Mass. Bill Aims to Improve System to Track Hate Crimes
By: Aidan O’Mara Schwartz

As the rate of reported hate crimes increases across the country, a bill to require Massachusetts law enforcement agencies and communities to report Hate Crime incidents is currently under study by the state legislature. The Massachusetts Hate Crimes Reporting Act was originally introduced in late March of 2021 to advance and change the current hate crime reporting practices which are informal and unevenly enforced. The proposed bill is currently being put on a study order for further review by the Massachusetts State Senate.

In recent years, across the United States, there has been an increase in hate crimes targeting People of Color. While Blacks are still the most frequently targeted group for hate crime, anti-Asian hate crimes are steadily increasing. From 2020 to 2021, anti-Asian hate crimes increased 339 percent nationwide, according to the FBI and multiple state agencies. Several major cities saw especially big jumps: New York City reported a rise from 30 to 133 anti-Asian hate crimes, a 343 percent increase. San Francisco rose from nine to 60 crimes, a 567 percent increase while Los Angeles rose 173 percent according to the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism. "The Federal Bureau of Investigation’s 2020 FBI Hate Crime Statistics revealed that the number of reported hate crimes in the United States rose in 2020 to the highest level in 12 years. The FBI hate crime statistics documented that reports of anti-Asian hate crimes sharply increased by over 70%” (The U.S. Department of Justice).

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Master Thangka Artist Niangben at Pellas Gallery
By: Sonia Cavazos

Thangka paintings have been around for thousands of years, dating back as far as the 11th century. An amalgamation of culture, history, religion, and beauty is displayed in this artform, matched only by the combination of unique materials such as gold and precious stones. The time, effort, and materials that go into these paintings are just some of the aspects that make this type of art unique.

There is a man that has mastered the craft and worked his whole life to share it with the world. His devotion and fascination with it have sparked a life-long journey whose goal is so close in sight. Niangben is considered a master of Thangka paintings on a national scale and he has come to Boston for his first solo Boston show at the Pellas Gallery in an exhibition titled The Lost Art of Thangka: A Tibetan Monk’s Journey.

At the opening on Sept 29, pianist Lang Lang was in attendance. Exclaimed by the New York Times as “the hottest artist on the classical music planet.” Lang Lang described that, “Niangben’s Thangka is one of the most spectacular artworks I have ever known, and it is an absolute great privilege to be a close friend with Master Niangben. His art should be celebrated around the world. He brings a lot of emotions and the most beautiful colors into his work. Some of them took him several years to finish. I am a huge fan of him.”

This reporter had the distinct privilege to meet with Niangben and Lang Lang at the opening.

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Master Thangka Artist Niangben at Pellas Gallery

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Niangben has worked since he was twelve years old to perfect the craft in order to share it with the world. But his artistic development was conflicted with many personal challenges. Faced with severe poverty, Niangben graduated from elementary school and promptly stopped attending school. “I was number five in my family. I had four sisters and as the son in the family—usually the son is supposed to take care of the family, as the eldest son who was still younger than four sisters, I felt I needed take on the role of supporting the family.” At that time, there was a Master of Chinese arts and crafts in his village, Xiawu Cairang. Niangben began an apprenticeship with him, and then his early education and cultural inspiration of the Thangka art form. “I took an internship with him as a way to make money, but over time, by the age of 14 to 15, I became more into the art form and was getting amazed at the materials used and how they were reflected in the paintings.” To end his own education to care for his family at such an early age took self-sacrifice and deep love for his family.

Now that he is a master Thangka artist, Niangben has found that his new purpose is to reach others. “I have devoted my life to this art...I believe it is my responsibility to take and preserve this art and firmly develop and make it known and teach other people.” It is an immense goal but one that he is in completely devoted to. Though many exhibitions at throughout Asia and now in America, Niangben’s personal mission to share Thangka with the world will no doubt be realized.

It is not a well-known art form and, in its early stages, was rarely seen. Niangben talked of its early stages “Originally Thangka was only found in Buddhist temples, very high-level temples in Tibet or in the nearby province in Shanghai. People didn’t get to see them. Only high ranking leaders. They were preserved as prestigious offerings to the Buddha and jushri Bodhisattva with the deep contrast of figures in deep blue at the bottom and even the portrait of White Tara, bright and luminescent in the middle, against a backdrop of dark browns and blacks with deep gold show that range. It’s captivating and invokes a feeling of both unparalleled respect and unbridled wonder. To share this with the world would be to truly beneficial and enriching to all. To look upon it is to be drawn in, to be caught, leaning close to see every detail but feeling as though there isn’t enough time in the world to notice it. This artist is truly a master.

