

LEADERSHIP TEAM

National Collaborating Team

- Dr. M. Danet Lapiz-Bluhm - Project Leader
- Denise Marie Partosa - Research Assistant

NayonsCalifornia

- Dr. Katherine Abriam-Yago - ARC
- Rudy Asercion - PAL

Hawaii

- Marianela Jacob - ARC
- Gina Lardizabal - PAL

Texas

- Dr. Pamela Windle - ARC
- Shela Ecobiza - PAL

New Jersey

- Dr. Persephone Vargas - ARC
- Veronica Lavarro - PAL

New York

- Dr. Mary Joy Garcia-Dia - ARC
- Liza Santos - PAL

Consultants

- Dr. Melinda Bender
- Dr. Leo-Felix Jurado
- Marietta Dela Cruz

ARC: Academic Research Collaborator

PAL: Patient Advocate Leader

Pasko Amidst a Pandemic: Meaningful Celebration of Love, Unity, and Hope

By M. Danet Lapiz-Bluhm, PhD, RN, MSCI, FAAN

"*Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon sa Inyong Lahat!*" Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to All! These wishes which traditionally bring cheer and glad tidings are especially significant this year 2020 as we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the World Health Organization (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life worldwide, presenting an unprecedented challenge to public health, food systems, and work. At the time of writing, there has been 1.57 million cases and 25,608 deaths from COVID in the US; the global statistics are staggering. The economic and social disruption caused by the pandemic is devastating; tens of millions are at risk of falling into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, at about 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of the year (WHO, 2020).

Despite these gloomy statistics, the pandemic also showcased our sense of community, unity, and love. We made masks, donated food and money, celebrated and fed our frontliners, consoled family members and mourned the loss of lives, and many more. A significant personal contribution was wearing mask and social distancing to stem the spread of the virus. We persevered while looking forward to a future of hope when a vaccine is developed. Two vaccines have now been endorsed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020). As of 12/19/2020, 272,000 Americans received the COVID-19 vaccine (First tier: healthcare providers) with 7 allergic reactions and 2 briefly hospitalized. The vaccines are reported to be safe and about 95% effective. Indeed, there is hope. Vaccination against the COVID-19 virus is highly recommended.

At the end of 2020, which fits the Dickensian "the worst of times and the best of times," we celebrate the love, unity and hope that helped us through the pandemic. During our virtual or socially-distanced celebrations, let us pause for fervent prayers of thanks for the gift of life and hope. Let us rejoice as we sincerely wish everyone a blessed, safe and healthy holiday season. "*Maligayang Pasko! Mabuhay!*"

Hence, the California Filipino-American Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (FA-PCOR) Nayon had the yeoman's job of getting Filipinos to participate and be engaged in our "Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo" project.

At our last national meeting, the CA Nayon leaders shared various strategies to engage Filipinos, including creating a "[Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo](#)" [Facebook page](#). They have also created an informative YouTube video which provides a background of the project (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8m79b9EjuBo>).

The Philippine Nurses Association of Northern California has on its Research page a recruitment flyer of the *Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo* Project community meetings (<https://pnanorthcal.org/research/9095267>).

Kudos to the CA leadership team headed by the Academic Research Collaborator (Dr. Katherine Abriam-Yago), community Patient Advocate Leader (Mr. Rudy Asercion) and the project consultant, Dr. Melinda Bender. The same team also created a guide on the conduct of Zoom meetings with community members.

Thank you, CA FA-PCOR Nayon, for all your hard work!

Recruitment Strategies from California FA-PCOR NAYON: Notes from the Field

By M. Danet Lapiz-Bluhm, PhD, RN, MSCI, FAAN

California has the largest population of Filipinos in the US. According to the data pooled by Migration Policy Institute (2020), 31% of Filipinos in the US live in greater Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York metropolitan areas.

Community Leaders' Voice: Accomplishments and Challenges of the FA-PCOR *Nayon* Networks

By M. Danet Lapiz-Bluhm, PhD, RN, MSCI, FAAN

At the November 2020 "Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo" Project National Leadership Meeting, *nayon* leaders were asked to describe community networking accomplishments and failures, recommendations to improve and sustain successes. A summary of the main themes shared are listed below.

Networking Accomplishments:

- CA:** Expanded research and community networks, and the building of relationships
- HI:** Leveraged and improved community relations, reached other islands and key governmental entities, and collaborated with community organizations
- TX:** First to completed community stakeholder meetings, inclusive outreach, and broad reach through the State of Texas
- NJ:** First to publish data from NJ FA-PCOR meetings in the first year and engaged Filipinos in multigenerational households
- NY:** Community collaboration, increased awareness of participants' needs, motivate younger demographics, the recognition that success stories are encouraging, and the importance of religion and partnership with faith-based organizations (FBOs).

