

ADAPT (Addressing Disparities in Asian Populations through Translational Research) Coalition

Quarterly Newsletter: February 20, 2024

Tufts CTSI Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute



**Dr. MyDzung Chu,
Director of ADAPT**

Dear ADAPT Partners and Friends,

Happy New Year – Year of the Dragon!

We're excited to launch this quarterly newsletter series as a space to share highlights from our ADAPT partnerships and engagement!

Reflecting on the past year, 2023 was a transformative year for ADAPT as we completed our 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Over the course of seven months, the Steering Committee worked towards a new path for ADAPT, built on the foundations of health equity, trust, and authentic research partnerships. Our Strategic Plan is centered on ADAPT's renewed mission as a **coalition of community and academic partners committed to advancing the health, well-being, and visibility of underserved Asian communities.** Our approach is to pursue **community-engaged research, education, and advocacy that translate into improved service delivery, policies, and health equity.** ADAPT will continue to serve as an incubator, convener, and a co-learning space to foster bi-directional conversations and collaborative activities to address community-identified priorities and advance Asian health equity. Examples of our collaborative projects can be found [here](#). In addition, we will expand our work in the areas of research dissemination and policy. I encourage you to read our new strategic plan and work with us to build this vision together.

Looking ahead into this year, our Coalition plans to establish workgroups focused on Asian mental health care access and data equity. We will also host our 8th Asian Health Symposium this fall. In addition, we are partnering with CREST (Collaboration for Research Equity, Sustainability, and Trust) at the Tufts CTSI to co-develop an advocacy training curriculum for community partners. Please continue to stay engaged with us as well as share with us emergent issues and initiatives that impact the health of our Asian communities, and how we can best support you and use this collective space.

Thank you for being part of the ADAPT Coalition and for the important work that you and your organizations are doing to amplify the visibility and improve the health of our underserved Asian and immigrant communities. We wish you a happy and healthy new year, and look forward to continuing to build with you in this new year.

Warmest wishes,

MyDzung



ASIAN TASK FORCE
Against Domestic Violence



**Boston Chinatown
Neighborhood Center**
波士頓華埠社區中心



Greater Boston 中華耆英會
Chinese Golden Age Center



Tufts | Jonathan M. Tisch
College of Civic Life

Tufts | SCHOOL OF MEDICINE
Public Health

Tufts | School of
Dental Medicine

ADAPT Strategic Plan 2023-2027

In 2023, through a seven-month strategic planning process, ADAPT adopted a new mission statement, vision statement, and strategic priority goals that will guide our work, engagement, and partnerships in the next four years. Please see below for an overview of our Strategic Plan.



"We would like to thank the Strategic Planning Committee for their dedication and valuable contributions to the strategic planning process in the past seven months. Their thoughtful feedback ensures that our Plan reflects ADAPT's core mission and values and is responsive to and impactful for the communities that we serve [...] Together, we look forward to realizing our Plan and ensuring ADAPT's sustainability and continued impact in Asian communities to advance health equity."

– MyDzung Chu, ADAPT Director, and Dawn Sauma, ADAPT Community Co-chair

Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission: ADAPT (Addressing Disparities in AsiPopulations through Translational research) is a coalition of community and academic partners committed to advancing the health, well-being, and visibility of underserved Asian communities through community-engaged research, education, and advocacy that translate into improved service delivery, policies, and health equity.

Vision: ADAPT envisions a healthy and thriving society where all Asians are equitably represented and meaningfully engaged in research, education, service delivery, and policies.

Core Values: We embrace the following core values in our engagement, partnerships, and work:

- Bi-directional learning and collaboration
- Health Equity
- Racial Justice
- Language Justice
- Data Equity
- Culture, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Asset- and strength-based approaches
- Principles of integrity, transparency, accountability, and mutual respect
- Community-prioritized research, action, and advocacy

Strategic Areas and Goals

I. Amplify ADAPT's Translational Impact

- **Goal 1:** Develop a set of shared principles that guide our Coalition's work in research, education, and advocacy toward advancing improved service delivery, policies, and health equity.
- **Goal 2:** Increase the dissemination and support the implementation of research findings.

II. Strengthen ADAPT's Sustainability by Increasing Program Capacity and Resources

- **Goal 3:** Secure resources to optimally perform and sustain our work across all areas (i.e., research, education, and advocacy).

III. Increase ADAPT's Brand Awareness, Visibility, and Engagement

- **Goal 4:** Reaffirm our identity and the efficacy of our work by developing a Theory of Change model.
- **Goal 5:** Increase ADAPT's visibility and recognition locally, regionally, and nationally.
- **Goal 6:** Diversify ADAPT's current population reach in alignment with our mission, vision, and values.

