

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION – NAIL SALON WORKERS

In 2005, community health workers at Asian Health Services documented an increasing number of Vietnamese patients working in nail salon shops who exhibited acute symptoms, such as rashes, skin irritation, and respiratory difficulties, as well as more chronic issues, reproductive impacts and cancer. It was soon discovered that these patients worked long hours, many days each week and were chronically exposed to reproductively harmful chemicals found in the nail products and solvents they utilized to pamper their clients on a daily basis. Since then, we have worked collaboratively with other reproductive and environmental justice, and public health organizations locally and statewide to improve the health, safety, and rights of the nail salon community.



Project

Addressing Occupational Health Impacts of Patients who are Nail Salon Workers

- Nail salon workers are disproportionately and cumulatively exposed to chemical known to be carcinogenic and reproductively harmful due to the multitude of products they handle daily.
- Workers often experience common negative health impacts such as chronic asthma, memory loss, dermatitis, and other acute illnesses.
- Since nail salon workers are often exposed to chemicals for long periods regularly, the increased risk to cancer, respiratory problems, and reproductive harm among the nail salon community is a serious concern.
- In California alone, up to 80% of manicurists and cosmetologists are Vietnamese immigrants, and more than 50% are of reproductive age.
- There are approximately 97,100 manicurists and 241,700 cosmetologists in California.
- Over the past decade alone, the nail salon industry in the United States has witnessed a 374% growth with over 380,000 nail salon workers generating approximately \$7 billion in sales revenue each year.

Our Goals

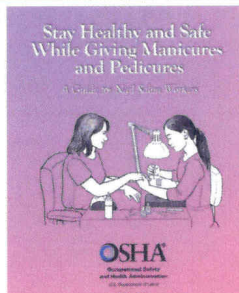


- Increase awareness among nail salon workers who are patients about health and safety tips to reducing their exposure to workplace chemicals,
- Build leadership skills among nail salon community members that enable them to advocate for their needs and issues
- Ensure opportunities for increasing public awareness about the health issues faced by this immigrant workforce.
- Support coalition building that helps to advance policy, research, and outreach initiatives to support the health and well-being of the nail salon community.



Activities

- Played a key role in establishing the California Healthy Nail salon Collaborative, a statewide coalition focused on improving the health, safety and rights of the nail and beauty care workforce.
- Currently serves as a key member of the Collaborative and serve as its fiscal sponsor.
- Helped shape standardized culturally and linguistically appropriate nail salon health and safety education materials translated into Vietnamese.



- Conducts regular health and safety trainings for nail salon worker patients.
- Supports the convening of nail salon workforce members from around the Bay Area, including AHS patients as well as other nail salon workers throughout the region.
- As a key member of the Collaborative, co-lead, collaborate, and support policy advocacy and research efforts to advance health and safety initiatives on local, state, and national levels.

Lessons Learned



- Importance of working with community groups, advocates, researchers and institutional allies with diverse expertise to work on multiple levels of policy, research and community organizing.
- Creating a pathway for community leadership is integral to building a civically engaged immigrant community that can voice their concerns and issues to create positive change.
- Building partnerships with local policymakers and health departments can catalyze local impactful change that might be otherwise challenging at a state level.

