



# Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition

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

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

**Chairperson:**  
Tammie Pitkin

**Vice Chair:**  
Minh-Tuan Nguyen

**Members:**

American Cancer Society  
Anthem Blue Cross  
Asian American Center of Santa Clara County  
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  
Viet Mental Health Network of Northern California

**WHO WE ARE:** The **Vietnamese Reach for Health Coalition (VRHC)** was officially formed in 2010, however, the group has worked together on health projects since 1999. The coalition consists of 16 agencies including community-based organizations serving the Vietnamese American community, along with 4 community members.

**WHAT IS OUR VISION:** VRHC envisions a Vietnamese American community free from the burden of preventable diseases, a community which is aware and knowledgeable of health promotion and disease prevention, where all its members have equal access to affordable, culturally, and linguistically appropriate health services, and actively participate in their own health care to achieve optimal quality of life.

**WHAT IS OUR MISSION:** To promote health equity among Vietnamese Americans in the Bay Area Counties of California through advocacy, education, 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. One in 14 Santa Clara County residents is Vietnamese or about 127,000 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.
- 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.

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**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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