

"Organ Donation and Asian Pacific Americans: The call for a national public health education campaign to meet the needs of a rapidly increasing health disparity"

The lack of donated organs in the United States is a rapidly increasing health disparity and an urgent life-or-death issue that disproportionately affects Asian Pacific Americans (APAs). Of the over 90,000 patients who are currently on the national waiting list for a life-saving organ transplant, over 50% are people of color. APAs are overrepresented on the U.S. waiting list (6.1%), and are the least likely to donate (<2%) Due to a lack of donors, 1 patient dies every 85 minutes, while 13 are added to the list each day. It is incumbent on us to raise donation rates among APAs, in order to decrease the number of unnecessary deaths of other APAs waiting for transplants.

Our call is to raise APA donation rates through a national, culturally competent public education campaign targeting APAs that addresses: (1) basic knowledge of organ donation, including the fairness of the allocation system; (2) awareness of the success of transplantation as a treatment for end-stage organ failure; (3) a belief in the humanitarian virtue of organ donation and pride in being a donor. Our call is to address this void through a national campaign with the following components: (1) targeting younger generation APAs with a message that becoming donors will help other APAs; (2) disseminating the message through national APIA organizations, the workplace, and those on the bone marrow registry; (3) working with a national cadre of community health workers in APA communities and social service centers; (4) utilization of the ethnic media to target limited and non-English speaking APAs.