



Community Grant Outcome Report

Name: Influencing Wisconsin's Public Health System by Defining, Understanding and Diffusing a Treatment Model for Hmong Mental Health

Grantee: Mental Health Center of Dane County, Inc.

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Academic Partner: Dean Krahn, MD, MS, Professor, UW SMPH Department of Psychiatry

Program: Implementation

Grant Duration: 03-01-2006 to 07-31-2009 (41 months)

Expenditures: \$450,000

Use of Funds: Community Based Research and Evaluation

► **Description:** The Hmong community is a rapidly growing segment of Wisconsin's population. Many elder members of the community fled Laos after the Laotian Civil War (1962-1975) and have faced high degrees of trauma. There has been little study of the challenges faced by this community, which makes it difficult for physicians and mental health providers to treat and understand the challenges facing Hmong patients and develop cultural competence.

This project had three aims. First, it sought to adapt Kajsib House model – a model of culturally competent community-focused mental health care for Hmong elders – to the Appleton Hmong Community. The second objective was to determine the different health issues facing the Hmong population across generations. Finally, this project attempted to determine the relationship between trauma exposure, familial factors, acculturation and health status and the degree to which those relationships are mediated by levels of cortisol, the primary human stress hormone.

► **Results:** This project successfully replicated the Kajsib House model (Dane County) in Appleton. By combining WPP funds with government, health care, and private donations, the Lutheran Social Services in Appleton was serving 43 Hmong elders.

By the end of the grant period, the research project team had conducted interviews with and collected samples from 291 individuals from 100 three-generation Hmong families in Dane County. A variety of measurements such as psychiatric symptoms, mental status, height/waist/hip ratios, blood pressures, and body mass indexes were taken. In addition, 2,600 cortisol samples were obtained. Analysis is still ongoing, but this is believed to be the largest dataset ever collected in the Hmong Community.

This project may be the first or only study that focuses on the relationship of the stress levels of the generations Hmong immigrants in the United States, leading to improved levels of care.

The project was also successful in bringing local attention to the efficacy of the Kajsib House model of treatment for Hmong residents.

► **Met Objectives:** Project complete

► **Baseline Progress on State Health Plan**

Objectives: The project addressed mental health and mental disorders took on health disparities in the Hmong community. Specific objectives were not measured.

► **Academic Partner Role:** Research and evaluation. The academic partner provided guidance to ensure that objectives were carried out and samples and interview packets were of high quality. He also met regularly with the with the community partner to discuss and address issues.

► **Matched Dollars (cash or in-kind):** \$41,250

► **Dissemination:** The project team shared the preliminary findings at a Hmong National Conference in Appleton, Wisconsin in April of 2009. Five articles for publication are planned once the data are fully analyzed. The Kajsib House model was presented in California to other mental health service agencies and to the federal government staff.

► **Sustained:** Kajsib House received \$60,000 in federal, state and local funding for the program in Appleton. Mental health services continue in both the Dane County and Appleton sites.