

PINOY PCOR BALITA



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Get Vaccinated and Boosted: Staying Safe and Healthy the Holiday Season!

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

"Maligayang Pasko at Manigong Bagong Taon!" "Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year!" These are greetings often exchanged at during the holiday season. However, two years into the pandemic, wishes have morphed to blessing others a safe healthy holidays and new year 2022.

Wishes for safety and health are especially important as a new variant of the SARS virus, the Omicron, variant, has been reported. Viruses constantly change through mutation which sometimes results in a new variant of the virus. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has consistently sent the message that to reduce the spread of infection and new variants, people must get the COVID-19 vaccine and wear a mask.

Amid the continued spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant and growing concerns related to the Omicron variant, unvaccinated people are at increased risk for infection, illness, and death. Vaccines reduce the risks. The CDC recommends everyone ages 5 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine. The Pfizer-BioNTech COVID vaccine is authorized for 5 years and older; Moderna and J&J vaccines are authorized for 18 years and older. COVID-19 booster doses are recommended at least 6 months after the 2nd dose.

As of December 15, 2021, the CDC reports that only 72.1% of the US population has received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. Among this group, nearly two-thirds were White (58%), 10% were Black, 19% were Hispanic, 6% were Asian, 1% were American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN), and <1% were Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (NHOPI), while 6% reported multiple or "other" race. Clearly, there is a need to improve our vaccination. As we usher the new year, let us help increase the vaccination rate for our safety and protection. The virus does not distinguish ethnicities; it must be a united effort. Hence, as we convey our holiday wishes, we too should campaign for vaccination!

Get vaccinated! Get boosted!

Alarming Rates of Hypertension Among Filipinos in South Texas

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

Members of the Philippine Nurses Association of America (PNAA) local chapters are engaged with the community to promote health and prevent disease. They regularly conduct community outreach activities including health screenings and education. An exemplar is the Philippine Nurses Association of San Antonio (PNASA) in South Texas. Under the leadership of Dr. Lapiz-Bluhm, PNASA volunteers, in collaboration with academic, community and faith-based organizations (such as University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Aguman Capampangan of San Antonio (ACOSA), Institute of Texan Cultures, Sto. Nino Catholic Church and others) have provided free health screenings.

Data analysis show that about 70% of the Filipinos screened have abnormal blood pressure ($\geq 120/80$ mmHg). This data support the reports from the Filipino American Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (FAPCOR) "nasyon" of five US States (California, Hawaii, Texas, New Jersey, and New York) where the stakeholders report hypertension as a priority health issue. Interestingly, there are studies that report high hypertension rates ($\geq 50\%$) among Filipinos in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. These alarming statistics call us to action to address this important health issue among Filipinos.



Engaging Filipino Stakeholders: Tips from PCORI

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

The Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) funded projects, *"Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo"* and its extension, the Filipino American Research (FAR) Hub, aim to build Filipino American Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (FAPCOR) *"Nayon"* (villages) in 20 US States. Key to FAPCOR *"Nayon"* is the engagement of multiple stakeholders to make them equal partners in the research endeavor. Hence, a better understanding and application of stakeholder engagement strategies is necessary.

As the PCORI aptly stated, diverse stakeholder perspectives make studies more useful and meaningful. However, creating a partnership between stakeholders and research professionals is not easy. It takes commitment and effort. PCORI provides resources for engaging stakeholders (click this link to view) broken down into three learning areas: (1) Inclusion: The Starting Point for Effective Teams, (2) Best practices in Engaging Stakeholders, and (3) Addressing Contextual Challenges to Engagement. Tips on to be more inclusive are briefly described below.

Inclusion are behaviors and social norms intended to ensure that people feel welcome, are treated fairly and respectfully. It ensures that each person is given the same chance to contribute. PCORI provides tips on being inclusive (see this link). Below are some examples.

Common Non-Inclusive Behaviors:

Below is a list of common behaviors that are not inclusive and may prevent stakeholders from participating.

