to know about sex, but were too afraid to ask" - A Q & A session for those who have questions they were always curious to ask.

The youth who attended were recruited from volunteer and peer educator networks in and around New York City and were all open to discuss sex education among their peers. In one particular workshop, "How safer sex can be more fun," I found myself surrounded by high school aged youth who were all at APICHA for one reason: to learn more about condom usage and the importance of using them. They were all very surprised to see how many types of condoms were

readily available and by the variety of features the condoms had, ranging from being glow in the dark to having a warming sensation. The peer educators that conducted the workshop strongly emphasized the reasons for having safer sex, some of which included STI, HIV and pregnancy prevention. Providing the youth with interesting solutions and pertinent answers to their different questions opened up the workshops for everyone to talk about safer sex more openly.

Participants that attended the workshops gained not only valuable information but found a place where they can have a safe space. It was great to see our community come together to hear what the peer educators had to say. One strong impact we had was with one participant who wanted to continue learning about the work we do by becoming a volunteer with the Young People's Project.

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**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:30pm

**Clinic Hours:** M/T/F: 9:30am-5:30pm, W/Th: 9:30am-7pm

**HIV Testing Hours:** M/T/Th/F: 10:30am-4:30pm, W: 1:30pm-6:30pm

**To make an appointment for testing, please call Infoline:** 866-APICHA9 (866-274-2429)

**To make an appointment for medical care, call:** 212-334-6029

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**ABOUT ASIAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER COALITION ON HIV/AIDS, INC.**

Asian & Pacific Islander Coalition on HIV/AIDS, Inc. (APICHA) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1989 located in New York City. APICHA's mission is to improve the health of our community and to increase access to comprehensive primary care, preventive health services, mental health and supportive services. We are committed to excellence and to providing culturally competent services that enhance the quality of life. APICHA advocates for and provides a welcoming environment for underserved and vulnerable people, especially Asians and Pacific Islanders, the LGBT Community and individuals living with and affected by HIV/AIDS. For more information, visit: [www.apicha.org](http://www.apicha.org).