



International Community Health Services
Report to the Community





“My wife and I are very grateful for the good customer service at ICHS. I feel like a family member here.”

- ICHS Patient



In 2007, Premera Blue Cross honored ICHS with its Health Care Quality Leadership Award, in recognition of our acute, chronic, and preventative care.

Our History

In the early 1970s, a group of dedicated medical students and community volunteers came together to create what would become International Community Health Services (ICHS). For years, they had observed the growing need for affordable and in-language health care for the elderly immigrants who lived in the International District. In 1973, they achieved their dream of establishing a free health clinic. First known as the Asian Community Health Clinic, the small storefront clinic quickly grew into the largest Asian and Pacific Islander (API) health care provider in Washington. Today, ICHS operates two clinic sites, one in the International District and another in South Seattle's Holly Park neighborhood.

Our Mission and Commitment to Community

ICHS' mission is to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health services to improve the health of the Asian and Pacific Islander community and others.

We are committed to delivering the best possible care to our patients. ICHS is proud to have a multicultural and multilingual staff to provide culturally-relevant and in-language health services to our diverse patient population. As a federally-funded community health center, we serve everyone who walks through our doors, regardless of their insurance status or ability to pay.

A “One-Stop Shop” to Serve All Your Needs

ICHS' clinics function as “one-stop shops” where patients can access a variety of services to address their holistic needs, including:

- Primary Medical Services
- Dental Care
- Acupuncture/Chinese Traditional Medicine
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory
- Behavioral Health Services
- Health Promotion and Education

Growing to Meet Our Patients Needs

ICHS has undertaken several projects in order to stay responsive to the needs of our patients, including the implementation of Electronic Medical Records (EMR). We also completed our second-ever comprehensive Community Needs Assessment in 2006. This assessment examined demographic data and projected population growth, the current use of our health services, and trends in our patients' health needs. ICHS is already using the results from the Community Needs Assessment to guide our future direction. If you would like a summarized version of the Community Needs Assessment, please visit www.ichs.com.

Our Patients

In 2007, ICHS' clinics served almost 16,000 patients, the majority of whom (over 80%) were API. They include Chinese, Vietnamese, Filipino, Korean, and other API ethnic groups. We are also increasingly seeing patients from other communities, especially the Latino, African and Eastern European communities.

Nearly half (48%) of our patients live in the zip codes around the International District and Holly Park area, including Downtown Seattle, Southeast Seattle, and Beacon Hill. Some travel from as far as Olympia and Bellingham to see a provider at ICHS.

Barriers to Health

Almost two-thirds of ICHS patients reported a need for interpretation during their medical or dental appointment. In addition, about half of patients live at or below the Federal Poverty Level. (According to 2007 Poverty Guidelines, this was a family of four earning \$20,650 or less.) Many of them can be covered by public insurance programs such as Basic Health, Medicaid, and Medicare; however over 25% of ICHS patients are still uninsured.

“ Between 2001 and 2006, the percentage of uninsured patients at ICHS increased by 43% ”

Shattering the “Model Minority” Myth

Despite the perception that APIs are doing well when it comes to their health, our Community Needs Assessment showed that low-income and limited English-speaking APIs fare worse than their white counterparts on numerous health measures, including the incidence of diabetes, use of preventive health screenings, and overall dental health.

Leading the Way in Asian and Pacific Islander Health

ICHS partners with other community organizations in initiatives, projects, and research-based interventions aimed at examining and reducing health disparities for APIs. As the first clinic in Washington to provide culturally-relevant and multilingual services targeted to diverse API populations, ICHS' expertise is sought out by other health and social service providers seeking to improve their services to API communities.

Creating Support Systems to Promote Health

Since its inception, ICHS' services have always included education and prevention programs that are designed to address the specific health needs of APIs.

Currently, these include:

- Community Advocacy and Outreach for:
 - Diabetes Education Classes
 - Women's Health Services
 - General Health Issues
- Nutrition Services
 - Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) Nutrition
 - Medical Nutrition Therapy
- Health Education on:
 - Chronic Disease Management & Prevention
 - Chronic Hepatitis Education & Management
 - Family Planning (including a Young Adult Clinic)
- Behavioral Health Services

Identifying Our Challenges

Seattle's dynamic and diverse API community is expected to grow rapidly in the years to come, surpassing the API growth rates around the nation. By 2010, King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties are projected to have a combined population of 400,000 API residents.

The rising costs of health care, a weakening economy, shrinking funds for health services, and changes in regulations for Medicaid, Medicare, and other health care programs, will seriously impact the ability of ICHS and all community health centers across the nation to provide care to a growing medically-underserved population.

Integrating Prevention into Our Practice

The old adage "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" will be put to the test as health providers put more emphasis on preventive care as a means to reduce health care costs. ICHS began expanding our already-existing Health Promotion and Education services, as recommended by our Community Needs Assessment, and is seeking better ways to integrate preventive care into our primary care services.

Advocating for Our Communities

As a leader in advocacy for APIs, as well as all medically-underserved communities, ICHS plays an active role in creating local, statewide, and national policy to expand access to care and improve the health of all. Our priorities include the breakdown of health data on APIs. This category combines data for over 20 distinct API ethnic groups, making it difficult to get accurate and meaningful information to properly address the health care needs of each of the different communities.

Building Sustainable Growth

The ICHS Foundation was established in 2007 to support the long-term sustainability of ICHS and to ensure that we can fulfill our goal of providing the best possible care for our patients. The mission of the ICHS Foundation is to raise funds for and give philanthropic support to ICHS.

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