

The CDO Quarterly provides insight into community-based outreach efforts associated with the WA State Department of Health (DOH) [Community-Driven Outreach Initiative](#). Each issue features inspiring and educational stories of community rooted efforts to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 information, vaccines, and prevention resources while also addressing the social inequities amplified by the pandemic. The CDO Initiative aims to reduce COVID-19 disparities among communities disproportionately affected and to help these communities build their capacity for future emergencies.

## Media outlets and community organizations expand reach and capacity with support from APartnership

Strategic planning became a key focus for APartnership during the fall and winter of 2023. With deep experience communicating about COVID-19, APartnership’s subcontractors appreciate the importance of being ready for any future community health threats.

“We consulted with our partners on health needs in the community,” said Haven Nguyen, of APartnership. “Emergency response planning was a top interest.”

The media and community organizations working with APartnership serve Washington’s Asian populations and communicate in Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Khmer, Lao, English, and more languages. Teams are mapping out communication channels and information sources in preparation

for any future health emergency. In recent months, the Khmer Community of Seattle King County joined with experts and community leaders to draft action plans for a health emergency and practiced distributing personal protective equipment.

The groups, predominantly located in Western Washington, also are collaborating to widen their reach. The *Seattle Chinese Times* for example, is preparing to distribute the paper at library branches in Snohomish, Spokane, and Yakima.

“Winter is a good time to work on capacity building,” said APartnership’s Vivian Weimei Wang. “In-person events slow down in the cold weather. It’s a chance to plan for the future.”



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## Positivity and understanding fuel community well-being

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Momentum Professional Strategy Partners is a Black-owned and led consulting and communications firm. They specialize in DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility) services, support for BIPOC businesses, community engagement, public relations and marketing solutions for meaningful and lasting change in organizational cultures and the communities they serve. In the Community-Driven Outreach program, Momentum operates the [Elevate Black Wellness](#) initiative. Momentum leaders shared insights about their work in a Q & A with the CDO Quarterly.

### One description of Elevate Black Wellness referred to “celebrating and enhancing black wellness.” How do you see the role of celebration and joy in the approach to public health?

By prioritizing joy, connection, and celebration, public health initiatives like Elevate Black Wellness address not just the physical aspects of health but also nurture emotional and social well-being. They offer an uplifting counter-narrative to often-challenging public health stories, reinforcing the community’s bonds and collective identity.

Integrating public health messaging into celebrations models healthy behaviors in a positive light. It illustrates that maintaining health can be a joyful, fulfilling aspect of life, not merely a response to illness or adversity. This positive association can lead to more sustainable health practices and attitudes.

### What should people know about peer support in public health?

Unlike some traditional methods, peer support establishes a genuine connection rooted in shared experiences, fostering a sense of understanding and empathy among community members. This is key for the Black community as personal connection often creates a safe and non-judgmental space, which encourages folks to open up about their health concerns and seek guidance.

Moreover, peer support can also be a great method for sharing health information as it considers the people and cultural nuances of the community. We saw this within our [“Can a Brotha Heal?”](#) event and in other peer navigation support programs.

### What’s ahead for Elevate Black Wellness? What are you looking forward to in 2024?

Our focus remains on fostering community dialogues, providing a nurturing space for learning and sharing experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic. This effort is about empowering individuals to voice their stories and insights, strengthening our collective understanding and resilience. This year we will launch an informative mailer and social media campaign, aiming to reach around 15,000 African Americans across Washington, raising awareness about respiratory viruses and promoting better health practices.

We also will introduce a microgrant program designed to support Black community events with health components, such as vaccines, screenings, and educational activities. Grants offered through this program will assist in enhancing these vital community events, contributing to our ongoing commitment to close the health equity gap.



*Momentum Professional Strategy Partners met with community partner Deaunte Damper and former Washington State Department of Health partner Daniel Hannawalt-Morales.*

## Data and action unite in survey initiative

Comagine Health conducted a community health concerns survey in 2023 that went beyond getting information: It connected people to health care resources tied to specific needs and concerns. The survey was a tool for both data and action, uncovering attitudes on COVID-19, vaccines, mental health, and more.

The survey's community-based data capture model had questions to understand community health concerns, and it allowed respondents to opt in for text messages connecting them to resources relevant to those specific concerns. Three community-based organizations successfully promoted the survey: Martin Luther King Jr. Family Outreach Center, Southwest Washington Accountable Community of Health (SWACH), and the YMCA of Greater Seattle.