Networking Challenges:

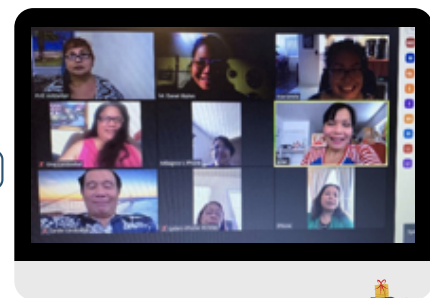
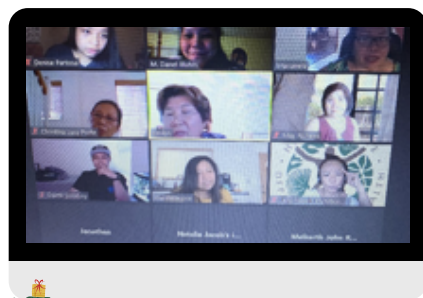
The COVID-19 pandemic was a challenge that was unanimously shared by *nayon* leaders of all states. The pandemic limited community interactions and shifted meetings into the online platform, where technology issues were experienced. The CA *Nayon* The HI and NJ *Nayon* brought up the potential improvement of interview questions.

Scheduling meetings was also a challenge before and during the pandemic, when meetings were held virtually (CA, TX, NJ, and NY). The TX *Nayon* reported a perceived skepticism among the Filipino community about the project. The NY *Nayon* experienced a leadership change with the partner professional organization, consistent communication about sharing personal views, and limited volunteer time.

Recommendations:

- CA:** Actively involve Filipino community leaders, create Facebook account, the importance of personal connections, and provide training for the virtual platform
- HI:** Provide training for the virtual platform, and continue collaboration - Continue collaboration with local organizations to maintain stable relationships.
- TX:** Extension of the project period and provide training for the virtual platform.
- NJ:** Virtual and telephone interviews helped engagement during pandemic.
- NY:** Stakeholder recruitment, re-engagement following leadership change, schedule flexibility, creation community forums, and participation compensation

The essence of the project is giving a voice to the community. Thank you to all the leaders who provided feedback. The information shared is useful as we continue this project through the approved no-cost extension period (Thank you, PCORI!). They are also helpful for clinicians and researchers who may want to involve Filipinos in research endeavors! *Maraming salamat po!*



Photocaptures of the online PASS meeting of the HI FA-PCOR *nayon*



COMMUNITY LEADER HIGHLIGHT

By Denise Marie Partosa

PCOR Balita is proud to highlight the FA-PCOR Patient Advocate Leader of New York, Mrs. Liza Santos. Mrs. Santos is an alumnus of San Sebastian College in Manila with a Bachelor of Science in Commerce. She attended the University of the Philippines where she earned her post-graduate degree. Her passion for education and communication reflects her professional career as a private tutor for the younger generation, teaching math and reading courses.

Mrs. Santos spent her childhood in Taytay, Rizal which is known for its clothing manufacturing and woodworking industries as well as rich historical churches and homes. Echoing the flourishing and vibrant progress of this municipality, Mrs. Santos exudes the community spirit of helping and supporting endeavors towards development.

Mrs. Santos is currently a volunteer for Kalusugan Coalition based in New York, a multidisciplinary collaboration for Filipino-Americans to improve community health through many facets such as education and networking. She also spearheads and coordinates her local church's health-related projects. She became a co-leader of the NY FA-PCOR *Nayon*, through the recommendation of the PNAA President, Dr. Mary Joy Garcia-Dia (the ARC of NY FA-PCOR *Nayon*). She believed that the project aligns with her goals of better healthcare access and opportunities for the Filipino-Americans in New York and the United States.

Mrs. Santos states that research is essential as, "you'll be able to understand the current and pressing issues of Fil-Ams regarding research-related activities and be able to find ways to resolve those issues." Being a part of this project allows her to interact with the diverse sectors (demographics) to work together in gathering more data to have better and reliable community-based research outcomes. The activities completed for the project's goals and objectives have been great experiences and made her more aware of the diversity of Filipino-Americans and their health and healthcare needs.

She believes that continuous efforts in collecting, recording, and analyzing information through the PCORI project will give more representation and voice to pressing issues that have been prevalent in our growing Filipino-American population.



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