

Reaching Lu Mien Community, Listening Sessions Project

February 25, 2026



**COPN is the largest overdose prevention network in the country,
with 32 active coalitions representing 85% of
California's 39 million people.**

**The information gathered supported the work that
Sacramento County is doing as part of COPN.**

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In partnership with:

Sacramento County
Behavioral Health Services
(BHS)

Iu Mien Community
Services (IMCS)

Sacramento Cultural and
Linguistic Center (SCLC)

Sierra Sacramento Valley
Medical Society (SSVMS)

California Opioid
Prevention Network
(COPN)



**Sacramento County BHS
hosted a trivia game
activity to help Lu Mien
community members
learn about substance
use/opioid use and how to
seek help for their loved
ones.**



Sacramento County BHS and IMCS hosted three listening sessions to gather feedback from Lu Mien seniors/adults about substance use/opioid use, the community's needs, and ways to help.



Listening Session #1:

July 15, 2025



Listening Session #2:

July 29, 2025



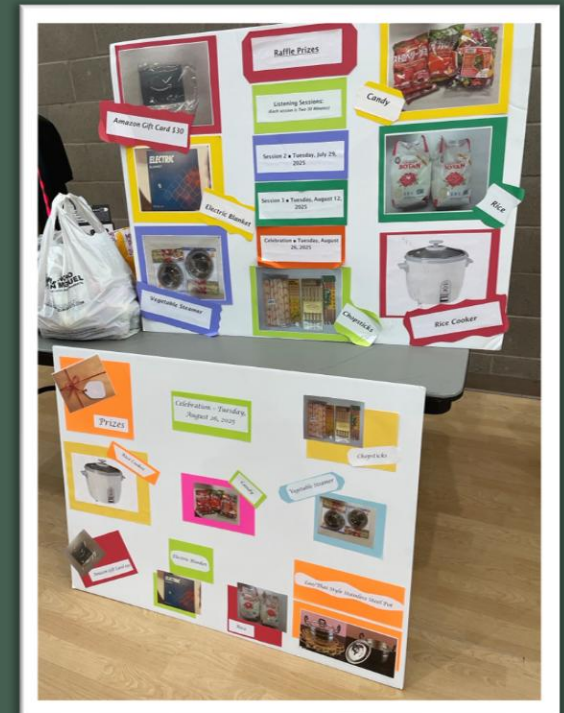
Listening Session #3:

August 12, 2025



We are grateful for the level of enthusiasm and the number of participants who were willing to engage in the listening sessions.

We could tell that participants thought hard about the answers and were open to discussing the topic of substance use.





LISTENING SESSION
QUESTIONS AND
SUMMARY OF
RESPONSES

Question 1: ***Why do you think people use substances?***

- For medicinal remedies for cough, fever, stomach pain, etc.
- To socialize with friends / Peer pressure / “Thoy Kaeh” (to be hospitable).
- To fulfill Mien Shaman duties such as staying up for a three-day funeral ceremony.
- Due to anxiety, loneliness, feeling depressed, to fall asleep, or thinking too much.
- To relax or be happy because they have nothing to do.

Question 2:

What does substance use treatment look like to you?

- Some shared about “Meng chan” (going to the “American agency” or “American program”).
- Some were aware of specific agencies who provide help such as methadone clinics.
- Limited treatment options were available in Thailand/Laos.
- Belief that stopping use will be “physically painful.”
- “An individual must make the decision to want to quit.”



Question 3:
Do you think there are differences in substance use across age groups?

Those who believe there are differences say:

- Older generation uses substances for medicinal purposes, to show respect, or to socialize with friends.
- Younger generation uses substances because they are bored, depressed, or use recreationally with friends.

Those who do not believe there are differences say:

- “Regardless of age, it is bad to use substances.”
- Substances make it hard for individuals to work well together and causes them to not be themselves.



Question 4:
Why do you think people do not get substance use treatment?

- Unaware of how to seek help.
- “Some cannot speak English and cannot get the help they need.”
- Belief that using opioids is like using medication and that if they stop, they will suffer, be in “pain,” or relapse.
- Fear of getting into trouble with the law and going to jail.
- Not wanting to lose their friends.