Niangben has adhered to the traditional form of Thangka but has continually employed his own style, making it what it is today and evoking the admiration of so many. He expressed his excitement of being here in Boston and that this exhibition is yet another to fulfill his purpose to spread love and education about the Thangka art form. His show is at Pellas Gallery to November 26.
SA...
Heart Disease: What You Can Do Today to Reduce Your Risk

By: Jeff Millman

This is the second is a series of articles on how to protect against heart disease and improve cardiovascular health.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States and globally. Though it affects people of all races and socioeconomic statuses, a 2021 Nature article found that “large differences in cardiovascular disease morbidity and mortality exist between migrant populations and host populations.” Migration itself “generally has an adverse effect on health, particularly cardiovascular and metabolic health, which is more pronounced among migrants moving to high-income countries.” According to a 2012 study in the Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health, immigrants to the United States may be less aware of their own risk factors and therefore less likely to seek help or change behaviors to reduce their risk of heart disease.

It’s important to address these disparities, and that starts with making sure people have the information they need to begin to change their lifestyles and behaviors to become healthier. To that end, we interviewed Dr. Deeb Salem, cardiologist and Professor of Medicine at Tufts University School of Medicine, about how to reduce the risk of heart disease. Dr. Salem poses the question: what’s the most important thing you can do to improve your heart health? The answer is simple. Don’t smoke, and if you already do, stop.

“I tell my patients that every cigarette they smoke is a minute off their life,” Dr. Salem says. A shocking twelve percent of the adult population of the United States still smokes cigarettes, and according to the CDC, cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in this country. You might associate smoking with lung cancer and other pulmonary diseases, but its effect on the heart is extremely detrimental and its role in causing cardiovascular disease should not be overlooked.

There is good news, however: the damage done to the heart soon starts to be repaired for most smokers who manage to quit. The CDC notes that even long-time smokers “can see rapid health improvements when they quit. Within a year, heart attack risk drops dramatically. Within five years, most smokers cut their risk of stroke to nearly that of a nonsmoker.”

Though not an easy task, quitting smoking is the number one priority if you want to improve your heart health. Now, if you succeed, or if you were not a smoker to begin with, what else can you do? Search “heart disease” on the internet and you will be bombarded with news and medical journal articles about how to lower your risk. The information can be overwhelming. Luckily, Dr. Salem offers some easy tips and bits of wisdom to remember.

Exercise is crucial, but you don’t need to be a long-distance runner or competitive weightlifter to improve your heart health. If you hate running (not uncommon – even runners hate running), you’re in luck. Dr. Salem points to research from the American Heart Association that found walking is just as good as running when it comes to reducing your risk of heart disease. Biking and resistance training are great exercises too, and can lower your blood pressure and LDL (“bad”) cholesterol levels and improve your mental health. With smartphones and smartwatches, tracking your daily activity is easier than ever, so get your steps in.

What about diet? Dr. Salem is quick to offer this advice: “everything in moderation – including moderation.” You don’t need to stop eating steak for the rest of your life, but reducing the amount of red meat you consume and focusing on other protein sources, such as chicken and fish, can be beneficial. Diet is also important for losing weight and controlling blood sugar, both of which can improve overall cardiovascular health. Obesity prevalence is now at 42% in the U.S., and is similar to smoking in terms of measurable impact on life expectancy.

“We’re a chubby nation,” Dr. Salem says, and that needs to change.

Of course, there are some things you can’t change: namely, your genetic history. You may be at higher risk for cardiovascular disease because it runs in your family. You may have a healthy diet and you may exercise regularly, only to find that your blood pressure or LDL cholesterol levels are still high. Some people need to take medication to control these factors, and the last few decades have seen the development of some incredible therapeutics that help people at risk of heart disease. Statins are perhaps the most well-known example of drugs that can lower bad cholesterol and improve heart health, but Dr. Salem also points to newer drugs, such as PCSK9 inhibitors and SGLT2 inhibitors.