People who opted in to receive text messages began receiving messages tailored to their community. For example, food insecurity was one of the highest identified needs in the Spokane area, so a message was issued about the food bank resources the MLK Family Center offers. Forty new families connected to the resource.

The survey had nearly 5,000 responses from more than 70 percent of Washington zip codes. Organizations can explore the [survey results](#), filtering by age group, linguistic background, race and ethnicity as well as public transit use, apartment dwelling, and LGBTQIA+ community membership.

## Building creative, supportive programs to promote community health

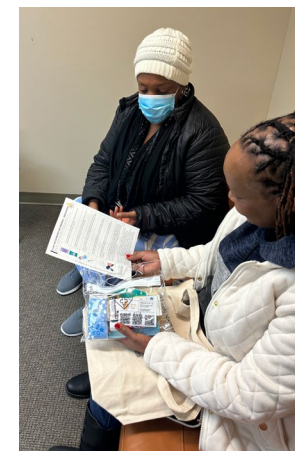
The Center for MultiCultural Health (CMCH) promotes health and wellbeing in diverse communities, using diverse approaches. Under the CDO program, CMCH has served Pacific Islander and African Diaspora communities with virus-prevention kits, in-person gatherings, and virtual events.

CMCH promotes and holds outreach events where the public can pick up cold and flu prevention kits and access COVID-19 information and vaccinations. Kit instructions are published in five languages.

Dr. Abubakar Abdul-Rahman, a medical director at a South Seattle clinic, has partnered with CMCH to answer informal questions at in-person and virtual events and give vaccines or take appointments for follow-up at his clinic. "The communities we serve, like many others, have reached a fatigue point with typical COVID-19 information," said Kerry Holifield, a program manager at CMCH. "But they definitely care about staying healthy, and one way we connect is by offering practical support."

CMCH's monthly Zoom events offer an in-depth presentation on a health topic and virtual break-out rooms—each one hosted in a different language—that allow for questions, answers, and discussions.

"We make the presentations fun, with games, quizzes, and celebrations folded in. The response was so good, we had to upgrade our Zoom subscription to handle more than 150 participants at once," Holifield explained.



*CMCH distributes cold and flu prevention kits along with COVID-19 prevention information. Kit instructions are published in five languages.*

## Featured Resources

### Health insurance plans available, regardless of immigration status

Washington Healthplanfinder offers health and dental insurance options to all Washington residents, regardless of immigration status. Accessing health coverage through [Washington Healthplanfinder](#), including Washington Apple Health or Medicaid, will not affect immigration status or citizenship applications for someone receiving coverage or for surrounding family members. Explore free or low-cost health coverage options through Washington Healthplanfinder or learn more about health care options for immigrants [here](#).

### Care Connect services available

The Care Connect Washington program continues to offer services to those affected by COVID-19. Care coordinators work with individuals and families to understand their needs and connect them with local resources such as housing, insurance, childcare, food assistance, unemployment benefits and more. Call 1-833-453-0336 to access these services and visit the DOH [Care Connect page](#) to learn more. You can also contact Jill Toombs at [Jill.Toombs@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Jill.Toombs@doh.wa.gov) for more information or to share any feedback you have about the program.

## Did you know?

Contractors and subcontractors in the CDO program are invited and encouraged to share upcoming events, created materials and program highlights. We love to learn about community partners efforts, as it helps us promote upcoming partner events, share newly created materials that may be useful to other partners, and spark ideas and inspiration among CDO program participants. There are a variety of ways to share your work!

**Do you have upcoming events?** Fill out our [event form](#) or email [partnerinfo@wearedh.com](mailto:partnerinfo@wearedh.com) with your event information and we will add it to our partner events calendar on the Community Partner Page and share about it in our Community Partner Newsletter!

**Did you create any materials to support your CDO outreach efforts?** Please consider sharing videos, photos, social media content, and informational materials through this [online form](#), your reporting submissions, or with a member of the DH team via [partnerinfo@wearedh.com](mailto:partnerinfo@wearedh.com).

**Do you have program insights or highlights to share?** If you would like to share about lessons learned, challenges overcome or any highlights from your CDO efforts, please consider sharing your insights with our team through this [online form](#), your reporting submissions, or with a member of the DH team via [partnerinfo@wearedh.com](mailto:partnerinfo@wearedh.com).

If you have any questions about sharing your work, please reach out to a DH Communication Strategist or to our DH team at [partnerinfo@wearedh.com](mailto:partnerinfo@wearedh.com).

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