

# National Cambodian American Health Initiative

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April 5, 2006

Mr. Bob Chanly  
Chairman, CACO

Dear Mr. Chanly:

On November 13, 2005, the National Cambodian American Health Initiative (NCAHI) declared a "state of health emergency" in the Cambodian American community due to increasing levels of serious, life threatening illness and diminishing resources.

NCAHI is a newly formed national Cambodian American health advocacy organization and is now reaching out to Cambodians across the United States seeking support for actions which will increase health resources for our people.

The current emergency in our community is not like the raging storm that tore apart our country in the 1970's but more like the slowly rising flood waters from broken levees that are silently drowning our people. We are now dying from diabetes, stroke, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in large numbers. What we are seeing is the ongoing degenerative effect of genocide, because these illnesses have their roots in the violence, starvation and torture of the Killing Fields.

There are no simple answers to solve this problem, but we believe that if we come together as a community to tell our stories and to search for solutions, we can begin a process of healing. We will develop the power to bring our voices to the public and claim our rightful share of the resources that are essential to saving lives.

We ask you to please join us for a National Town Hall meeting on April 17<sup>th</sup> from 11am-4pm Central Time (12pm-5pm East Coast, 9am-2pm West Coast) held at the Killing Field Memorial in Chicago, Illinois. This meeting will use videoconferencing technology to bring together our community from across the country. We are please to invite you to participate in this historic event by:

- Joining us in Chicago, Illinois
- Joining us from a satellite site in Long Beach, California; Farmington, Connecticut; Lowell, Massachusetts and Portland, Oregon. Satellite sites will have videoconferencing linkage to Chicago, Illinois.
- Participate through Internet web casting; the web casting URL will be available one week prior to April 17<sup>th</sup>.

- Send us a written testimony about the health problems of Cambodians in your area.

We have included the following supplemental documents: (1) postcards to help publicize this event and solicit community participation; (2) a listing of all satellite meeting sites and (3) a testimony form to share your community's needs and health problems.

This meeting is the first step in a series of actions that we hope will lead to a Congressional hearing on Cambodian health. Together we can make this happen.

Should you have any questions, please call me at (860) 561-3345 or contact SivHeng Ung at (503) 234-1541 ext 209.

Truly Yours,

Theanvy Kuoch, Chair

Enclosures (3)

Cc: Steering Committee Members