



# California

## Removing Barriers to Increase Cervical Cancer Screening Among Vietnamese American Women

### Public Health Problem

Vietnamese American women have the highest incidence rate of cervical cancer of any ethnic group in the United States—43 cases per 100,000, which is 5 times as high as rates among non-Latina whites. In addition, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer among Vietnamese American women. More than 25% of Vietnamese American women living in Santa Clara County reported in 2000 that they had never had a Pap test, compared with less than 5% of all women in the United States.

### Program Example

The Vietnamese Community Health Promotion Project organized the Vietnamese REACH for Health Initiative Coalition to prevent cervical cancer among Vietnamese American women in Santa Clara County. The coalition has held community forums, meetings, and retreats to develop an action plan. Community members identified multiple barriers to Pap testing: lack of information, concerns resulting from traditional beliefs, and absence of culturally and linguistically appropriate screening services that are affordable. To address these barriers, the coalition developed and launched a community action plan to promote Pap screening by creating change among community leaders, the health care system, Vietnamese American medical providers, and Vietnamese American families. The coalition's integrated strategy uses six approaches: 1) a media education campaign; 2) outreach efforts using lay health workers; 3) patient navigation and a low-cost Vietnamese-language Pap clinic staffed by a female Vietnamese American physician; 4) continuing medical education; 5) mailed reminders; and 6) advocacy to reestablish a Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program in the county.

### Implications and Impact

Preliminary results from the outreach efforts show that 46.8% of Vietnamese American women who had never had a Pap test obtained a Pap test after meeting with lay health workers. The patient navigator has received calls from more than 1,214 Vietnamese American women seeking information and assistance. As a result, 724 women have registered to receive a Pap test. In addition, 50 Vietnamese American physicians have been educated about cervical cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment, and 29 physicians have registered 4,187 women in a reminder system. A cancer information Web site established for this program has received more than 1,200 visitors and 10,600 hits per month. Moreover, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program has been reestablished in Santa Clara County, with two clinics and three providers.

### Contact Information

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