PCSK9 inhibitors such as Repatha work by enhancing the liver’s ability to filter LDL cholesterol from the blood, while SGLT2 inhibitors can improve the kidney’s capacity to remove glucose from the body through urine. SGLT2 inhibitors are FDA-approved for use in patients with type-2 diabetes, and its effects of lowering blood sugar can improve overall health. Given that both of these are prescription drugs and can be expensive, however, some may be concerned about affording them. Are there cheaper options on the market?

Dr. Salem is hopeful about “polypill”, which contain a combination of medications used to treat heart disease and high blood pressure. Though these polypill have lower doses of the medications than would be in individual versions, they seem to be effective at lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Polypill are still being studied and are not yet available in the U.S., but research published in the New England Journal of Medicine is promising – it suggests that polypill can reduce cardiovascular events or later cardiovascular disease. And because they are a combination of other medications, they might be easier to take (only one pill a day as opposed to several) and more financially viable.

We will likely need to wait a few years before polypill are widely available. In the meantime, there are plenty of simple things we can do to improve our heart health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease. Your journey will depend on your individual situation – you may need to think about quitting smoking, or perhaps talking to your doctor about starting a new medication. But for those of us who are able, a brisk walk or weightlifting session can do wonders, and as Dr. Salem points out, they don’t even require that you leave your house. He himself makes sure to get at least 3,000 steps and twenty to thirty minutes of exercise on a stationary bike each day. “After that, I feel pretty good,” he says.
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1. Visit SoWa Open Market on Sundays: May 1, 11:00 am October 30, 4:00 pm. An event every week that begins at 11:00 am on Sunday. “SoWa Open Market is part farmers’ market, part arts market, and part food festival. Local farmers and food purveyors line up to sell fresh produce, animal products, baked goods, and other treats, while artists sell handmade jewelry, clothing, home decor, and crafts.”

2. Explore the New England Aquarium’s new public photography exhibit: June 22, 8:00 am – November 1, 5:00 pm. New England Aquarium, 1 Central WharfBoston, Massachusetts 02110. “Discover the extensive marine life of Stellwagen Banks National Marine Reserve returns to Carver.”

3. Go to the ICA, free of charge throughout 2022. August 11-23, 2022. 8:00 am-5:00 pm. Recurring event happens every Thursday throughout Contemporary Art. 25 Harbor Shore Drive Boston, MA 02210. “Open to all, the weekly evening event runs through the end of 2022, and among the exhibits, you’ll view an array of 2022 exhibits, including Deana Lawson’s photographic representations of Black life, the multimedia installations of Somerville native Renée Green, opulent and joyful sculptures of Raul de Nieves in Treasure House of Memory, and Eva LeWitt’s captivating arrangements of hanging geometric forms. Face coverings are required, and, beginning January 15, people age 12-plus must show COVID-19 vaccine proof to enter the museum.”

4. View ‘Legacies’ by Rose B. Simpson at the ICA this August in an exhibit called “Legacies,” featuring new works alongside her signature ones. Simpson lives and works in Santa Clara, New Mexico. Rose B. Simpson is an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Santa Clara, a federally recognized tribe of Native American Pueblo people.” Tickets for this event cost $20 per person. However, if you register to see the exhibit for no cost, then go to ICA on Thursdays. This exhibit’s debut is being shown on the same day that ICA is introducing its free entry days on Thursdays so that you can see its grand opening for free, or you can see it on a different Thursdays. Either way, come see Legacies at the ICA.

5. Support local businesses at the Seaport x Black Owned Bos. Mar ket. August 27, 1:00 pm-October 16, 6:00 pm. Seaport Common 85 North ern Ave Boston, Massachusetts 02210. “The Seaport x Black Owned Boston Market offers a wide range of products that support Black entrepreneurship, including gifts, apparel, painting, foods, and beauty products. This market, located on Seaport Common, is run by Black Owned Boston, a business service and consulting agency which aims to highlight Black owned businesses, places, spaces and people. Black Owned Bos. aims to show people that collective buying power can make an impact, and asks them to be intentional about shopping Wallen das.”

