



Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address SDOH: Design Sprints

With support from a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) and the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organization (AAPCHO) launched “Building Cross-Sector Partnerships to Address SDOH: Design Sprints.” Using human-centered design concepts, NACHC and AAPCHO facilitated four design sprint cohorts of community health centers and their cross-sector partners to tackle social determinants of health challenges in their communities and advance health equity. Each cohort was focused on one aspect of the RWJF Theory of Change framework (purpose, data, governance, finance) to strengthen both emerging and established partnerships, and foster improved alignment between sectors.

Improving Healthcare Access for the Burmese Community

Overview

HealthNet

A non-profit federally qualified health center providing primary care health services to the medically underserved

MISSION: To improve lives with compassionate health care and support services, regardless of ability to pay.

VISION: World class quality in community health care.

Hope for Tomorrow

A non-profit organization providing the resources necessary for the Burmese of Indianapolis to begin to achieve the American dream.

MISSION: To build bridges between the Burmese and American communities through education and service.

VISION: To empower Burmese refugees toward a hopeful, successful future.

PROBLEM: Typically, Burmese people do not seek medical care until it is their very last resort. As a result, American providers might become frustrated and ask, “*Why did you wait for so long?*” Immediately, there is a disconnect between the provider and the patient.

DESIGN SPRINTS: We were very excited to participate in the design sprint initiative to develop and formalize a collaborative partnership between HFT and HealthNet. We felt that building trusting relationships between our two organizations, working together, and enhancing cultural understanding, ultimately, would help reduce Burmese fears of the medical community and result in increased openness to health education and preventive care.

GOAL: Lives will be saved if people are no longer afraid of the medical community and hesitant to seek care.



Addressing our Community Challenge

Both HealthNet and HFT believe that for immigrants to successfully integrate into a new community, while maintaining their own ethnic cultural identity, both the incoming and the receiving communities need to learn from each other — appreciating diversity and respecting each other’s cultural norms and practices.

During the design sprint process, HealthNet learned a great deal from our HFT colleagues as the horrific military coup brought violence and bloodshed to Burma. Watching while loved ones in Burma face arrest, detention, escape, and in some cases, death, has severely stressed the Indianapolis Burmese community, causing depression, anxiety, and other crisis reactions.

As a result, the design sprints team shifted its focus to address the immediate mental health needs of a highly traumatized community.

Outputs:

- The HealthNet psychologist and behavioral health therapist provided a Zoom workshop for HFT volunteers on “*Mental Health 101*,” including depression, anxiety, stress, and suicidality.
- Flyers on topics related to mental health were translated into Hakka Chin for the Burmese community.
- HFT recorded several educational “spots” on Chin TV on mental health issues.

Design Sprint Highlights

Relationship building: As a new partnership, first we convened the team to get acquainted, followed by brainstorming, sharing ideas and prioritizing projects.

Community voice: Identified and connected with leaders in the Burmese community to shape our work and respond to community needs/priorities given the crisis in Burma and COVID limitations.

The long-term goal is to leverage our partnership to identify and address issues voiced by the community and contribute to decisions that impact the health of the Burmese community.

Moving Forward

Next Steps:

1. HFT provide additional training for HealthNet personnel on the Burmese culture to ensure culturally sensitive medical care
2. Host small group discussions with Burmese to identify unique health and healthcare needs, as well as pressing social determinants of health.

Future Project: HealthNet to sponsor Chin National Day and the Myanmar Union Day

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For more information about the partnership, please contact **Nancy Richman**, nancy.richman@indyhealthnet.org

HealthNet: www.indyhealthnet.org **Hope for Tomorrow:** www.hopefortomorrowusa.org

For more information about the design sprint program, please visit www.prapare.org