

# Chinese Health Initiative



CHI



## Mission Statement

*The Chinese Health Initiative (CHI) strives to improve the emotional and physical health and well-being of Chinese individuals, families and children in San Mateo County. CHI empowers the Chinese community by raising awareness of health issues and services, advocates for culturally and linguistically accessible and responsive services and collaborates with partners to facilitate outreach and referrals.*

## What is the Chinese Health Initiative?

The Chinese Health Initiative (CHI) was created out of the BHRS Office Of Diversity and Equity to promote cultural competence and address health inequities in San Mateo County. CHI is comprised of county employees, community partners, consumers/clients and family members who are interested in improving the health and well being of the Chinese community in San Mateo County. Our goal is to:

- Raise awareness of health issues and availability of services available throughout the County through community outreach, engagement and education.
- Educate the Health System and our partners around cultural issues and potential barriers around working with the Chinese community.
- Advocate for services that are culturally and linguistically accessible and welcoming to the Chinese community.
- Work collaboratively with partners to facilitate access to services for the Chinese community.

## Barriers To Accessing Services in San Mateo County:

- Lack of education and awareness about health and mental health related illnesses as well as services.
- Ability to easily find and access culturally and linguistically competent services in San Mateo County.
- Severe stigma and shame around mental illnesses. The “model minority myth” perpetuates this by masking the existence of psychological distress in families and communities.
- Cultural and religious beliefs about health/mental health issues and that personal and family affairs should not be discussed with others.
- Lack of insurance due to self employment, fear of immigration status, understanding of how to access public insurance, or that seeking help from public benefit programs might be frowned upon by others.

## Did You Know?

- The Asian population represents 25% of San Mateo County residents—Chinese Americans are one of the largest subgroups at 9%.
- The Chinese population is the fastest growing ethnic group in San Mateo County—with a 32% growth over the past decade.
- More than half the members of some Asian ethnic groups suffer from a range of mental illnesses, including chronic depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, family violence, alcoholism and substance abuse.
- Asian American adolescent girls have the highest rates of depressive symptoms of all racial/ethnic and gender groups.
- Among women ages 15–24, Asian American girls have the highest suicide mortality rates across all racial/ethnic groups.
- Older adult Asian American women have the highest rate of suicide of any ethnic/racial group.
- Asian Americans have the lowest utilization rate of mental health services, and are more likely to have psychotic diagnoses. Nearly one out of every two Asian Americans will have difficulty accessing services.
- Chinese clients reported one the lowest levels of linguistic access in health care organizations in San Mateo County—reporting a lack of bilingual staff and providers, extensive reliance on family and friends for interpretation, and inadequate written information in their language. Lack of linguistic access caused them to seek care in San Francisco, rely on home or drug-store remedies, or delay treatment.

## Chinese Family Support Group

The Chinese Health Initiative sponsors a monthly support group for Chinese-speaking individuals and family members interested in learning about health and mental health services in San Mateo County. For more information, please contact Alice Tong at (650) 573-3686 or Maureen Lin at (650) 261-3704.

## Chinese Health Initiative Chairs:

### Sylvia Leung

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### Steven Sust

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## Get Involved in the Chinese Health Initiative or for more information:

Contact one of the Chairs above, or visit:  
[www.smchealth.org/CHI](http://www.smchealth.org/CHI)

*The Chinese Health Initiative in part of the Health Equity Initiatives under the Office of Diversity and Equity and is funded by the Mental Health Services Act.*



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*Working together to improve the health and well being of the Chinese Community in San Mateo County*

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**Behavioral Health & Recovery Services**  
SAN MATEO COUNTY  
Office of Diversity and Equity