

Pasifika Health Summit

5/12/2023



From Data to Storytelling “Unleashing the Power of Collective Wisdom for a Healthier Tomorrow”

As the sun beat down on the picturesque Pacific Islander community, an array of CBOs and public health professionals came together to celebrate the successes and progress of their community's public health efforts. The air was filled with a sense of joy, accomplishment, and camaraderie, as everyone united under the common goal of improving the well-being and health equity of the Pacific Islander community.

Reflecting on the journey that had brought them all together, they acknowledged the challenges that they had overcome, both long before COVID and throughout the pandemic. The systemic inadequacies and disparities that were exposed by the pandemic were daunting, but they were not insurmountable. This community was nothing if not resilient and resourceful, and they had been making strides toward their goal of uplifting the Pacific Islander community.

As the group contemplated the road ahead, they knew that creating a network of engaged CBOs would be essential. It would require a willingness to learn from one another, to engage in reciprocal relationships that demand collective action and shared responsibility. It was a challenge, but one that they felt confident they could overcome, by working together towards a brighter future.

With optimism and perseverance, this community would face the unknown challenges that lie ahead, and they would overcome them together, united by their shared vision and collective intelligence. As they wrapped up the festivities, they knew that the work was far from over, but they were excited to continue the journey and make even greater strides toward health equity and a brighter tomorrow.

APDE placemat walk

Working closely with both Tacoma Pierce and Seattle King County Public Health Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation units, our team embarked on a journey of discovery to unravel critical data regarding Youth Depression, Adult connection, Housing, Life expectancy, and Racism. Our aim was to analyze these factors to determine how they contribute to community health outcomes.

Our team had access to overwhelming facts and statistics that gave us a bird's eye view of the state of Pacific Islander communities. For example, a low number of Pacific Islander youth feel they have a trusted adult they can talk with about important problems. This data only served as a starting point for our group activity. We realized that to understand the full picture of these health factors, we needed to dive deep and examine each of these factors from different angles.

We consulted with community leaders to get their unique perspectives and personal experiences. We wanted to hear their stories about how these health factors impacted their communities. We facilitated a data "placemat" activity where participants examined key data points on poster boards and determined if they resonated with them or not. Then, participants broke out into small groups and discussed what the data points meant to them and how we can all address them as a collective. These conversations helped us bring the data to life and paint a clear picture of how they affect people daily.

We learned that Youth Depression is a significant problem in many of our communities, and it can affect a young person's quality of life. On the other hand, adult connection, when nurtured, can serve as a protective factor against depression, creating positive ripple effects on an individual's overall health and well-being. We also discovered that Housing and Life expectancy play a significant role in a community's overall health outcomes. Having access to safe and affordable housing has a direct impact on an individual's mental and physical health. Furthermore, Racism, whether intentional or not, creates barriers to health care, housing, education, and job opportunities.

Throughout our explorative Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation phase, we delved deep into these health factors and learned the truth behind the numbers. Participants placed a red dot on data points that did not make sense or align with what they see in the community. This participatory activity with community leaders allowed us to uncover insights that would have otherwise gone unnoticed, allowing us to create solutions that were tailored to the unique needs of each community. One participant shared, "It was refreshing to give my opinion on issues that have affected my community rather than sitting back in a session where I was being talked at."

Through our partnership with Tacoma Pierce and Seattle King County Public Health Assessment, Policy Development, and Evaluation units, we were able to analyze these health factors and determine what was true and what was false. Moving forward, it is crucial for both Health Departments to continue looking at data with community members. This activity will serve as a starting point for building healthier communities that are safe, supportive, and thriving for everyone.

Cultural Celebration

The sun had set on a perfect day, and the island breeze blew gently over us as we wrapped up the Health Summit. A palpable energy had built throughout the day, but it had reached its climax when each island culture performed a dance with joy and laughter.

The Melanesians had mesmerized us with their hypnotic hip sways and fluid movements, while the Micronesians had dazzled us with their high-energy beats and complex choreography. The Polynesians brought us a profound sense of energy and flare. Each island had brought something unique and valuable to the table.

As the last notes of the music died away, we gathered to say our goodbyes, exchanging hugs, handshakes and promises to stay in touch. We had all bonded in a way that transcended cultural differences, thanks to the common goal of health and well-being that we shared.

We all felt energized, revitalized, and renewed. We knew that the knowledge and inspiration gained from the Health Summit would carry us through until our next gathering in 2024. And until then, we promised to keep our connections alive and to bring the joy, love, and laughter of our island cultures into our everyday lives.

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