



# Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition

## Liên Hội Bảo Vệ Sức Khỏe Cộng Đồng Việt Nam

[www.VietHealthCoalition.org](http://www.VietHealthCoalition.org)

**Chairperson:**

Ms. Tuyet Ha-Iaconis

**Vice Chair:**

Ms. Ngoc Bui-Tong

**Members:**

American Cancer Society

Anthem Blue Cross

Asian Americans for Community  
Involvement

Catholic Charities-John XXIII

Community Health  
Partnership, Inc.

Immigrant Resettlement  
and Cultural Center

Kaiser Permanente Medical Group

Cancer Prevention Institute of  
California

Premier Care of Northern California  
Group, Inc.

Santa Clara County Ambulatory &  
Community Health Services

Santa Clara County  
Public Health Department

Santa Clara Family Health Plan

Southeast Asian Community Center

UCSF - Vietnamese Community  
Health Promotion Project:  
*Sức Khỏe Là Vàng!*

Vietnamese Physician Association  
of Northern California

Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation

**WHO WE ARE:** The Vietnamese Reach for Health (VRH) Coalition was formed in 1999 to serve the Vietnamese American community in Santa Clara County, CA. The partnership consists of 16 agencies including community-based organizations serving the Vietnamese American community (American Cancer Society, Asian Americans for Community Involvement, Catholic Charities-John XXIII, Community Health Partnership, Immigrant Resettlement and Cultural Center, Southeast Asian Community Center, Vietnamese Voluntary Foundation, Inc.), county health agencies (Department of Public Health, Ambulatory & Community Health Services), health insurers and providers (Anthem Blue Cross, Kaiser Permanente, Premier Care of Northern California Medical Group, Inc., Santa Clara Family Health Plan, Vietnamese Physicians Association of Northern California), and researchers (Cancer Prevention Institute of California, Vietnamese Community Health Promotion Project- Health is Gold at the University of California, San Francisco), along with 4 community members.

**WHAT IS OUR MISSION:** The Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition's mission is to promote health equity in Vietnamese Americans in the Bay Area Counties of California through advocacy, education, research and collaborative efforts.

**WHAT IS OUR COMMUNITY:** Vietnamese Americans are one of the fastest growing US populations. From 1990 to 2000, the number of Vietnamese Americans grew by 83% from 614,547 to 1,122,528. More than 105,000 Vietnamese-Americans live in Santa Clara County and 484,000 in California. More than 2/3 of Vietnamese Americans are foreign-born.

**WHAT ARE THE MAIN PREVENTABLE HEALTH PROBLEMS:** Vietnamese Americans have many barriers to health, including high rates of limited English proficiency, difficulty with health care access, low levels of knowledge about prevention, and physician-patient communication problems. They also have marked health disparities:

- Vietnamese Americans have extremely high rates of liver cancer, over eight times that of non-Hispanic whites. This is due primarily to the high rates of chronic hepatitis B, which is 10-14% among Vietnamese Americans, 47 to 140 times the rate in the general population. Although hepatitis B can be treated, many Vietnamese Americans have no symptoms and do not know that they are infected.
- Vietnamese American women have a high rate of cervical cancer, twice that of non-Hispanic Whites. Cervical cancer is preventable with regular Pap tests, but more than 25% of Vietnamese American women have never had a Pap test compared to less than 5% for all American women.
- Breast cancer is the most common cancer among Vietnamese American women. It can be detected early with regular mammography, but 25% of Vietnamese-American women age 40 and older have not had a mammogram within the previous two years.

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- Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third most common cancer among Vietnamese American men and women. Colorectal cancer can be detected early with screening tests, but 40% of Vietnamese Americans have never had a colorectal cancer screening test.
- Tobacco is the most important preventable cause of death, but, in California, 25% of Vietnamese American men continue to smoke compared to only 16% of the general male population.

**WHAT ARE OUR SOLUTIONS:** The Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition and its members have received funding from the American Cancer Society, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), the National Center on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NCMHD), and the California Department of Public Health to work on the health issues of Vietnamese Americans.

- The Coalition has successfully increased breast and cervical screening in Vietnamese American women using a community-based participatory research model and a multi-component intervention that included a media campaign, lay health worker outreach, patient navigation, and continuing medical education for Vietnamese American physicians. We continue to refer women to Every Woman Counts program for breast and cervical cancers screening.
- We are currently addressing barriers to hepatitis B screening and vaccination among Vietnamese American in a multi-media campaign.
- We are currently addressing barriers to colorectal cancer screening among Vietnamese Americans age 50 and older using lay health worker outreach.
- We have recently completed the first ever statewide Tobacco Use Survey for Vietnamese Americans and are preparing to address tobacco control and smoking cessation in this population.
- We have held a community forum in September annually since 1999 to raise community awareness about health and prevention. Over 300 community members participate in each forum to learn about healthy behaviors.
- We have published 17 articles in scientific journals presenting our successful breast and cervical cancer programs.
- Our Coalition was recognized nationally by the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, and in 2004, the Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition was given an award as a "Partner in Closing the Health Gap" during the Commemoration of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP:** To find out more about us and how you can help, please contact:

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