- Greeting and starting conversation with only select team members
- Not acknowledging your team member's comment or contribution
- Interrupting a team member who is speaking
- Minimizing or dismissing a team member's observation opinion
- Focusing our attention only on those who know well
- Expressing criticism to others of your team member's work or ideas
- Making jokes about a team member's personal characteristics

Recommended Inclusion Behaviors:

Below are some recommended strategies to ensure an inclusive atmosphere in stakeholder meetings and activities.

- Make a point to greet your team members and include that person in the conversation.
- Paraphrase or repeat your team member's comment and verbalize the value of their contribution to the project to show you listened and understand.
- Allow your team member to finish their thought completely before responding.
- Acknowledge your team member's idea or opinion and communicate how it is being considered.
- Intentionally seek out others who you don't yet know
- Ask you team member about their process or approach to the work
- Find opportunities to show respect to your team members for their individuality

Source: Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (2020). How to be more inclusive. <https://research-teams.pcori.org/sites/default/files/2021-02/HowToBeMoreInclusTipSheet508.pdf>

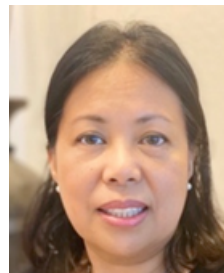
COMMUNITY LEADER HIGHLIGHTS

The Filipino American Patient-Centered Outcomes Research (FAPCOR) *"Nayon"* Network welcomes the Arizona FAPCOR leadership team, Dr. Erlinda Singarajah, and Ms. Maribel Dillard. Dr. Singarajah serves as the Academic Research Collaborator (ARC). Ms. Dillard serves as the Patient Advocate Leader (PAL).

Erlinda Singarajah, Ph.D., ANP-C, COHN-S is board certified as an Adult Nurse Practitioner (NP) and as an Occupational Health Nurse Specialist. She has over 3 decades of nursing experience and currently serves as the Interim Director and NP for an Employee Occupational Health department and as an Adjunct Faculty of the AZ State University College of Nursing. She is the current President of the Philippine Nurses Association of Arizona (PNAAZ) and the President-Elect of the NP Section of the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Dr. Singarajah's Ph.D. dissertation is titled, *Ethnic Differences in Health and Cardiovascular Risk Factors of Asians in Arizona*. She hopes to partner with local and community members to reduce cardiovascular risks and optimize the health of Filipino Americans in AZ. She was highly recommended by the PNA of America President, Dr. Mary Joy Garcia Dia, one of the FAR Hub's consultants. Dr. Dia based the recommendation on Dr. Singarajah's active leadership in the PNAAZ as well as the community. Dr. Singarajah shared, *"The invitation to serve as the ARC of AZ came at a perfect time. I am excited to assist in building FA health-related research and advancing the health of FA in AZ."*

Maribel Dillard, a LEAN Practitioner, is the Charter President of the Phoenix Lion Without Borders. She was highly recommended by Dr. Singarajah because Ms. Dillard's organization has collaborated with PNAAZ and other Filipino organizations to enhance the health of our local communities. Phoenix Lions Without Borders focuses on specific health issues such as pediatric cancer, diabetes, veterans health, youth engagement, vision. Its a service organization that focuses on humanitarian projects. They have outreach activities in the Philippines and along the Mexico border (see: <https://www.lionswithoutborders.org/>). Ms. Dillard is also very active in other organizations. She is also the current President of the Filipino Club of Arizona (FCA). The FCA is a community organization that promotes Filipino culture and engagement as well research and health and wellness and scholarship. Its focus is on seniors of the community and honoring the elders. Ms. Dillard is affiliated with the Arizona Asian American Association, a cultural and ethnic organization that promotes unity and cultural awareness within Arizona. With these deep community connections, it is no wonder Ms. Dillard understands the importance of collaboration. She said, *"You accomplish more together than just working with one organization."* When asked what motivated her to agree to serve as the AZ PAL, she replied, *"I want to ensure that something is being done to promote wellness for the Filipino American community."*

Thank you, Dr. Singarajah and Ms. Dillard, for your leadership of the AZ FAPCOR Nayon and commitment to promote the health of Filipinos in AZ.



Dr. Erlinda Singarajah



Ms. Maribel Dillard

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