



## Milwaukee Consortium for Hmong Health

The Milwaukee Consortium for Hmong Health was founded in 2008 to increase capacity in the Milwaukee community to address cancer health disparities for Hmong women.

### Mission

To engage the Hmong community of Milwaukee for positive change regarding women's cancer health and wellness.

### Vision

To advance strategies for reducing the burden of women's cancers in the Milwaukee Hmong community.

### Goals

- Provide communication, education and outreach on cancer issues.
- Build capacity to address cancer issues.
- Address barriers to and encourage cancer screening and follow-up.



Consortium Leadership Team & Healthy Hmong Women CHWs

## Community Dialogues

In Fall 2008, the Consortium engaged Hmong women from the Milwaukee community (N=33) in a series of community dialogues to assess the perspectives and needs of the community in relation to women's cancer health. These dialogues were designed to:

- Discuss how understandings of cancer and cancer risk perceptions affect Hmong women's ideas about obtaining preventive cancer screenings.
- Explore with community members effective ways to overcome barriers to accessing cancer screening and cancer care.

Common themes from the dialogues were distilled into a set of recommendations; the community then provided further feedback regarding feasibility and priorities for implementation.

For more information, visit: [MkeHmongHealth.org](http://MkeHmongHealth.org)

## “Healthy Hmong Women”

### Utilizing Lay Community Health Workers to Promote Cervical & Breast Cancer Literacy & Screening in the Hmong Community



## Community Recommendations

1. Explore ways to make annual exams a “requirement”
2. Provide in-depth information and education about the importance and consequences of annual exams
3. Ensure that Hmong women have access to female doctors
4. Ensure that annual exams are affordable
5. Offer peer education programs
6. Offer free clinics

## “Healthy Hmong Women”

After reviewing the community recommendations, the Consortium made the strategic decision to develop a peer lay health educational program addressing recommendations 2 & 5. This program – *Poj Niam Hmoob Kev Noj Qab Haus Huv* – was developed by the Consortium Leadership Team with input from the greater Consortium membership and piloted from 2011-2013. Its goal was to reduce barriers to the early detection and treatment of breast and cervical cancer among Hmong women by increasing knowledge about cancer and cancer screening and facilitating access to healthcare resources via local Hmong women trained as Community Health Workers (CHWs). Specifically, this project aimed to:

1. Make positive changes in knowledge about and attitudes towards cancer and cancer screening.
2. Increase rates of breast and cervical cancer screening.

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CHWs practice communicating about breast and cervical cancer screening using role playing scenarios

## CHW Training Curriculum

Our CHWs go through a five (5) day training incorporating the following topics, skills and competencies:

- Community health worker roles & responsibilities
- Cultural competency
- Principles of a helping relationship
- Communication strategies & facilitation skills
- Stress management & conflict resolution
- Ethical issues & legal responsibilities
- Resources and referrals
- Hmong cancer beliefs & stigmas
- Breast and cervical cancer – physiology, etiology, signs/symptoms, screening recommendations, treatment options
- Role playing & practice sessions

All CHWs demonstrated positive changes in knowledge and self-efficacy by the end of the training sessions.



CHW demonstrating breast self-examination

## Lay Health Education Community Workshops

The CHWs conducted educational sessions with Hmong women on the topics of breast and cervical cancer including information about Hmong cancer rates, breast and cervical cancer signs and symptoms, prevention and early detection, screening recommendations and procedures, cultural beliefs and myths about breast and cervical cancer, and healthcare access issues and resources.

CHWs followed-up with workshop participants six (6) months post-workshop to see if they have received breast and cervical cancer screening tests for which they are due and eligible.

Workshop participants expressed satisfaction with the information received in the workshops and demonstrated a greater understanding of cancer post-workshop. In addition, the majority of workshop participants reported that they intended to get screened for breast and cervical cancer in the future.