6. King Richard’s Faire returns to Carver. September 3, 10:30 am-October 23, 6:00 pm. King Richard’s Faire Grounds, 235 Main St. Carver, Massachusetts 02330. “Deep in the woods in Carver, an enchanting village known as Carvershire awaits—where royalty stroll alongside minstrels and jesters, knights battle on horseback, and kissing wenches steal glances from unsuspecting visitors. King Richard’s Faire returns for its 41st season of entertainment, exciting rides, skilled games (yes, there will be axe throwing and archery), meals of spit-roasted giant turkey legs and mac & cheese. Walk through the gates and back in time to the Renaissance period, as hundreds of entertainers (think acrobats, aerialists, jugglers, minstrels, fire eaters, and puppeteers) perform non-stop throughout the day on vibrant stages and meander on the property’s winding paths. Talented artisans will also have their wares of glass blowing, portrait painting, hand-spun pottery, sword making, and more. Guests can come in period costume or wear modern day attire.”

7. The Smithsonian to Massachusetts. September 10, 10:00 am-August 11, 2023. An event happening this September, you can discover more about small town life thanks to “Crossroads: Changes in Rural America,” a traveling exhibit produced by the Smithsonian Institution’s Museum on Main Street program. The Smithsonian, along with Mass Humanities, have selected six communities in Massachusetts for this exhibit that explores how rural American communities have changed in the 20th century. The exhibition will prompt discussions about what happened when America’s rural population became a minority of the country’s population and the ripple effects that occurred.”

8. The Topfield Fair brings food, rides, music, and more this Fall. September 30th, 4:00 pm-October 10th, 10:00 pm. Topfield Fairgrounds 207 Stetson Rd. Topfield, Massachusetts 01983. “Every fall since 1818, the North Shore has traded in summertime slushies and beach-side lounges for amusement rides, animals, agriculture, and food. Topfield Fair is a large event that has transformed the Topfield Fair as this quintessential county fair returns in October. With everything from racing pigs and bike stunts shows to canine aquatics and Flying Wallen das, you can’t swing a fried Twinkie without hitting something to see and do at this outdoor gathering.”

9. Celebrate creativity at Art Provincetown. October 7, 10:00 am-October 9, 6:00 pm. Various locations in Provincetown, Massachusetts “The three-day festival taking place Oct. 7-9 will include a two-day market-place at Town Hall. Galleries and studios like the Provincetown Arts Association and Museum (PAAM), the Fine Arts Work Center, and the Commons will host other events throughout the weekend. Art Provincetown will also collaborate on programming with the Washashake Music Festival, a ‘three-day, multi-venue, genre-bending, queer music festival’ taking place throughout Provincetown the same weekend.”

10. Attend the 43rd annual Harvard Square Oktoberfest. October 9, 11:00 am - 6:00 pm. Harvard Square Brattle St Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. “Annually on October 9th, over 100,000 people, the Harvard Square Oktoberfest is a long-standing tradition for Harvard Square. Planned and executed by The Harvard Square Business Association, this popular fall festival takes place throughout the year, Oktoberfest is one of the group’s largest and most popular celebrations. This year, Oktoberfest will feature: Live music, Dancing, Street performers, Family-friendly activities, Sidewalk sales, Arts and craft vendors, Vintage goods, Free goodies, Globally inspired food.”

11. Get spooky at the second annual Fall-o-Ween Children’s Festival October 21st, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm Village Green. “Last year’s event included family-friendly fun like a glow-in-the-dark play space with swings and corn hole, a Lego building demonstration, and aerial and stilts performances at the Boston Circus Guild. Adults and children alike are encouraged to attend the free event in costume. Other activities at last year’s festival included a Haunted Fun House sponsored by the New England Aquarium, Black Creamery Co-operative, a bubble demonstration by “Bubble Man” Jim Dichter, and a Day of the Dead-inspired mural open to public participation.”

12. Browse art at the 24th annual Boston International Fine Art Show. October 21 11:00 pm-October 23 5:00 pm. Museum of Fine Arts, 465 Huntington Avenue Boston 02116. “Get drawn into some art at the 24th annual Boston International Fine Art Show—one of the only such fine art events in New England. The Boston Center for the Arts is converting its 15,000-square-foot Cycorama into an exhibition hall. On display will be works from 40 fine art galleries across the United States and Europe, along with 15 juried individual artists.”

13. Watch the Head of the Charles October 21, 7:45 am-October 23, 5:00 pm. Harvard Square Brattle St Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138. “Athletes from around the world and thousands of spectators are drawn to the banks of the Charles River each October for the Head of the Charles Regatta (HOCR), the largest three-mile regatta in the world.”
Kwong Kow Chinese School held its annual Fundraising Gala on September 23, 2022. In attendance was former board member and honorary fundraising committee chair Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. Other attendees included from the left: Vice Chairman Felix Lui, City Councilor At-Large Ruthzee Louijeune, State Rep. Donald Wong, Principal Ping-Jung Huang, Director Paul Chan, behind Paul Chan is Board treasurer Tak-Chee Stephan Chan, TECO Boston Director General Jonathan Sun, Director Lily Huang, Director Dr. John Leung, Director David Chin, Director Linda See (and her daughter Olivia Powers), Director Irene Ruan, Director Winston Wong.

Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center celebrated its 50th anniversary on September 15, 2022 at Empire Gardens in Boston. 450 guests attended and the Community Leadership Award was presented to Executive Director Ruth C. Moy by President of the Board of Directors Peter K. Chan. The award specifically recognized Moy’s exceptional leadership and dedication to our organization and community.

The Massachusetts Asian Restaurant Association (MA-ARA) held its annual Gala on September 21, 2022 at Kowloon Restaurant, Saugus. Pictured here are: Jason Yu-owner Genki Ya Sushi Restaurant, Bob Wong-Kowloon Restaurant, Andy Kuang-Samurai Express/Boston, Malia Milstein-MRA, Kerry Miller-MRA, Steve Clark President/CEO MRA, Tiffany Chan-WBZ Channel 4 reporter, Tran Le-Pho Le Restaurant/Dorchester, Xiaoyan Huang-Web Power.

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Since the beginning of time, stories and tales have been used in different cultures to communicate. They have been used to teach, to preserve history, to entertain, to evoke emotion. From early Greek writers to the stage owned by Shakespeare, stories, regardless of their intended purpose, do so much. However, to tell a story firsthand, to evoke emotion through a first person testimonial of a challenging experience can be a different situation entirely, and GBH’s General Manager of Television, Liz Cheng, brings this to television in the show, Stories From The Stage.

Stories From the Stage focuses on bringing these stories to the world to connect people. There is an importance to that type of storytelling. Emotions evoked that affect audience members in different ways. Liz Cheng regarded this type of storytelling and the effect she has seen on the audience. “Don’t get me wrong.” Liz said, “Documentaries and stories are very important, but you know, especially, the members who sit in our audience and stay as well as those who are watching at home- the person is looking right at you and telling their story to you and it’s such a personal feeling and there is no filter of a reporter or producer between that storyteller and that audience member. So, it’s just raw emotion, ideas, feelings, learning and it’s hard not to feel uplifted when somebody has told a very difficult story and they come out the end of it in a better place. It’s very emotional. Much more so than when you hear someone’s story being interpreted by a producer or reporter.”

That raw emotion and lack of someone in between is what drew her into this show in the first place. All great ideas start somewhere and this show that is now capturing the audience of World Channel, accessible by 73% of American households, began as it continues, with the telling of a story. “It’s funny.” Liz said when recalling the show’s origins. “Years ago, the GBH Events Team organized storytelling events in our studios. And as I walked by one evening, I heard this incredible story by this regular person, not by a celebrity or anything, but what was most important was I witnessed how it resonated in, essentially, an auditory sense. And I thought, why storytelling on the radio is wonderful, because certainly there are plenty of storytelling series, being able to see multicultural tellers can add layers of understanding. And when I brought the idea of doing a television show back to the GBH World staff, they immediately understood the power of storytelling. To change minds and influence attitudes because what really struck me is when you see someone on stage and they say they’re very different from you and you can open your heart to their story it really becomes impossible to fear or to hate someone.”

This, Liz emphasizes, is the crux of the show, making it more than just inspiration and storytelling, but the reviewing of everyone’s differences as a way to connect people. “We try to encourage our audience,” Liz remarked, “to appreciate how we are different. Stories From the Stage is about really celebrating our differences. Not just tolerating people or understanding on a very superficial area. Because we celebrate what we have in common and how we are different and frankly that’s why we call it our “Good Citizen” show, because we like to honor diversity in the best possible way. And we found that with our audiences, it really touched them.” There are so many aspects of human existence that can be used to divide, differentiate, and push away. The unique part about this show is that it takes these pieces and uses storytelling as a vessel to explain why these differences should be celebrated and used to connect.