[Click here for a copy of our Strategic Plan](#)

Recent Work Across ADAPT

Cultural-Responsiveness of Mental Health First Aid Training

The COVID-19 pandemic and rise in anti-Asian racism have negatively impacted mental health in Asian communities across the nation. In response to a growing need for culturally-tailored, linguistically-accessible mental health resources for Asian communities, ADAPT partnered with the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) and Asian Women for Health (AWFH) to evaluate the cultural responsiveness of Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainings. MHFA is a widely utilized first-responder program that trains community members how to recognize and respond to signs of mental health and substance use issues. As part of this research, the study team assessed mental health needs and priorities of Asian communities in Greater Boston. This project is supported by the Tisch College Community Research Center Seed Grant funded by the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life at Tufts University.



**Boston Chinatown
Neighborhood Center**
波士頓華埠社區中心



- After sharing findings and recommendations with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing (NCMW), which oversees MHFA trainings in the U.S., NCMW added statistics of mental health issues specific to Asian populations to the training curriculum. NCMW is also working with BCNC to roll out a Chinese language version of the training.
- The team is currently in the process of publishing this work. Please keep an eye out for future announcements about the paper!

Building Resilience: Promoting Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Access to Mental Health Care



ADAPT staff and Steering Committee members played a key role in organizing a successful mental health forum that took place last October 2023, in partnership with the Tufts CTSI Science Communications team and the Museum of Science, Boston. Featuring a panel of expert speakers, followed by facilitated small group discussions, the event raised awareness of important resources and barriers to accessing mental health care among AAPI communities, as well as fostered important conversations about bridging these gaps.



- The forum convened over 50 health care professionals, community leaders, and public health practitioners from across Greater Boston.
- After the event, participants reported greater interest in engaging with AAPI mental health care and access, as well as increased confidence in their abilities to advocate for relevant issues.

Measuring Well-being

A Sample of Mental Health and Well-being Scales for Immigrant Communities

June 2023

Measuring Well-being Resource



INSTITUTE FOR
COMMUNITY
HEALTH



LEAH
ZALLMAN
CENTER
FOR IMMIGRANT
HEALTH RESEARCH

In June 2023, ADAPT and the Leah Zallman Center for Immigrant Health Research (LZC) at the Institute for Community Health (ICH) jointly released Measuring Well-being, a resource for researchers and organizations that wish to measure the impact of mental health and well-being interventions for immigrant populations. The document serves as a reference list, offering a snapshot of selected validated scales on Discrimination (Racism); Resilience; Stress, Anxiety, and Depression; Trauma; Well-being; and the COVID-19 Pandemic. These scales were collected by ADAPT and LZC in the process of conducting two separate but overlapping projects: ADAPT partnered with the Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) to evaluate their pilot community wellness and mental health support spaces for immigration-impacted Asian communities in Boston, and LZC partnered with the City of Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA) and seven immigrant-led organizations to assess the Weaving Well-being mental health initiative.

ADAPT Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Throughout 2023, ADAPT hosted **five virtual events** open to ADAPT stakeholders and the general public, providing space for academic and community members interested in advancing Asian health equity to share, connect, and collaborate. A total of **158 participants** attended these meetings throughout the year, featuring **15 guest speakers** on topics that included: *countering AAPI discrimination and invisibility; mental health among Asian immigrant populations in Greater Boston; and increasing bilingual/bicultural health workforce capacity in AAPI communities.*

Most recently, in November 2023, ADAPT hosted a virtual panel discussion of the Massachusetts Data Equity Bill, passed last August (H.3003). This legislation combats harmful racial biases in data by mandating Massachusetts to “collect, organize, and assemble public data on major ethnic groups.” Representatives from the Asian Pacific Islanders Civic Action Network (APIs CAN!), the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Boston Public Health Commission, and the Mass. Department of Public Health shared insights on how we can advance AAPI data equity, data sources available locally and statewide, and next steps to support cross-sector communication and bill implementation.

For those who were unable to join, a recording of the November meeting can be found [here](#).



Data Equity Discussion Panelists

Clockwise from upper left: Ronak Patel, Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund; Carolyn Chou, AARW and APIs CAN!; Ta-wei Lin, Mass. Department of Public Health; Johnna Murphy, Boston Public Health Commission

ADAPT Partner Research Spotlight



“HEAR US: a qualitative study of racial discrimination in Boston’s Chinatown and empowering change from within the community”

Frontiers in Public Health, September 4, 2023

Siyu Chen, Yajing Luo, **Kimberly R. Dong**, **Yoyo Yau**, **Ben Hires**, Shiwei Liang, **Alice M. Tang**

In 2023, ADAPT Steering Committee members from the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center and the Tufts University School of Medicine, highlighted above, published a study exploring the impacts and lived experiences of anti-Asian racism among Chinese community members living in the Boston area. They found that the “majority of participants reported personal experiences of anti-Asian racism, ranging from microaggressions to violent attacks,” causing “a variety of emotional, mental, and physical health effects associated with feelings of fear, anxiety, isolation, and powerlessness.” In response, participants called for increased education and social/self-advocacy around racial justice, enhanced community and governmental support, opportunities for peer support, and greater allyship with other communities of color.

