

Asian Profile Series: Filipino Community



Culture

Simbang Gabi, or Mass at Dawn, is a 9-day celebration around Christmastime that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ. The *novena* (prayer that lasts 9 days) begins around December 16 and ends on Christmas Eve with the *Misa de Gallo* (Mass of the Rooster). People all over the Philippines celebrate *Simbang Gabi* by hanging lights and parols on every window and families attend mass. Families celebrate *Misa de Gallo* by feasting on dishes like queso de bola, bibingka, puto bungbong, & a drink of salabat (hot ginger tea) or tsokolate (hot chocolate).

Health

In the United States, nursing is the largest healthcare profession, with over 3.2 million registered nurses (RNs) nationwide. Philippines-trained RNs make up 1 out of 20 RNs in this country and continue to be the largest group of foreign-trained nurses today. Recently, a report by the National Nurses United (NNU, 2020) union found that racial/ethnic minority nurses, specifically Filipino RNs, are disproportionately dying of COVID-19 compared to white RNs. Thus far, NNU has confirmed 213 COVID-19 fatalities. Of this number, 31.5% were of Filipino descent and 39.4% were white. However, Filipino RNs make up only 4.5% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019b) of the RN workforce in the United States while whites make up 75.9% (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2019). One explanation for this disparity is due to the work environments of Filipino vs white RNs. Philippines-trained RNs are disproportionately on the frontlines of acute and long-term inpatient care settings compared to their white counterparts, who are more likely to be working in outpatient, non-acute, ambulatory, clinic settings. Hence, Filipino nurses appear to be more frequently exposed to patients with higher acuity illnesses, including patients with comorbidities and exhibit severe symptoms related to COVID-19 (Jain & Yuan, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2020).





Center for Asian Health Equity (CAHE)

Spotlights

Community Partner **PNAAF**



The Philippine Nurses Association of America Foundation works collaboratively with the Philippine Nurses Association in their unified mission to uphold and foster the positive image and welfare of its constituent members, promote professional excellence, and contribute to significant outcomes to healthcare and society. Their goal is to understand the health barriers and how to inform researchers on the needs of the Filipino community. PNAAF also holds professional education events at the local, regional and national levels to support the certification and licensure requirements of nurses by providing contact hours. Currently, they are working with AHC on the NIH All of Us Research Program to advance precision medicine.

CAHE Staff

Samantha Dayon joined CAHE in July of 2021, serving as a Program Manager for the All of Us Program. She is a first-generation, Filipina American college graduate. Immigrating from the Philippines in the 80s, Samantha's parents have always shared various Filipino foods and dances with her - Sinigang being one of her favorite dishes and Pandanggo being one of her favorite dances. Now, Samantha is heavily active in Filipino community organizations locally and nationally.

