



# Program for Multicultural Health

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The Program for Multicultural Health staff includes specialists in:

- Diet/Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Cultural Competency
- Community Health Education
- Nursing
- Social Work
- Public Health

## *PharmD Students Use Bilingual Talents, Pharmacy Knowledge, to Aid Non-native-English Speakers*

Communication skills are a top priority in a Michigan PharmD education. This summer, Pharmacy students Eugene Kreys, Jane Zhang, and Chending Wu added their own twist: using their bilingual skills and pharmacy knowledge to tear down the language barrier separating non-native-English-speaking patients from the sage advice of their

Acting as translators (Kreys in Russian; Zhang and Wu in Mandarin Chinese) working side-by-side with Rite Aid staff pharmacists Lynda Parson, and Helena Elterman, the students gained unique insights into community practice.

"Ethnic/racial groups have higher morbidity and mortality rates than the general population," explains Rowley. "While

communication difficulties are not the sole cause, they do contribute to the problem. Anything we can do to eliminate communication barriers not only

helps patients, it also helps reduce the total cost of health care." The project focused on two ethnic populations: an elderly Chinese community based in Parkway Meadows, a senior housing complex on Ann Arbor's north side; and an elderly Russian-Jewish community based at Cranbrook Tower, a senior housing complex on Ann Arbor's west side. "The program achieved its goals; in fact, we are now planning to hire a Mandarin-speaking technician as a service to our large Chinese-speaking patient population," says Parson. "I was impressed with our students. What most impressed me was their determination to help anyone who approached them; their ability to get accurate answers to patients' healthcare questions; and their consistent follow-through."



community pharmacists.

**This pilot project was sponsored by the University of Michigan Health System's Program for Multicultural Health (PMCH) and coordinated by PMCH health educator specialist Trish Rowley, BSN, MS.**

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Source: Adapted from, [http://www.umich.edu/~pharmacy/morenews/students/bilingual\\_talents/bilingual\\_talents.html](http://www.umich.edu/~pharmacy/morenews/students/bilingual_talents/bilingual_talents.html)

## *Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS)*

By Beth Adams

Culture and language are vital factors in how health care services are delivered and received, therefore, it is important that health care organizations and their staff understand and respond with sensitivity to the needs and preferences of culturally and linguistically diverse patients.

In December 2000 the Office of Minority Health (OMH) officially published its 14 national standards for culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) in health care. The standards are intended to inform, guide, and facilitate required and recommended practices related to culturally and linguistically appropriate health services.

Before the CLAS standards were developed, there was no clear guidance on how to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate health care services.

The CLAS standards are primarily directed at health care organizations; however, individual providers are also encouraged to use the standards to make their practices more culturally and linguistically accessible. The principles and activities of culturally and linguistically appropriate services should be integrated throughout an organization and undertaken in partnership with the communities being served.

The standards are intended to be inclusive of all cultures and not limited to any particular population group or sets of groups. However, they are especially designed to address the needs of racial, ethnic, and linguistic population groups that experience unequal access to health services.

Patients can use the CLAS standards to understand their right to receive from all health care staff members effective care that respects their cultural health beliefs and practices and preferred language. (CLAS Standard 1).

To view the 14 National CLAS Standards, visit <http://www.med.umich.edu/multicultural/ccp/CLASpage.htm#CLAS>.



**Providing culturally and linguistically appropriate services (CLAS) to patients has the potential to improve:**

- Access to care,
- Quality of care, and ultimately,
- Health.

### Examples of Culturally Competent Care

- Providing an environment in which patients/consumers from diverse cultural backgrounds feel comfortable discussing their cultural health beliefs and practices.
- Striving to overcome cultural, language, and communication barriers.
- Encouraging patients/consumers to express their spiritual beliefs and cultural practices.
- Being familiar with and respectful of various traditional healing systems and beliefs.
- Assessing cultural beliefs of each patient.
- Providing language assistance services.
- Posting signage in the languages of commonly encountered groups.

(OMH, 1991)

## *Chinese New Year Traditions*

Chinese New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. The celebration is traditionally highlighted with a religious ceremony given in honor of Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and the family ancestors. Departed relatives are remembered with great respect because they were responsible for laying the foundations for the fortune and glory of the family.

The presence of the ancestors is acknowledged on New Year's Eve with a dinner arranged for them at the family banquet table. The spirits of the ancestors, together with the living, celebrate the onset of the New Year as one great community. The communal feast called "surrounding the stove" or weilu. It symbolizes family unity and honors the past and present generations.

Probably more food is consumed during the New Year celebrations than any other time of the year. Vast amounts of traditional food is prepared for family and friends, as well as those close to us who have died.

On New Year's Day, the Chinese family will eat a vegetarian dish called jai. The various ingredients in jai are root vegetables or fibrous vegetables, and many people attribute various superstitious aspects to them:

- \* Lotus seed - signify having many male offspring
- \* Ginkgo nut - represents silver ingots
- \* Black moss seaweed - is a homonym for exceeding in wealth
- \* Dried bean curd is another homonym for fulfillment of wealth and happiness
- \* Bamboo shoots - is a term which sounds like "wishing that everything would be well"

Fresh bean curd or tofu is not included as it is white and unlucky for New Year as the color signifies death and misfortune.

Other foods include a whole fish, to represent togetherness and abundance, and a chicken for prosperity. The chicken must be presented with a head, tail and feet to symbolize completeness. Noodles should be uncut, as they represent long life.

In south China, the favorite and most typical dishes are nian gao, sweet steamed glutinous rice pudding and zong zi (glutinous rice wrapped up in reed leaves), another popular delicacy.

In the north, steamed-wheat bread (mantou) and small meat dumplings are the preferred food. The tremendous amount of food prepared at this time is meant to symbolize abundance and wealth for the household.

Source: [http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese\\_new\\_year.html](http://www.educ.uvic.ca/faculty/mroth/438/CHINA/chinese_new_year.html).  
Accessed November 1st, 2006



*The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern festival*

***February 18, 2007 marks the beginning of the Year of the Pig. To bear children in the year of the pig is considered very fortunate, for they will be happy and honest***



New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family affair



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## *Is Your New Year's Resolution to be Healthier?*



*He who has health has hope,  
and he who has hope has  
everything. - Arabian Proverb*

*A man too busy to take care of  
his health is like a mechanic  
too busy to take care of his  
tools. - Spanish Proverb*

*A healthy man is a successful  
man. - French proverb*

Here are a few simple things you can do to improve your health.

### **Eat Better**

**Visit a local ethnic grocery store and add some variety to your traditional meal.**

Try a fruit or vegetable from a culture different from your own. You can also take a trip down the ethnic food aisle at the grocery store.

### **Don't Smoke**

**If you smoke, quit. If you do not smoke, avoid secondhand smoke.**

Visit businesses and restaurants that are smoke-free.

### **Move More**

**Try an activity from a different culture.** Go to the library and check out a video or DVD on a new activity such as salsa, yoga, or belly dancing. Dance to a different beat! Check out a music CD from a different culture - music is an international language.

For more tips to improve your health contact the Health Promotion Clearinghouse at 1-800-353-8227 or Michigan Steps Up! at [www.michiganstepsup.org](http://www.michiganstepsup.org)

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