

**PUBLIC POLICY AND ADVOCACY**

***Addressing Disparities in Immigrant Women's Reproductive Health and Health Care***

On November 2, the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues (SPSSI) in cooperation with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust held a breakfast briefing addressing immigrant women's reproductive health. A summary of the remarks of Reps. Michael Honda and Madeleine Bordallo and the major talking points of the panel are provided below. The distinguished speakers included: **Courtney Chappell, JD**, Policy Director, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, **Anita Raj, PhD**, Associate Professor of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Boston University School of Public Health, **Amita Vyas, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Department of Prevention and Community, George Washington University, **Maria Gomez, RN, MPH**, President/CEO, Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care, and **Angela Hooten, JD**, Associate Director of Policy and Advocacy, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health. SPSSI President-Elect, **Irene Frieze, PhD**, Professor of Psychology, University of Pittsburgh, served as moderator.

Congressional Representatives' Remarks:

**Representative Michael Honda**, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, began his remarks by expressing the importance of involving men in women's health issues. Without their support, the reproductive health concerns of women cannot be adequately addressed. He also emphasized the importance of getting broad support for the Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act, the legislation aimed at reducing racial and ethnic minority health disparities.

**Representative Madeleine Bordallo**, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus's Health Task Force, emphasized that immigrant women's health issues not only concern her own district, the territory of Guam, but also the entire nation. She highlighted the importance of addressing and understanding cultural issues when working with immigrant populations.

Distinguished Speakers:

The panelists highlighted some of the reproductive health disparities affecting immigrant women; addressed the social, cultural, and behavioral factors contributing to their poor reproductive health outcomes; and shared the personal stories of immigrant women. The panelists also offered policy recommendations to improve immigrant women's reproductive health, which included supporting: (a) Immigrant Children's Health Improvement Act (H.R. 1233/S. 1104), which would restore coverage for publicly funded health care (i.e. Medicaid, SCHIP) for legal immigrants, (b) Healthcare Equality and Accountability Act (H.R. 3561/ S.1580), which would increase funding and enforcement mechanisms for language services under Title VI & cultural competence training; and, (c) Prevention First Act (S.20/HR1709), which would support comprehensive sex education programs and increase family planning access through Title X funds.