



2018: New Year, Same Mission “Helping the people of American Samoa Fight Cancer”

Highlights

TAUTAI LAVEA’I

Financial stipends provide an opening to improve navigation for cancer patients.



REACH

Methodist churches commit to smoke free and to support healthy beverages.



INSPIRE

Training for indigenous researchers concludes.



The mission of the ASCCC may sound simple but our efforts are diverse. Since its inception in 2004, the ASCCC has learned that cancer is not simply a disease to be diagnosed and treated. Health disparities, inequities, and injustices have contributed to our social and economic conditions impacting our health status in a way allowing cancer to remain the second leading cause of death in American Samoa. We have helped to address some of these barriers by advocating for policies, educating the public on screening and prevention, reducing the financial burden by fundraising for stipends, and *much more*.

In 2018 we aim to strengthen our partnership in the community and abroad to implement innovative research, develop health policies within faith based organizations, and enhance patient navigation. For more information on how to join our efforts, contact the office at 699-0110 or visit our website at www.asccancercoalition.org.

REACH

**Racial and
Ethnic
Approaches to
Community
Health**

METHODIST CHURCHES IN AMERICAN SAMOA JOIN REACH INITIATIVE!!

In November 2017, Reverend Asi Se'a of the Methodist Church signed a commitment to eliminate tobacco use on church grounds and promote the consumption of healthy beverages such as water and coconut water at church events. The Methodist Church is the latest organization to join local efforts in reducing non-communicable diseases (NCD) and related risk factors in American Samoa. The Congregational Christian Church of American Samoa (CCCAS) and the Catholic Diocese of Samoa, Pago Pago were the first to sign the REACH pledge in 2016. To implement the newly signed commitment for healthier environments, tobacco signage and healthy beverage posters were prepared for all the Methodist churches to be followed by community education sessions.

In January 2018, REACH staff visited 9 of the 18 Methodist churches and met with the Faifeau and Faletua's at each of these churches. The church leaders were very receptive to the idea of 'no smoking on holy grounds' and serving water and niu at church functions. The staff provided overview presentation on the REACH project and delivered the tobacco and nutrition signage to each Methodist church. Per the request of some Church leaders, additional educational presentations were scheduled in the following months, targeting the church youth groups.

Updates:

REACH project tobacco and nutrition signage were translated into Samoan. Additional copies of project materials in language are being provided to all churches who signed the REACH healthy environment commitment upon request. The CCCAS and Catholic churches were initially given signage in English in previous years.



Outreach:

Sau'ia American Samoa Bodybuilding & Fitness Federation hosted a Fitness & Wellness Expo on February 16, 2018. The REACH Project was invited to participate in the wellness expo. Project information about the REACH initiatives was disseminated to expo attendees. The public has positive feedback the healthy interventions and the partnership being established with the local churches.

Catholic Diocese of Samoa Pago Pago –

Continue monthly project monitoring through intercept surveys and actual use assessments to evaluate policy efficacy, public awareness, and behavior change.



Congregational Christian Church in

American Samoa – Church monitoring will continue to ensure educational materials are installed at all CCCAS Churches. Random data collection through intercept surveys and actual use assessments will continue evaluate the tobacco and nutrition policies.



FIRST TRAINING FOR INDIGENOUS RESEARCHERS IS COMPLETE!!

The INSPIRE Program is a five year federally funded program by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities with two objectives: build research capacity on island and assess the community’s health literacy. A notification for community members interested in research was released in March of 2017 and final selection of the five researchers was completed the following month. The training program consisted of a variety of training methods including asynchronous and synchronous activities. The researchers completed over 13 training modules in January of 2018. The INSPIRE program will have look to recruiting more researchers in January of 2019.



L-R: Wynona Lee, Dr. Angela Sy, Magdalene Augafa, Va’a Tofaeono, Dr. Tofoi Mageo, Dr. Salote Aoelua-Fanene, Dr. Katherine Tong, Solinu’u Savusa, Luana Scanlan

Other 2017 Accomplishments:

INSPIRE reached over 100,000 viewers during their CRC awareness campaign, completion of first Research Training, IRB training with the American Samoa Community College and LBJ Tropical Medical Center, strengthened community ties through partnership with American Samoa STEM Committee, Feleti Barstow Library and the Aoelua Family Reading program.

First Lady donates books!

First Lady Cynthia Moliga donates 500 books to the Aoelua Family Reading Program. First Lady is American Samoa’s Reading Ambassador for a literacy program by Scholastic that encourages children to read every day, especially during the summer months. Reading Ambassadors support families and schools in their perspective states by: encouraging students and families to ready every day and read aloud together. Also, in putting books directly in the hand of children who many not have.

Dr. Tofoi Mageo, Researcher

“When I first started this journey as a researcher, I knew that I would gain greater knowledge in conducting research for the greater good, the healthier good for the people in American Samoa. I felt blessed to be working with great people, my co-researchers (Maggie, Soli, Wynona & Oscar, and especially my two mentors (Va’a & Salote).”

Dr. Angela Sy, Co-investigator

“I got to know the trainees a little better during the web video conferencing and reading their work. I conducted sessions including the Andersen Model of Healthcare Utilization and logic models. The face to face retreat gave me a better chance to interact and get to know INSPIRE trainees better. Using the research textbook, Kathy and I covered introductory research topics, literature reviews and developing research questions. The hands-on format and applying the textbook directly to the INSPIRE colorectal cancer screening project worked well together. We trained in using the qualitative analysis software to begin to code the key informant interviews.”

Va’a Tofaeono, Program Director

Perseverance: The INSPIRE program was built upon innovation. Through perseverance, we were able to identify ways to overcome those barriers. For example, during the proposal process we knew TA was going to be provided, however didn’t know how that was going to be done. Fortunately, we found Moodle and that provided a free way to connect our researchers to on and off island instructors to have access to a synchronous and asynchronous learning environment.