

Promoting the importance of organ donation and the effectiveness of transplantation in the Asian Pacific Islander community

Currently there are over 90,000 patients on the national waiting list for a life-saving organ transplant in the United States. Of these, 5,906 patients are Asian Pacific Islanders. In 2000, a grant through the Department of Transplantation allowed the California Transplant Donor Network (CTDN) to engage in educating the API community in Northern California on the importance of organ donation. To serve our diverse population, coordinators were hired to target the Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin), Vietnamese, and Filipino communities.

Since then, public education efforts have grown from simply concentrating on the need to broader topics such as the effectiveness of organ transplantation for API patients suffering from end-stage organ failure and the preventative measures that can be taken to avoid needing an organ transplant. This has provided our organization with a platform for discussion of relevant API health topics such as hepatitis B, kidney failure, and heart disease.

Materials developed have included brochures, donor cards, and print advertisements. Media component included newspaper and magazine articles, radio and television news programs, talk shows and public service announcements targeting API's. Partnerships with API organizations have served to enhance our public outreach efforts.

Consent rates for organ donation have since risen from 25% in 2000 to 45% in 2005, a direct indication of an increase in awareness and support. However, much more work needs to be done in order to increase consent rates to a national goal of 75% in order to decrease an organ shortage which results in 17 lives lost daily.