



A P P E A L

ASIAN PACIFIC PARTNERS FOR EMPOWERMENT, ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP

2021-22 SPARC LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

June 23 – 24, 2021

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The 2021-22 SPARC Leadership Program launched with the Core Summit on June 23-24, 2021. The Core Summit convened 18 California-wide leaders and advocates passionate about commercial tobacco control and policy change among the diverse Asian American (AA) communities. The objectives of the summit were to 1) provide a safe forum to engage in dialogue on advancing health equity (and specifically, tobacco control) for AAs 2) assess readiness and identify priorities and next steps for moving equity forward; and 3) build and strengthen partnerships and leadership within and between AAs and health organizations to advance tobacco control and equity in California.

Day 1 of the summit was held on June 23 to build a foundation of policy change and engage in community-building. Day 2 was held on June 24 and addressed how health equity and data disaggregation are critical pieces of advancing tobacco control policy within AAs and other communities of color. This group had an opportunity to discuss barriers and potential opportunities to advance equity in commercial tobacco control for AA communities within California.

Over the course of the two days, Fellows engaged in a peer-to-peer dialogue through a combination of experiential-based activities, presentations, and dialogue. Fellows also worked in small group dialogue to further operationalize the following areas of policy change: 1) use of tobacco industry documents for advocacy, 2) menthol and flavor bans, 3) data disaggregation, 4) smoke-free multi-unit housing, 5) expanding smoking cessation, and 6) advancing equity in health departments.

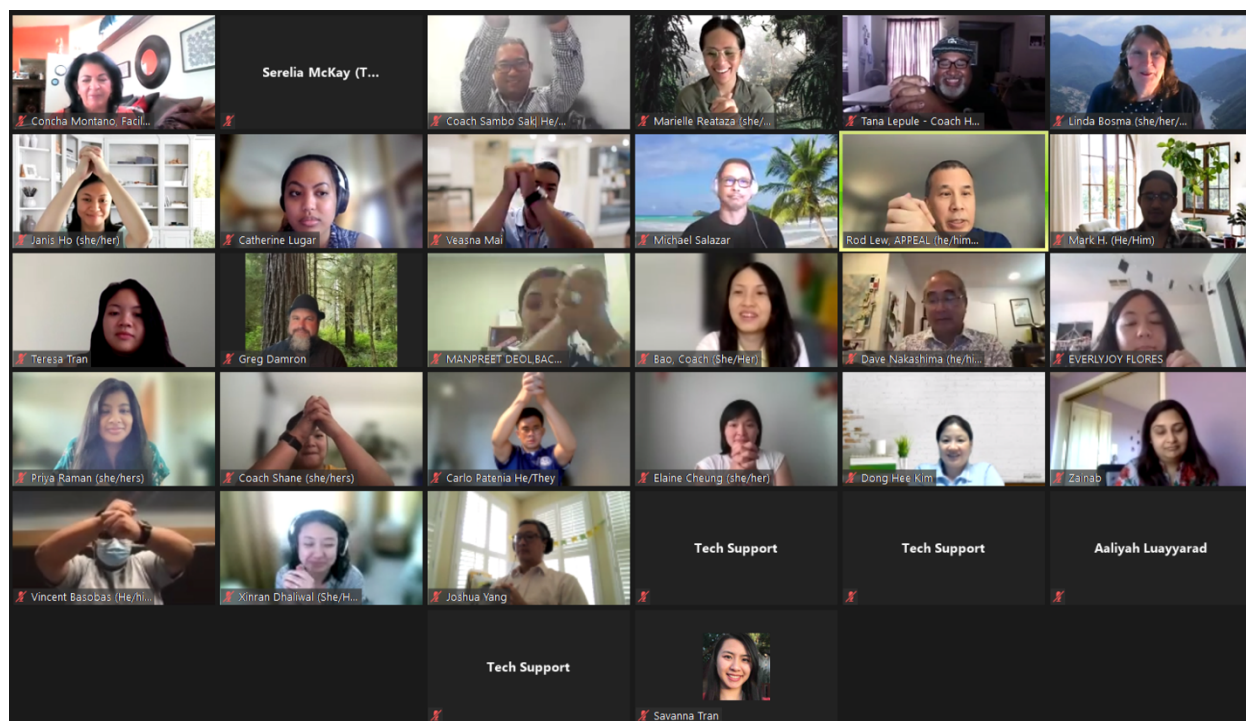
The facilitators ensured that the SPARC Leadership Summit's environment for safety, confidentiality, and trust were established by creating opportunities for networking, having the group develop working agreements and expectations, and by having Fellows participate in team building and small group exercises. These activities, including Four Corners, Who's in the Room and Stand and Deliver, helped demonstrate the elements necessary to create a healthy collaborative.

Day 1: Welcome and Introductions June 23, 2021

Fellows' Expectations and Desired Outcomes

Eighteen Fellows representing AA communities in California gathered virtually on June 23. Fellows saw the summit as a means to connect with each other and the coaches, to reaffirm the community's role as active participants in commercial tobacco control and health equity discussions, and to strengthen their leadership skills to build community-centered advocacy efforts. Fellows expressed their desired outcomes for the Leadership Summit and Program altogether: these revolved around the meaningful inclusion and engagement of communities in tobacco control and health equity work.