Question 5:

Who do you talk to about substance use (e.g., family, teachers, religious leaders, health care workers, community leaders, friends, etc.)?

- Conversations around substance use need to be initiated by someone else.
- Some do not talk to anyone about substance use but when they see it happen, they will talk to the person about the consequences and for them not to use.
- Sharing with community-based organizations(CBO), religious leaders, family members (children, spouses, and/or in-laws), and friends.



Question 6:
What would make it easier to talk about substance use?

- Talking to friends, family or someone with lived experiences.
- Talking to people nicely and calmly helps.
- “Sometimes it’s scary when people are under the influence, but we still talk and say what we need to say.”
- Having groups/space available to talk about substance use.



Question 7:

What is one fact you remember about substance use disorder that you might share with someone?

- Avoid friends who are using substances.
- Drugs will not lead to a good life.
- If you see people using drugs, tell them to stop or get help.
- In case of overdose, use Narcan.

Behavioral Health Services – Screening and Coordination (BHS-SAC)

Telephone

(916) 875-1055, CA Relay 711, or toll free at (888) 881-4881

Hours

Support is available 24 Hours a Day, 365 Days a Year

Website (Open Assessment Hours are available)

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Pages/BHS-SAC.aspx>

SUPT BHS-SAC Informational Flyer

<https://dhs.saccounty.gov/BHS/Documents/SUPT/GI-BHS-SUPT-BHS-SAC-Info-Flyer.pdf>

How To Get Help



**Iu Mien Community Services (IMCS) Healthy
Village Senior Group
Listening Session Celebration**



Presentation:

- Review of overall findings in the listening sessions
- Chance for further input
- Narcan training and demonstration
- Expression of appreciation for the partnership



Iu Mien Community Services (IMCS) Healthy Village Senior Group Listening Session Celebration



KEY LEARNING AND STRATEGIES MOVING FORWARD

Key learnings from the COPN program

- Conducted three listening sessions to learn more about the issue in the Lu Mien Community, followed by a celebration
 - Key learning: Substance and opioid use has some basis in cultural norms for Lu Mien community
 - Key learning: Strong stigma serves as a barrier to reporting overdose and accessing services for Lu Mien community
 - Key learning: There is a lack of culturally tailored education, intervention, and healthcare provision for substance use disorder for Lu Mien community

COPNs impact on our approach to messaging

- Influenced approach to the community and selection of the focus community
- Provided scaffolding for shaping the final messaging
- Allowed for direct feedback from the community to shape our work (i.e., listening sessions)

Putting our messaging plan into practice

- Will be continuing participation in cultural events and activities to build rapport
- Will build on relationships built in listening sessions to continue conversations with elders in community, who serve as trusted community messengers
- Will take community feedback from listening sessions to approach conversations with healthcare providers and provide direct education

How this project improved our messaging strategy going forward?

- Provided essential context and valuable information for reaching multiple cultural groups
- Highlighted the importance of collecting information before disseminating information



COPN Messaging Goal:

“We are a caring community of strong hearts and heads ...”



If we can talk about substance use with our community and families, more people can get the help they need.



Conversations about substance use belong in a healthcare setting and substance use disorder can affect people from all walks of life.



Overdose can happen to anyone, and everyone can have tools to keep the people around them safer.



Ongoing partnership and SUPT community outreach support to the Lu Mien Population and the API Community



IU MIEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Free event & resources!

Join us for our annual
SENIOR PICNIC

Enjoy cultural foods, fun family activities, and community!

Saturday, September 20, 2025

10:00 - 2:00 PM - TAHOE PARK
3501 59TH ST SACRAMENTO CA 95820

For questions contact us at (916) 383-3083

This program is funded by the Division of Behavioral Health Services through voter approved Prop 63 Mental Health Service Act (MHSA).

2026

Healthy Village Senior's
IU MIEN NEW YEAR *Celebration*

Tuesday, February 17, 2026

Updated Time 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

George Sim Community Center
6207 Logan St
Sacramento, CA 95824

IU MIEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

City of SACRAMENTO

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Questions?

Substance Use
Prevention and
Treatment (SUPT)

- Main Line: (916) 875-2050
- BHS-SAC: (916) 875-1055, CA Relay 711, or toll free at (888) 881-4881

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THANK YOU!