



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
COMMISSION

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For Immediate Release:  
April 21, 2014

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## **APAAC Distributing i-SPEAK Cards to Facilitate APA Access to Services**

**HARTFORD, CT** – This year, the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission (CT APAAC) began distributing “i-SPEAK Cards” for world language speakers among the Asian Pacific American (APA) community. i-SPEAK cards are two-sided, business card-sized inserts printed in English on one side, and an Asian language on the other. They inform service providers of an individual’s interpretation needs. Institutions receiving federal funds, such as Medicaid or Medicare, must provide qualified interpretation services at no cost to the customer. APAAC presently distributes i-SPEAK cards to businesses, community groups, and other organizations in Chinese, Lao, and Vietnamese.

One-third of all APAs in Connecticut report speaking English “less than very well”. This language barrier can deter APAs from seeking services, as they often cannot communicate effectively with providers. Furthermore, Connecticut has limited services that accommodate APA language needs. While health and other providers expand their capacity for cultural competency, i-SPEAK cards afford the APA community an opportunity to engage services and navigate the system with someone that can facilitate communication and understanding.

The challenges to equal access facing APAs contribute to the total inequity of health and well-being in Connecticut. i-SPEAK cards represent one small, effective measure to reduce gaps in service while empowering communities. No Connecticut resident should have to shy away from services or assistance programs when in genuine need.

APAAC highly appreciates our community partners for their participation in this program. Please contact APAAC for further information, or to get involved in the i-SPEAK initiative.

**About the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission:** Created in 2008 by the Connecticut General Assembly, this 21 member bipartisan commission oversees matters concerning the Asian Pacific American population in Connecticut. Its board members, who serve as volunteers, are appointed by legislative leaders of both parties.

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