Below is a summary of the comments and desired outcomes expressed by the Fellows:



- Improved methods for data collection and data disaggregation to better and more fully understand the nuances between all subpopulations that are considered part of the AA and NHPI diaspora
- Engaging key subpopulations within AA and NHPI communities, since one definition for equity does not fit for all communities
- Increasing understanding and visibility of AAs and NHPIs in health organizations and health departments (e.g. language used, LGBTQ+, youth issues, multigenerational households, immigration, etc.) and ensure that data is collected appropriately and sensitively

- Acknowledge the challenges in understanding and educating peers and community on intersectional identities
- Acknowledge the power that Big Tobacco wields in their resources, ability to lobby, and predatory marketing techniques
- Conversations will be richer when community leaders can share experiences from community to allow for richer conversations

Community Agreements

The group discussed what agreements would be important to ensure the full group participation and a safe environment for learning.

1. Be kind to each other, celebrate the different perspectives and experiences. Be an active listener and share.
2. Remember that we come from different paths and backgrounds, be open-minded when listening to someone's story/experience. Don't be negative about others' opinions or questions.
3. Maintain/Affirm a safe and inclusive space, assume good intentions, question the idea/issue not the person.
4. Have fun!
5. Honor the newness and seek out the new perspectives.
6. Be patient and support each other.

Introduction Activity: Four Corners

During this activity, Fellows shared information about themselves including their desired goals for the Leadership Program.

Key take-away points from the activity were as follows:

- Storytelling is powerful and builds rapport
- Policy work during a pandemic and increased remote work requires new approaches and creative ways to engage the community
- There is not a "one-size fits all" approach to community organizing
- Acknowledgment that everyone in the room has different levels of knowledge and different capacities and the need to mentor rising leaders in tobacco control work

Presentation: AA and NHPI Tobacco Use and Intro to Policy Change

APPEAL staff provided an overview of commercial tobacco use in the AA and NHPI communities and an introduction to what policy change is using the river analogy.

Activity: Public Interview

Fellows participated in an activity where each of them were interviewed by their team members. It was an opportunity for them to learn more about each other but also emphasized the importance of building skills in asking questions (as in an advocacy setting).

Evaluating Our Policy Work

Andrea Spagat, Program Director at Story Center discussed how storytelling and sharing personal narratives is critical in capturing the leadership journey and successes through creative digital storytelling. Andrea shared a powerful digital story that featured a leader enacting change on an issue they were passionate about. The SPARC Leadership Program will be offering an opportunity for select Fellows to participate in a Story Center training and develop their own digital story (more information forthcoming).

Linda Bosma, evaluator for SPARC, briefly talked about the importance of participating in the evaluation activities to enhance the program design and to document feedback on the program.

Policy Workgroups

Fellows participated in small groups to further develop their policy projects. They identified multiple policy ideas and charted them on a grid based on policy impact and doability. Then based on the grid, they identified 1-2 policy areas that had the most potential.

Day 2: Engaging in Policy Work June 24, 2021

Day 2 of the Core Summit was focused on refining their policy projects, sharing their personal advocacy visions (through Stand and Deliver), and building collaboration in their teams

Overview: Data Disaggregation and What to Do about it?

Julia Liou, Chief Deputy of Administration, Development, at Asian Health Services discussed the importance of data disaggregation for AA and NHPI communities and the history involving the efforts behind advocacy for data that better captures the nuances of the many subpopulations that make up the AA and NHPI diaspora.

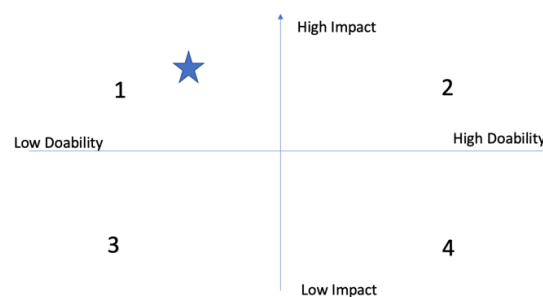
Activity: Stand and Deliver

Fellows were given two minutes to deliver their vision of policy change based on their personal experience to the entire group. This activity allowed for community-building among the Fellows and provided an opportunity to practice public speaking in front of a large audience.

Overview: Leadership and the AA Community

Arnab Mukherjea, Chair of the Department of Health at California State University East Bay discussed the challenges of community-building and engagement, especially when ethnic groups vary greatly from each other in history, culture, and language. Given the rise in rhetoric surrounding racism and xenophobia, Arnab also described the allyship between BIPOC communities throughout history and the significance in remembering this allyship as a testament to how successful advocacy can be when community empowerment is at the center of a movement.

Impact-Doability Grid



Activity: Developing Policy Goal Areas

Fellows met their Policy Work Group Coach and peers in their respective Zoom breakout rooms. These work groups will continue to meet throughout the Leadership Program on a bi-monthly basis, starting August and concluding in February 2022 with the SPARC Leadership Capstone. During these breakout sessions, fellows engaged with a specific tobacco-related policy project that the SPARC team will support the fellows in pursuing. During these breakout sessions, the Policy Work Groups discussed the *impact* and *doability* of completing policy goals for each topic.

Closing Comments

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed several challenges in public health, health policy, and within AA communities. The pandemic has also posed new challenges to community engagement, calling for creative ways to convene. Public health policy work becomes an avenue for community betterment and improving overall health when policy work intersects with community-centered approaches in organizing. Tobacco control work among AA communities requires addressing Big Tobacco, a powerful industry with a history of predatory marketing towards AA communities. Reducing commercial tobacco use and enacting long-lasting, impactful change within AAs and other communities of color starts with empowering community leaders with the tools needed to push policy forward.