No matter the background, people can relate to some of these experiences and can even begin to understand, sympathize, and see those who are different from themselves. Liz challenges that the telling of the story is just as important as when it is told. “I believe a memorable story, when heard at the right time in your life, can really transform you. Because these stories we talk about, and we show on Stories From the Stage are quintessential U.S. stories and the storytellers might be from families that originated in other countries and it just shows that you can be emotionally uplifted by a storyteller who might at first seem very different from you and me, and we believe these stories can insight and inspire empathy and action and even incite social change and we like to think of it as an art form that dares take a personal stand. It’s a very primal act when you share a story. It’s a wonderful communal experience.”

This experience can be taxing on the storytellers. Opening up about such a personal experience in a public space can be daunting and this new season titled “Change makers” is filled with so many stories that touch home. This season has a specific theme. To not only influence people on the inside of the family but people outside of our culture. And that you have to behave, and you have to obey all the rules and to stand up to that takes a lot of courage, especially for someone so young.” It was courageous to do and courageous to tell. Many people come forward, even people in the audience who are inspired to tell their own stories. It isn’t easy and some people need time, but the bravery to share does not go unnoticed. Liz is working to reach more people through the podcast for the show, meant to either continue or get closure on some of these fascinating and heart wrenching stories or even just air them in a different way.

“I hope that we can reach everywhere around the world,” Liz said as she talked about her goals for the show and its purpose. “As humans we can all connect, but it shows a side of America that is not always based on conflict and what we have that is so different from the fact that we don’t get along. That this is all about the ways in which we all have commonalities and that we can celebrate how we are different as opposed to using it as a weapon against each other. So, you know, hoping for that kind of understanding that is human to human but also an understanding of America and the news stories. They don’t really get to see who we are.”

Stories From the Stage, season 6, “Change makers”, aired on September 26th. It can be seen on the World Channel channel 956 on Comcast, 473 on Fios, and can also be streamed online at worldchannel.org. The podcast is updated every week and can be found at that same location. Stories change and inspire, and whoever watches will begin to see the world differently.

By: Sonia Cavazos
DHS Publishes Fair and Humane Public Charge Rule

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has issued a final rule, to be published in the Federal Register, that provides clarity and consistency for noncitizens on how DHS will administer the public charge ground of inadmissibility. The rule restores the historical understanding of a ‘public charge’ that had been in place for decades, until the prior Administration began to consider supplemental public health benefits such as Medicaid and nutritional assistance as part of the public charge inadmissibility determination. The rule announced today speaks to the Biden Administration’s commitment to restoring faith in our legal immigration system.

“This action ensures fair and humane treatment of legal immigrants and their U.S. citizen family members,” said Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro N. Mayorkas. “Consistent with America’s bedrock values, we will not penalize individuals for choosing to access the health benefits and other supplemental government services available to them.”

“In keeping with our nation’s values, this policy treats all those we serve with fairness and respect,” said U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Director Ur M. Jaddou. “Though there is so much we do to overcome confusion and fear, we will continue to work to break down barriers in the immigration system, restore faith and trust with our immigrant communities, and eliminate excessive burdens in the application process.”

Section 212(a)(4) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) renders a noncitizen inadmissible if they are “likely at any time to become a public charge.” A noncitizen who is deemed likely to become a ‘public charge,’ meaning that they are likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence, can be denied admission or lawful permanent residence (known colloquially as a green card). Prior to 2019, almost all non-cash government benefits such as Medicaid or nutrition assistance were excluded from consideration. The 2019 rule, which was ultimately vacated and is no longer in effect, resulted in a drop in enrollments in such programs among individuals who are not subject to the public charge ground of inadmissibility, such as U.S. citizen children in mixed-status households. The publication of this rule in the Federal Register avoids these effects by formally codifying the historical understanding of the term.

Under this rule, as under the 1999 Interim Field Guidance that was in place for most of the past two decades, a noncitizen would be considered likely to become a public charge if DHS determines that they are likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence. This determination will be based on:

- The noncitizen’s “age; health; family status; assets, resources, and financial status; and education and skills,” as required by the INA;
- The filing of Form I-864, Affidavit of Support Under Section 213A of the INA, submitted on a noncitizen’s behalf when one is required; and
- The noncitizen’s prior or current receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI); cash assistance for income maintenance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); State, Tribal, territorial, or local cash benefit programs for income maintenance (often called “General Assistance”); or long-term institutionalization at government expense.

DHS will not consider in public charge determinations benefits received by family members other than the applicant. DHS will also not consider receipt of certain non-cash benefits for which noncitizens may be eligible. These benefits include: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or other nutrition programs, Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medicaid (other than for long-term institutionalization), housing benefits, any benefits related to immunizations or testing for communicable diseases, or other supplemental or special-purpose benefits.

