

# PINOY PCOR BALITA

A quarterly publication of the "Mag-PCOR Muna Tayo" and Filipino American Research (FAR) Hub projects



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## Mental Health Awareness Month: Relevance for Filipinos

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

June is Mental Health Awareness Month (MHAM) in the US. MHAM is celebrated to raise awareness and educate the public about mental illnesses, the realities of living with these conditions, and strategies for attaining mental health and wellness. It also aims to draw attention to suicide, which can be precipitated by some mental illnesses. Additionally, It strives to reduce the stigma (negative attitudes and misconceptions) that surrounds mental illnesses. In 2019, about 21% of Americans experienced a mental illness. This rate could be higher in the post-COVID era.

Mental health is an essential issue among Filipino Americans. Our work through the Filipino American Patient-Centered Outcomes Research "Nayon" (FAPCORN) networks in 15 US States indicates that mental health is one of the top five prioritized health issues among Filipino communities. Stress related to work and family, especially caring for older family members and extended family in the Philippines, is often mentioned. Stigma related to mental health conditions has also been reported, which creates a barrier to mental health help-seeking behavior. This issue is not unique to Filipinos in the US. A systematic review of 15 studies of individuals of Filipino descent in seven countries (N = 5096) demonstrated unfavorable attitudes toward professional help-seeking behaviors despite experiencing high rates of psychological distress (Martinez et al., 2020).

Hence, Filipino communities in the US are urged to leverage the national mental health celebration to help de-stigmatize issues related to mental health. This awareness is especially significant considering that Filipino Americans underutilize existing mental health care services that are culturally, socially, and linguistically incompatible with their needs. Along with stigma, adherence to traditional practices and healing methods remains a formidable barrier to the appropriate provision of care. Hence, there is a need for a structured, culturally sensitive, comprehensive approach among Filipino communities. Our FAPCORN work can help inform clinicians and researchers on how to best approach Filipinos related to mental health.



## It's OK Not to be OK (IONO): Mental Health Outreach to Asians

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

Studies show that stigma related to mental illness is not unique to Filipinos but is also true to other Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. The stigma stems from cultural values, acculturation, and generalized attitudes toward mental illness in the community. Hence, mental illness concerns are often underreported. The "It's OK Not to be OK (IONO)" is a community service-learning project where members of the Asian Pacific Medical Student Association (APAMSA) at the University of Texas Health at San Antonio provide education to promote mental health and break the stigma surrounding mental illness in the AAPI communities. The APAMSA students will work with the FAPCORN team in South Texas to bring IONO to Filipinos and other minority communities. They will be at locally scheduled events in August, i.e., Adobo Throwdown 3 and Filipino and Pacific Islander Festival.

**"Your mental illness is not your fault, but it is your responsibility."**

Marcus Parks,  
host of *Last Podcast on the Left*



# Coalition of Asian American Nurses (CAAN) in Arizona

M. Danet Lapid-Bluhm, PhD, RN, MSC, FAAN

Dr. Erlinda Singarajah, the Academic Research Collaborator of the AZ FAPCOR, was one of the prime movers in the launch of CAAN (Coalition of Asian American Nurses) in Arizona on February 24, 2023. The coalition consists of leaders from the Arizona Indian Nurses (AZINA), the Philippine Nurses Association of Arizona (PNAAZ), and the Korean American Nurses Foundation (KANF). CAAN's vision is "to achieve health equity and improve the health and well-being of AAPI communities. Its mission is "to provide a unified voice to advocate health equity for AAPI communities and to advance AAPI nurses' roles through education, research, and scholarship."

CAAN announced the hosting of its inaugural conference, "Leading Changes by Embracing Diversity," on September 14, 2024, 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., at the Goldman Auditorium and Sonntag Pavilion, Barrow Neurological Institute, Phoenix, AZ. Please see the event flyer below. The FAPCOR network wishes CAAN a very successful event!



**Coalition of Asian American Nurses (CAAN) Inaugural Conference**  
*Leading Changes by Embracing Diversity*



**Saturday, Sept. 14, 2024**  
 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Goldman Auditorium and Sonntag Pavilion  
 Barrow Neurological Institute, Phoenix, AZ

**Barrow** Neurological Institute | **Dignity Health** St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center

## Goal

Healthy People 2030 focuses on the culturally sensitive approach to narrow the gap of the health equality or lack of healthcare resources among the Asian and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. Through this conference, we are focusing on educating AAPI nurses, public health advocates, and community members to increase their awareness of the healthcare inequality and to identify strategies to be advocates for the AAPI community.

## Learning Objectives

Learner will:

1. Identify healthcare issues affecting AAPI community members in Arizona
2. Identify gaps in knowledge to improve the health of AAPI community members in Arizona
3. Describe at least two nursing skills to improve care provided to AAPI community members in Arizona
4. Describe at least two self care strategies to improve the mental health of AAPI nurses in Arizona
5. Describe strategies to improve health of AAPI community members in Arizona



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