



PRESS RELEASE

May 10, 2010

Contact: Angela Tang, RAMS Operations Manager
(415) 668-5955 or angelatang@ramsinc.org

Resolution Declaring May 10th as “Asian Pacific American Mental Health Day”

SAN FRANCISCO – Richmond Area Multi-Services, Inc. (RAMS) is pleased to be the lead in spearheading the effort to establish May 10th as “Asian Pacific American Mental Health Day”, in recognition of the importance of raising awareness about mental health in the Asian Pacific American community. The month of May is already established as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month and National Mental Health Awareness Month; thus, establishing this day in May more closely aligns both awareness efforts.

Starting in the year of 2010 and each year thereafter, the City & County of San Francisco shall recognize May 10th as “Asian Pacific American Mental Health Day”, as it was introduced by San Francisco Board of Supervisor (District 1) Eric Mar and supported by the full Board. California State Senator Leland Y. Yee, Ph.D. introduced the resolution as SCR 97 at the State Senate and May 10th Asian Pacific American Mental Health Day is to be official in the State of California.

This resolution has been overwhelmingly supported by many major associations, such as American Psychological Association, National Association of Social Workers, Council of National Psychological Associations for the Advancement of Ethnic Minority Interests, California Marriage & Family Therapy Association, Northern California Psychiatric Society, National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association, and National Latina/o Psychological Association.

There is a significant need for enhancing awareness of mental illness in the Asian Pacific American community. Approximately 25% of Americans in a given year are impacted by mental health conditions regardless of gender, age, race, religion and socioeconomic status, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). Through the combination of psychosocial and pharmacological treatments and support, 70% to 90% of individuals with mental health issues have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life. Furthermore, Asian Pacific American (APA) communities are among the fastest growing and most diverse racial group in the United States though APA’s use mental health services at the lowest rate among ethnic populations. As such, there is a critical need to raise awareness about mental health within the APA community to de-stigmatize seeking help and enhance access to culturally competent community services.

“In establishing this reoccurring day, RAMS plans to launch Northern and Southern California Taskforces which would be the platform in order to formally collaborate on efforts,” says Kavous G. Bassiri, President & CEO of RAMS, “As a community of Californians and Asian Pacific Americans, together, the groups will identify best practices and strategies on outreach & promotion as well as discuss pertinent issues relating to mental health, culturally competent healthcare practices, and the community-at-large.”

Founded in 1974, RAMS is a non-profit agency providing comprehensive, culturally competent services that aim to meet the behavioral health, social, vocational, and educational needs of the diverse San Francisco Area with special focus on the Asian & Pacific Islander American and Russian-speaking communities. Each year, RAMS serves over 15,000 adults, children, youth, and families, in over 30 languages in over 75 sites, citywide.

###