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#### **Asian Health Coalition and Partners Celebrate Chinese New Year with new health initiatives**

January 23, 2012 – **CHICAGO:** The Asian Health Coalition (AHC) and its partners are ushering in the Year of the Dragon with new initiatives in 2012 to address substance abuse in the Chinatown community. In partnership with the Chinese American Service League (CASL), Coalition for Asian Substance Abuse Prevention (CASAP) and the Chicago Tobacco Prevention Project (CTPP), several activities will be held over the course of the year including:

- Launching of a newly revamped media campaign to target both youth, parents and families that focuses on positive messaging on smoking and drinking prevention (visit [www.asianhealth.org](http://www.asianhealth.org) to see posters)
- Starting a “Responsible Beverage Server (RBS) Training Program” for Chinese-speaking alcohol retailers and servers in April of 2012. The RBS program will educate local businesses on ways to reduce access to alcohol to underage youth and identify warning signs of over consumption.
- Conducting additional party patrols with the Chicago Police Department to help reduce alcohol drinking among under-aged youth at parties.
- Continuing the dialogue with local aldermen to further advocacy efforts in collaboration with neighboring communities

Tobacco use continues to be a major health concern in Chinatown. Surveys show that nearly one-third of adult males in the community use tobacco and 40% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students admitted to having smoked cigarettes in their lifetime. Underage drinking is also a significant problem in the Chinatown community. Recent findings show that 58% of 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported consuming alcohol in the past year.

More than 500 posters and campaign materials were distributed last year aimed at encouraging youth, parents and the community to take charge of their health and lead alcohol-free and tobacco-free lifestyles. In addition, CASL hosted a highly successful Chinese-language smoking cessation program, Courage to Quit, which received extensive community coverage. Currently, plans are underway to start a third Courage to Quit class in February 2012.

“We are excited to continue lead this call to action to address substance abuse prevention in Chinatown and bring about increased civic engagement and community empowerment to fight the harmful effects of tobacco and alcohol,” said Edwin Chandrasekar, Executive Director of the Asian Health Coalition.

If you are interested in signing up for Courage to Quit, please contact Tabitha Mui at 312.791.0418 x1174 or [tabitha\\_mui@caslservice.org](mailto:tabitha_mui@caslservice.org).

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**Asian Health Coalition:** Established in 1996, the Asian Health Coalition is a 501(c)3 non-profit with a mission to improve the health and wellness of the Asian American community through advocacy, technical assistance, community-based education and research. To learn more, visit [www.asianhealth.org](http://www.asianhealth.org)

**Coalition for Asian Substance Abuse Prevention (CASAP):** CASAP was formed in 2008 and comprises civic leaders and organizations representing 12 sectors of the Chinatown community with a mission to prevent substance abuse in Chinatown through capacity building, strategic planning, and implementing culturally appropriate prevention strategies for awareness, advocacy, and education. Visit [casapil.com](http://casapil.com) for a list of partners and activities.

**Chicago Tobacco Prevention Project:** As the delegate agency for the Chicago Department of Public Health, Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago oversees the Chicago Tobacco Prevention Project. Funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control, the comprehensive program includes hard-hitting media, outreach to vulnerable population groups, and policy efforts that reduce exposure to secondhand smoke. To learn more, visit [www.lungchicago.org/ctpp](http://www.lungchicago.org/ctpp).