For more details, read the full article at <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1212141>. Please direct any questions to Dr. Alice Tang at alice.tang@tufts.edu.

ADAPT Partner Highlights: 2023

In 2023 and early 2024, the ADAPT Steering Committee welcomed three new community members (Grace Su, BCNC; Naheed Esar, AWFH; and Angela Soo Hoo, ACDC) and three new academic members (Alice Tang, TUSM; Kimberly Dong, TUSM; and Tsung Mou, TMC), noted below.

Thanks so much to our partners for your leadership and commitment to ADAPT and to advancing health equity in Asian communities! We asked each Steering Committee member to name one 2023 highlight they would like to share related to ADAPT collaborations or their organizational accomplishments. In response, they answered the following:



Dawn Sauma, Co-Executive Director, Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK); Co-chair of ADAPT

Moving the Data Equity Bill (H.3003) forward in Massachusetts was one highlight Dawn named. Starting with advocacy in 2017, many community groups were involved, including ATASK and other ADAPT partners, with leadership from APIs CAN! Currently, the focus is to work with stakeholders on how the legislation is implemented going forward.



MyDzung Chu, Director, Addressing Disparities in Asian Populations through Translational Research

MyDzung was excited to welcome many new faculty and community Steering Committee members, including Naheed Esar, Angela Soo Hoo, Grace Su, Alice Tang, and Kimberly Dong. In her research work, MyDzung has enjoyed being out in the Chinatown and Greater Boston communities, working with partners like ACDC to conduct research on Chinatown residents’ co-exposure to heat stress and air pollution, as well as BCNC and AWFH to evaluate cultural responsiveness of Mental Health First Aid in Asian communities in Greater Boston.



Grace Su, Chief Program Officer, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC) *Joined in 2024*

In 2023, BCNC partnered closely with MyDzung Chu, ADAPT's Director, and the National Council for Mental Wellness to conduct Chinese translations for the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) instructor training. BCNC is excited to pilot these translations, and is also excited to see more culturally relevant data included in the program as a result of this collaboration.



Ben Hires, Chief Executive Officer, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC)

As an overall ADAPT highlight in the last few years, Ben cited the coalition's partnership with Asian CARES (Center for Addressing Research, Education and Services), of which BCNC is one of the leading organizations. The 2019 Asian CARES project report "illuminates how problem gambling is the 'canary in the coal mine' for the Asian community." The project was featured at the 7th Annual Asian Health Symposium in 2022, and BCNC is continuing to move this work forward by addressing problem gambling in Boston's Chinatown.



Naheed Esar, Executive Director, Asian Women for Health (AWFH) *Joined in 2023*

AWFH had stepped away from ADAPT for organizational reasons in early 2023, but reintegrating into the coalition was one 2023 highlight Naheed named. Another highlight included the success of AWFH's Community Health Worker (CHW) program, which has trained two cohorts of CHWs that went beyond certification requirements.



Megan Cheung, Associate and Clinical Director, Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center (GBCGAC)

GBCGAC built a behavioral health department in 2023, including office space for counseling and hiring a behavioral health manager and other new staff. Since creating the department, GBCGAC has been taking referrals from Tufts Medical Center.



Angela Soo Hoo, Community Building Associate, Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC) *Joined in 2023*

Angela successfully organized ACDC's first holiday toy drive, serving low income households in Boston's Chinatown. The drive reached 200 children across the neighborhood.



Alice Tang, Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine Department of Public Health and Community Medicine (DPHCM) *Joined in 2023*

Alice helped develop a TUSM course for 200 first-year medical students teaching social determinants of health in Boston Chinatown. She thanked ADAPT partners like ACDC, BCNC, and GBCGAC for helping to build the content and field experiences. Students worked and presented on 10 different projects about various issues in the community, including food insecurity and the history and role of Pao Arts Center. All students learned about the history of Chinatown and heard from key leaders like Suzanne Lee and Angie Liou (ACDC).



Kimberly Dong, Associate Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine Department of Public Health and Community Medicine (DPHCM) *Joined in 2023*

The Tufts Community Health Workers Engaging in Integrated Care (COHERE) program that Kim directs trained 40 community members to be Community Health Workers in 2023, in partnership with BCNC. The program also held its first symposium in October of last year. Moving into 2024, the current cohort includes 62 trainees. COHERE is also working with local and state partners to advocate for healthcare insurance companies to reimburse CHWs for their services.