DHS will develop a Policy Manual update to help USCIS officers apply this regulation fairly and consistently and to better inform the public about how the rule will be implemented. DHS will also conduct public outreach and engagements to minimize the risk of confusion or chilling effects among both noncitizens and U.S. citizens.

The final rule will be effective on December 23, 2022, and will be published in the Federal Register on September 9, 2022. DHS is currently making public charge assessments consistent with the statute and the 1999 Interim Field Guidance and will continue to do so until it implements the final rule for applications postmarked on or after the effective date.

Today’s announcement is among a series of actions this Administration has taken to better balance DHS’s mission sets and ensure the fair and effective management of our nation’s immigration systems.
Eugene Welch Retiring: The End of an Era for South Cove Community Health Center

By: Aili Liu

Welch: Asian health care 25 years ago was poor because most providers only spoke English and it was very difficult. They didn’t always want to deal with patients or through interpretation. So that is why we have decided that we are going to find providers that speak an Asian language, that comes from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China who knows the customs and the people. We want to give good care to our patients and that’s what we do. We are like a big doctor’s office. We see patients and a lot of our providers are their primary care doctors. But if they need some type of care that we do not have, we either refer them into BI, Beth Israel Lahey Health or Tufts. We have 10 interpreters at BI and Tufts. For example, if you were a Cantonese speaking patient, we would have a Cantonese interpreter meet you at your referral so you can get access to the doctor who can provide the care.

Sampan: What impetuses existed for Asians to access health care? Have they been removed?

Welch: Still not completely removed. You need to try to determine what type of care Asians might need, or where they have experienced more problems. (I don’t want to broadcast but) We have a lot of diabetic patients who need to be treated with medications. You can keep treating them by keeping track of their blood test, and we have a nutritionist who can advise them on their nutrition intake. In the culture, everybody has three bowls of white rice a day. But the white rice is completely carbs that turn into sugar. For example, our nutritionist may suggest patients to have two bowls, or one bowl instead, to improve their health. In addition, we are finding more cancer and hypertension in the Asian community. We are now doing 5,000 mammography screening a year and if we find something, we get a diagnostic evaluation and find them to BI or Tufts. Whether it is cancer or hypertension, we are trying to determine and treat the symptoms that are affecting Asian patients first.

Sampan: Are there any specific challenges South Cove faced during COVID?

Welch: It was a lot of challenges. In the beginning, before they got the new shots out, Moderna and Pfizer especially, people are dying. Thousands of people died in this country. Now, if you have a shot, you might catch COVID and be sick for a few days, but you’re not going to die. And most of the time, you don’t even need to go to the hospital. So, it is important for people to know that taking the shot cannot hurt you; it can only prevent you from dying in the future. We happen to be lucky. We’re a 330 federally funded health center. We get the federal fund from the federal government. During the Coronavirus, we gave out over 41,000 shots to Asian patients with the Coronavirus. Now we are doing flu shots and we are trying to give to the community what is the most important at the time. We will go back and give more shots for the Coronavirus if it seems like it will never completely go away. That is why we hire a good medical team to be always working on the frontline.

Sampan: As you retire, what are your hopes for South Cove and the state of Asian health care in the U.S.? Are you optimistic?

Welch: I’m always optimistic. You can’t be in this business and not be optimistic. It depends on the economy, who’s running the government? How much money is available? If the economy gets tight, they may start cutting back. There are many factors that can affect what we are planning on doing in the future. But at least we can hold on to what we are doing and do a good job until things pick up again.

I certainly have enjoyed my experience working here. It’s a pretty remarkable community that has allowed me, as a Caucasian, to come in and allow me to run a community health center and hopefully bring it to a better spot in the future. We think the Asian community is very thankful for getting health care. They are very realistic and try to keep themselves healthy and hopefully we do our part to help them achieve that.

Currently, there are some major Asian health centers around the United States including in California and New York. The Asian population is still only about 8% of the entire population. And the thing we should make sure to remind them is that they need to get out and vote. Because if you want to be heard by the politicians or people who control the money, you need to show them that you are voting and you are a good voting bloc. You can vote them in or out of office.

