



1145 Wilshire Blvd., Second Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
(213) 977-7500 • Fax (213) 977-7595  
www.apalc.org

## PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2009

**Contact:** Sara Sadhwani (213) 241-0271  
1145 Wilshire Blvd. #200  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

### **Asian and Pacific Islanders call for full and inclusive Health Reform**

*Briefing identifies health disparities and a lack of coverage options for API communities*

LOS ANGELES – With health reform being debated in Congress, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center hosted a briefing today on the state of health for Asian and Pacific Islander communities. The briefing highlights disparities that exist within API communities, such as disproportionate rates of obesity, access and utilization of preventative services and rates of uninsured.

“Given the Asian and Pacific Islander community’s ethnic and socioeconomic diversity, understanding the unique needs of each community is essential to developing a health reform that will meet those needs,” said Assemblymember Mike Eng who commissioned a report by a team of UCLA researchers to uncover these disparities. Among the reports many findings, it revealed that Asian Americans are the only racial/ethnic group for whom the leading cause of death is cancer.[\[1\]](#) “As our state continues to face its deepest recession, a broad and inclusive federal health reform will bring much needed dollars into California.”

Currently both the House and Senate are considering health care reform proposals which President Obama has requested. While the legislative proposals do make mention of health disparities, the bills fail to cover the broad swath of immigrants and legal permanent residents who live and work in the US, but for whom the cost of health insurance is too often out of reach.

“It’s critical that Congress not be divided by distractions and focus on improving health care for all communities. Many immigrants pay the exact same taxes as US citizen, but many legal immigrants are not able to obtain or are made to wait years to get affordable health care programs that are paid for by their taxes,” said Sonal Ambegaokar, Health Policy Attorney for the National Immigration Law Center. “If reform is going to work and reduce costs for all Americans, health care reform must be inclusive and must end the unfair treatment of immigrants.”

“APIs and other immigrant communities must take action in order to be included in any reform proposal,” said Scott Chan, community advocate for APALC. “APALC calls on API communities to contact their members of Congress and ask them to include our communities in any health reform legislation.”

Members of Congress can be reached by calling: (202) 224-3121.

###

[1] Ponce, Tseng, Ong, Shek, Ortiz, & Gatchell. “*The State of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Health in California Report*” Prepared for the Honorable Mike Eng & California Asian Pacific Islander Joint Legislative Caucus. April 2009.