Tsung Mou, Urogynecologist, Tufts Medical Center; Assistant Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine **Joined in 2024**

Through support from Tufts University's Springboard award, current and former ADAPT partners (Aviva Must, Alice Tang, Grace Su of BCNC, and Tsung Mou) conducted community stakeholder engaged research, convening ADAPT community partners and medical center leadership and clinicians to evaluate care delivery processes for Asian patients from clinicians' perspectives across Tufts Medicine.



Virginia (Ginny) Chomitz, Associate Professor, Tufts University School of Medicine Department of Public Health and Community Medicine (DPHCM)

Virginia was part of a team conducting community-engaged research that explored the relationships of social determinants and health. This work was showcased in the team's publication in Transportation and Health: "At the nexus of grocery access and transportation: Assessing barriers and preferences for alternative approaches to enhancing food access."



Meet Chloe Yang, ADAPT's new project manager!

Chloe joined the coalition as project manager in August of 2023. Drawing from her background in community-engaged public health research, Chloe is interested in studying and addressing inequities related to social and environmental determinants of health. She first learned of ADAPT while working as a research assistant at the Tufts CTSI Center for Community-Engaged Medicine in 2019. Later, as an MPH student at the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, she coordinated a variety of community-led projects, including ADAPT's participatory evaluation of the Asian American Resource Workshop's pilot mental health support spaces for immigration-impacted Asian communities in Greater Boston. [Click here](#) to read more about Chloe's background and interests. Her 2023 ADAPT highlight has been building connections with and learning from each Steering Committee member, both individually and in meetings. Going forward, she is excited to continue supporting ADAPT's work in mental health and advocacy.

Thank you to ADAPT's former Steering Committee members and staff!



Annie Chin-Louie,
Former Project
Manager, ADAPT



Min Kyung Kim,
Former Research
Associate, ADAPT



Susan Koch-Weser,
Associate Professor,
Public Health and
Community Medicine,
Tufts School of Medicine



May Lui, Former
Community
Organizer/Civic
Engagement
Coordinator, ACDC



Chien-Chi Huang,
Founder and
former Executive
Director, AWFH



Jane Steffensen,
Former Associate
Professor and Director
External Relations,
Tufts University School
of Dental Medicine



Yoyo Yau, Former
Chief Program
Officer, BCNC



Aviva Must,
Professor, Public
Health and
Community
Medicine, Tufts
School of Medicine

In addition to welcoming several new members in 2023 and early 2024, many ADAPT core partners and staff transitioned away from the coalition and/or their organizations. **We thank each and every one of our former members and staff for their time, dedication, and invaluable partnership!**

ADAPT in 2024

Mental health and advocacy are two of ADAPT's key priority areas in the coming year. See below for a broad overview of our coalition's upcoming initiatives, and keep an eye out for more updates in future newsletters!

Mental Health Workforce Project

The ADAPT Steering Committee is in the ideation stage of developing a project that seeks to address gaps in culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health care for Asian populations in Greater Boston. Dr. Alisa Lincoln, Director of the [Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research](#) at Northeastern University, will be supporting this work with her expertise in community-based participatory research and mental health services research. ADAPT staff and partners are currently gathering and synthesizing feedback from community organizations, Tufts Medical Center's Department of Psychiatry, and other stakeholders around Asian mental health priorities. In the new year, we are excited to continue this work with our Steering Committee members and stakeholders across the Tufts Medicine system.

Co-Creating Capacity for Advocacy

Building on Tufts CTSI's research primer for community engagement, Co-Creating Your Capacity: Advancing Research through Community Engagement, ADAPT partners are working to develop a new program to co-create capacity for community advocacy. We are conducting this work in collaboration with Tufts CTSI's [CREST \(Collaboration for Research Equity, Sustainability, and Trust\)](#), launched in 2021, which prioritizes community-driven research in largely Black and brown communities in Roxbury, Mattapan, and Dorchester. Through the Co-Creating Capacity for Advocacy program, participants and the program team will co-develop the skills and knowledge needed to translate community-engaged research into action.

This newsletter highlights some of the great work happening at ADAPT and our partner organizations, but it is not exhaustive of all our activities.

To learn more about ADAPT, [click here](#) to visit our website or scan the QR code.

Committed to advancing Asian health equity and hearing more regular updates from ADAPT? Please email Chloe Yang, ADAPT's Project Manager, at chloe.yang@tuftsmedicine.org to be added to the list serv and to join our Stakeholder Group.