I just want to end the interview by thanking first of all, the staff of South Cove for all the wonderful work they did over the last 23 years, and how wonderful and loyal they have been to SC, our patients and the community. Nothing can ever be done by one person. I also would like to thank the people of the community for always being available and supportive in all the different areas we have clinics. I wish all nothing but good fortune and health in the future.
This fall, celebrate with confidence.

As your family gathers to celebrate special occasions, protect yourself with an updated COVID vaccine. If you are 50 or older, your risk for hospitalization and death is higher, especially if you have a chronic disease. Get an updated vaccine today.

Have questions? Talk to a doctor.

Find updated COVID vaccines at vaccines.gov
Energy brings us together.

We are proud to support the Asian American Civic Association Gala
PRESS RELEASE:

South Cove Community Health Center announces CEO transition effective January 2023

Eric M. Tiberi named the next Executive Director and CEO of South Cove Community Health Center and Eugene J. Welch to retire at the end December 2022

BOSTON, MA — South Cove Community Health Center announced today that its Board of Directors appointed Eric M. Tiberi, currently serving as Chief Operating Officer, South Cove Community Health Center, as the Health Center’s next Executive Director and CEO, effective January 1, 2023.

With more than 30 years of experience at South Cove, Eric has served as the health center’s Chief Operating Officer of South Cove since 1999, and Eric’s leadership experience spans strategy, finance, accounting, planning, operations, information technology, and fund raising. He is a graduate of Merrimack College with a B.S. in Electrical Engineering.

Eugene will retire from his Executive Director and CEO role December 31, 2022. After January 1, 2023, Eugene will continue to serve as a Consultant to SCCHC administration to assist with this important transition. Eugene began his tenure with the Health Center as a ‘Temporary Consultant’ 23 years ago and has served as Executive Director and CEO for over two decades.

“This year marks the 50-year anniversary as a Health Center, with strong foundations and dedicated patients users across our communities. Under Eugene and Eric’s management the SCCHC has grown our patient enrollment from 12,000 to over 36,000 patients and have expanded facilities and services to include 7 Health Centers between Boston, Quincy and Malden, while maintaining stable staffing and a positive fiscal position.”

“On behalf of the board, I want to thank Eugene for his extraordinary leadership and collaboration in strengthening South Cove’s position and impact of our mission,” said Board President Nelson Liu. “Eugene has made exceptional and long-lasting contributions to the community by improving access, equity, and quality of healthcare. We appreciate his unwavering commitment in helping improve the health and well-being of our members and communities served in Massachusetts and wish him all the very best in retirement.”

Eugene has served as an officer and member of The Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers, the National Association of Community Health Centers, and the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations… sharing his knowledge in making health services accessible to our Asian American patient populations.

Eugene stated, “It has been my honor and privilege to serve South Cove Community Health Center’s board, staff, and communities. I am incredibly proud and humbled by the hard work, commitment, and collaboration of the South Cove employees. Together, we have built a strong organization that harnesses our strengths and brings fundamental value to our patients, families, and the communities we serve and to each other. It is an honor to help lead such an extraordinary organization of talented and caring people.”

“As I look forward to this next chapter in my life’s journey, I am confident that with the guidance of our Board of Directors and the support of our administrative and medical team, Eric Tiberi, our new CEO, will continue on with our commitment. Eric has worked by my side for all the years that I have been connected to South Cove and without question has the knowledge, background, and ability to move the Health Center forward into its next chapter.”

Eric Tiberi remarks: “I would like to thank the Board of Directors and Eugene Welch for selecting me to lead South Cove Community Health Center as the next Executive Director. Throughout my thirty-two years tenure at South Cove, it has been very rewarding to work with a dedicated board, competent leaders, and a caring staff. During this time, our team has worked to advance the Health Center to stand out as an integral and recognizable partner in the Asian community. I am excited for the opportunity to continue providing exceptional health care services to our patients and look forward to preserving and strengthening the mission of South Cove.”

About South Cove Community Health Center

Founded in 1972 in Boston’s Chinatown, South Cove Community Health Center (SCCHC) is the premier health organization providing primary care to the Asian Communities in the Greater Boston Area. With two locations in Boston, two locations in Quincy, and one in Malden, SCCHC’s mission is to improve the health and well-being of all medically underserved in Massachusetts, with a special focus on non-English speaking Asian-Americans. By providing high quality, community-based health care and health promotion programs that are accessible and linguistically and culturally competent for these populations, South Cove has become the largest Asian primary care provider in Massachusetts. Learn more at www.scchc.org