



PRESS RELEASE
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NEXT ACRS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ANNOUNCED

Michael Byun appointed to helm of 45 year-old social justice driven health and human service agency headquartered in Seattle, WA, effective December 3, 2018.

SEATTLE, WA—After 22 years of service to Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) as its executive director, Diane Narasaki announced her retirement, which will be effective December 2, 2018. She announced it a year in advance to ensure a smooth transition, and to celebrate ACRS' 45th anniversary with the community at the October 27 gala before her departure. Concluding a national search process, the ACRS Board of Directors has appointed Michael Byun to be ACRS' next executive director, effective December 3, 2018. Byun is currently the Chief Executive Officer for Ohio's largest health and social services agency serving Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders (AAPI) and other immigrant and refugee communities.

The ACRS Board led the search for the new executive director of a social justice agency that reaches over 30,000 community members each year. Under Narasaki's leadership, ACRS grew exponentially to meet the evolving needs of Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and many others by expanding its holistic continuum of social justice advocacy and culturally competent health and human services, and its staff, who collectively speak over 40 languages and dialects, at its 82,500 square foot facility in Seattle's Rainier Valley, and its offices in Kent, Bellevue and downtown Seattle, its food bank in the Chinatown-International District and at schools, community centers and homes throughout the region. During her tenure, ACRS also expanded its leadership and partners at the local, state and national levels.

Byun is a native Washingtonian and returns to the Pacific Northwest following 15 years of outstanding leadership at Asian Services in Action (ASIA), Inc. The leading health and social services organization for Ohio's AAPI community, ASIA is also an influential voice for the community, serving over 58,000 people annually and providing comprehensive, integrated health and social services, information, and resources to its clients.

With a track record of service demonstrating a strong fit for ACRS, Byun oversaw rapid growth in programs and services to respond to community needs at ASIA. Similar to programs at ACRS, key ASIA initiatives led by Byun have included expansion of workforce and job training programs, services for domestic violence, the launch of coalition-based, statewide civic engagement campaigns and AAPI Legislative Days, and in 2013, the opening of the first-ever federally qualified health center in Ohio focused on serving AAPI immigrant and refugee communities.

ACRS Board President Angelie Chong said “Diane has inspired truly collaborative leadership that strengthens our civil and human rights, and builds power with engagement from staff, clients, community leaders and members. Michael’s experience as a strong local, statewide and national voice with the AAPI community and other marginalized and communities of color will ensure our communities continue to have a strong leader, collaborator and advocate at ACRS.”

Byun has worked for nearly 25 years on health disparities, social justice, and immigrant and refugee issues, with a focus on AAPIs and other underserved communities. In addition to his leadership role at ASIA, Byun serves on local, state and national boards and advisory committees within the AAPI community. He is board co-chair for National Coalition of Asian Pacific American Community Development, and founding member for the national AIM for Equity, a health justice advocacy organization focused on advocacy and mobilization of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and allies to ensure access to high quality, culturally competent health care. Byun holds a gubernatorial appointment as chair of the Ohio AAPI Advisory Council, and in 2014, along with Narasaki, was appointed by President Barack Obama to the President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. He is a 2015 German Marshall Fund Fellow and 2009-10 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Fellow who received his MPA from the University of Washington.

Byun said, “I’m humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve this incredible community and this organization. I want to thank Diane for 23 years of amazing service as she hands over the responsibilities to me in December. Her visionary and strategic leadership of the organization means I have inherited a strong, influential and mighty institution that will continue our community’s important and vital work.”

Looking ahead, Byun continued, “We are at a time of great challenge unlike anything we’ve seen before. Now, more than ever, we must work together to uphold values of equity, fairness, and social justice. We are also confronted with a dynamic shifting landscape for health and social services where ACRS is well positioned as it continues to innovate to be community responsive. It is in the organization’s DNA. I look forward to working with ACRS staff, board of directors, volunteers, donors and other community allies as we look towards the future.”

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Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) offers hope and opportunity in over 40 languages and dialects. We provide one door through which AAPIs of many generations -- immigrant, refugee, or American born -- can find the resources they need. We help transform the lives of families and individuals by helping people feed their loved ones, find jobs, access resources, gain English language and work skills, become American citizens, recover from addiction, and achieve mind and body wellness. We serve seniors and people with disabilities, and connect youth with job training and leadership development opportunities while ensuring that they and their families receive the support they need to succeed in a new land. We support Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and other underserved populations with advocating on behalf of themselves and their communities about issues that matter most to them. For more information, visit www.acrs.org.