

From: Karen Menéndez Coller <karen@micentro.org>
Sent: Monday, January 14, 2019 2:39 PM
To: All Alders
Subject: In Support of Southeast Asian Healing Center

Dear Alders,

I have been made aware that the Finance Committee will be considering an amendment to the 2019 Operating Budget allocating funds to mental health services in the Southeast Asian community.

I am writing this email in support of the Southeast Asian Healing Center and the request that the community have a voice in funding allocated to support their mental health needs. Quality culturally competent services are severely needed throughout Dane County. As communities of color grow, the gap is felt more and more. At Centro Hispano we know this because we struggle identifying knowledgeable practitioners who understand the impact of history and culture on the well-being of the Latino community and whose process of care respects the values of the community. This is incredibly important for appropriate care. We recently took matters into our own hands working to pilot test a Spanish-Speaking AODA support group at Centro, that more adequately addresses stressors facing our Latino community, with generous EOP funds from the City of Madison.

We have always identified the Mayor and the City of Madison as valuable partners in our work and it is with that frame in mind that I've decided to voice my concerns about the recent decision to allocate \$115,000 to fund the Anesis Center for Marriage and Family Therapy through a non-competitive service contract. The community has expressed significant concerns about working with providers who may not understand the trauma they have experienced. With such an overwhelming lack in existing services, the allocation of these dollars needs to be even more carefully considered, and proposals for the agency that can best meet the needs of the community need to be at minimum equitably reviewed through a fair and transparent RFP.

It is my belief that the Southeast Asian Healing Center is best equipped to handle the needs of a community that was so severely impacted with the closure of Kajsab House and the Cambodian Healing Temple. I would advocate that if a non-competitive contract is issued, it should be issued to fund and support staff at this organization, staff that for 18 years has been working with the Southeast Asian community - giving staff the independence to provide services without fear of financial shortcoming as was the case when Journey Mental Health decided to close services. The community is fortunate to have capable service providers at the Southeast Asian Healing Center. Please, let's support their efforts to expand services and meet their needs. Let's not reinvent the wheel with models that may not be most suited for the needs of the community.

This is a very important decision. As always I thank you for your time and consideration, Karen.

Karen Menéndez Coller, PhD

Executive Director

Centro Hispano of Dane County

810 W. Badger Rd.

Madison, WI 53713

Office#: 608-442-4010

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