

## Connecticut Pharmacists Foundation: Connecting Older Cambodian-Americans with Pharmacists Miles Away

Responding to President Obama's initiative to maximize the benefits of health information technology, the Connecticut Pharmacists Foundation is collaborating with Khmer Health Advocates on an innovative telemedicine approach to delivering medication therapy management services to elderly Cambodian-Americans in Connecticut, Western Massachusetts, and California.

This project is being funded as part of the Center for Technology and Aging Medication Optimization Diffusion Grants Program. This one-year grant will partner Connecticut pharmacists with community health workers in Connecticut and California (through telemedicine links) to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate medication management, with a goal of identifying and resolving drug therapy problems to optimize health outcomes. The project incorporates all aspects of telemedicine including videoconferencing, spoken format (in Khmer language) data collection tools, electronic medical records and software for data analysis that identifies issues affecting medication beliefs and adherence for use in community specific education programs.

"The Cambodian community faces multiple barriers to health care including, language, culture and literacy. One of our greatest needs is

for help with medications—accessing them as well as managing them. Our lives depend upon this," said Theanvy Kuoch, Executive Director of Khmer Health Advocates.

The Cambodian-American community was formed in 1975 with the arrival of 190,000 refugees and survivors of the Khmer Rouge Regime who had experienced four years of terrorization and torture that claimed 2.25 million lives. Emerging science suggests that a history of trauma and torture is strongly correlated with the prevalence of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental health disorders.

Cambodian-Americans, with their history of trauma and torture, have prevalence rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorders that are 10 times the national average. In addition, mortality from diabetes occurs six times more often than the general population.



Thomas Buckley, Project Director for CTAF-funded "Delivering Culturally Appropriate Care to Optimize Medication Use in the Elderly"

“Through our partnership with the Cambodian community we hope to break through cultural barriers and demonstrate improved understanding and quality of care through a unique patient centered medication management program for this underserved population--ultimately unveiling a new paradigm of pharmacist services,” said Thomas Buckley, Executive Director of PharmNetEx, a subsidiary of the Connecticut Pharmacists Foundation.

**Project Collaborators:**  
**Connecticut Pharmacists Foundation**

The Connecticut Pharmacists Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to educational outreach and pharmacy practice-based research. PharmNetEx, a subsidiary of the Foundation, is a network of pharmacists providing diverse clinical services to optimize medication use and patient outcomes.

**Khmer Health Advocates**

Khmer Health Advocates has been providing medical care and advocacy for Cambodian victims of torture since 1981, and has developed and implemented the use of telemedicine as a means of improving access and efficiency of care.

**Center for Technology and Aging**

The Center for Technology and Aging (techandaging.org) supports more rapid adoption and diffusion of technologies that enhance independence and improve home and community-based care for older adults. Through grants, research, public policy involvement and development of practical tools and best practice guidelines, the Center serves as an independent, non-profit resource for improving the quality and cost-effectiveness of long-term care services. The Center was established with funding from The SCAN Foundation (thescanfoundation.org) and is affiliated with the Public Health Institute (phi.org) in Oakland, CA.

Telemedicine Approach to Delivering Medication Therapy Management

