



**Providing Culturally-Appropriate  
Health Care in Minnesota**

# ***HMONG***



## **Culture Matters Discussion Guide**

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**Providing Culturally Appropriate Health Care  
in Minnesota**

**Hmong Culture  
Interview with May Hang**



Minnesota's Quality Improvement Organization

In partnership with:



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**Note: Not all Hmong patients share the same cultural values portrayed on this DVD. It is important for health care providers to talk to their patients to discover the values that are important to them as individuals.**

## **Overview and Learning Objectives**

### **Using this guide:**

The Culture Matters Discussion Guide is designed to facilitate discussions after each section of the DVD. It is divided into six sections that correspond to the six sections of the DVD. Suggestions for implementing ideas are found after each discussion section.

### **Learning objectives:**

1. Assess your current understanding of the Hmong culture.
2. Discuss the role of religion, traditional health care beliefs, social values, and family structure of the Hmong people and the impact these factors have on health care.
3. Discuss ways to build trust with Hmong patients.
4. Identify specific culturally sensitive practices that you can incorporate into your work with Hmong patients.

### **Before viewing the DVD:**

1. Advertise your continuing education sessions two weeks in advance. A poster to advertise the session is on page 11.
2. Provide each participant with a copy of the self reflection assessment tool on page 13. Encourage participants to complete the self reflection tool prior to the first session. This assessment is intended for self reflection only.
3. Provide each participant with the CEU certificate on page 12 to distribute to participant on completion of each 50 minute session.

### **After viewing each section:**

Discuss the questions in this discussion guide. Allow 5 to 10 minutes for discussions after each DVD video section. The DVD and Discussion Guide are designed to allow for viewing and discussion in half hour sessions, or the entire DVD can be viewed and discussed within two hours.

## Overview:

### Culture Matters DVD

### Hmong Culture



In 2008, Stratis Health produced the Culture Matters Hmong DVD to increase awareness of the need for health care organizations to provide culturally-appropriate health care to the Hmong community in Minnesota. The DVD provides information about the cultural background of the Hmong community, its social values, the role of religion in health care beliefs, and decision making strategies related to health care considerations. It also includes suggestions for health care professionals in providing care to the Hmong population.

May Hang is the guest speaker on the Hmong DVD. May Hang is a Hmong immigrant from Laos who first came to the US at age four under adverse circumstances common to the Hmong People. May is the first Hmong Advanced Practice Nurse in Minnesota. Although there are relatively few Hmong registered nurses in Minnesota, they are the bridge between traditional and western beliefs for the Hmong community. Currently, May practices as a family nurse practitioner focusing on common acute family illnesses. She continues to work closely on a voluntary basis with culturally-specific programs for Hmong elders.

*Every visit is a cross cultural encounter...*

## Section 1

### Title: Cultural Background

Video: 17 minutes



If participants have not completed the self reflection assessment prior to arriving at the educational session, ask them to complete it before starting the DVD. The self reflection assessment is on page 13.

#### Discussion questions:

1. In what ways did the interview with May Hang help you understand the culture of the Hmong population?
2. Were there any aspects of the Hmong cultural background information that surprised you? If so, what were they?
3. Identify one piece of information from the cultural background section of the Hmong DVD that you can use in your work setting.

#### Suggestions for implementation in your work setting

##### Name:

Demonstrate respect to Hmong patients by asking them how they would like to be addressed.

- People from the Hmong community do not call each other by their first name.
- They address one another by their title, such as aunt, uncle, brother, etc.
- The medical record is maintained under a Hmong patient's first and last name. The Hmong have 18 clans, with 18 last names that represent the clans.
- Married women may keep their maiden name.

##### Decision making:

Allow additional time in obtaining consent signatures.

- Decisions are made by the family and clan.
- Patients may wait to sign a consent form until they have had time to talk to their family.

##### Language:

Determine if the patient needs an interpreter.

- When determining if patients need an interpreter or translated materials, ask "In what language do you prefer to discuss your health with us?"
- If patients prefer discussing their health concerns in Hmong, ask them which dialect they speak, Green Hmong or White Hmong.
- If an interpreter is needed, use a trained medical interpreter if possible.

## Section 2 and 3

### Title: Role of Religion and Health Care Beliefs Decision Making

Video: 5 minutes



#### Discussion questions:

1. What did you learn about the health care beliefs of the Hmong community that you did not know before?
2. In what ways are decisions made within the Hmong community?
3. How might your facility accommodate the decision making values of the Hmong people?

#### Suggestions for implementation in your work setting

#### Illness:

Ask patients what they believe is causing their illness.

- Health beliefs are intermingled with spirituality. Hmong may believe their disease is the result of a spiritual problem; when souls are off balance, illness may occur.
- Hmong patients may use a spiritual healer, or shaman.
- Work with a trained medical interpreter and take the time necessary to explain the health care options available.

#### Decision making:

Ask patients if they need to consult their clan prior to making decisions.

- Hmong want to be involved in the decision making. Rather than telling them what to do, involve them in their plan of care.
- Be respectful to Hmong patients' need to speak with their family and their clan prior to making decisions.

## Section 4

### Title: Health Care Considerations

Video: 20 minutes



#### Discussion questions:

1. What did you learn about health care considerations for the Hmong culture?
2. What surprised you about the health care considerations for the Hmong culture?
3. What illnesses are common in this population?

#### Suggestions for implementation in your work setting

#### Impressions of health care:

If a Hmong patient has an incurable disease, explain what is currently known about the disease and that no cure has been discovered.

- Hmong people sometimes feel that they do not receive the same treatments others receive—treatments that could cure them.
- They may feel they are being experimented on rather than receiving treatments others receive.

#### Feedback:

- Give immediate feedback to Hmong patients if possible.
- Explain to the patient how to manage the telephone triage system at your facility.
- In some cases, it may be necessary to make appointments for Hmong patients and to call them a week prior to their next scheduled appointment as a reminder.

#### Medications:

Ask patients if they use any herbs or medications from other countries.

- Patients may have prescriptions from Thailand, China, France, or Laos that have not been FDA approved.
- Educate patients about the safety of foreign medications.

#### Elderly family members:

Encourage adult children to assist their elderly parents in managing their illness.

- Ask elderly patients, “Who in your family can help you do this?”

**Chronic diseases:**

Explain to patients the long term consequences of not taking care of their chronic illnesses.

- Chronic diseases common among the Hmong population include chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, congestive heart failure, and hypertension.
- Gain family support by asking patients to bring an adult child with them on their next visit.
- Patients may not see the need for long term medications for chronic illnesses if they are feeling well.
- Explain to patients the long term consequences of not taking care of themselves.

## Section 5

### Title: Suggestions for Health Care Providers

Video: 8 minutes



#### Discussion questions:

1. What can you do to establish trust with your Hmong patients?
2. How can you help your Hmong patients navigate the health care system?
3. What are two ideas that you can implement in your work with Hmong patients?

#### Suggestions for implementation in your work setting

##### Medical Interpreters:

When determining if patients need an interpreter or translated materials, ask “In what language do you prefer to discuss your health with us?”

- If an interpreter is needed, use a trained medical interpreter. This is especially important for explaining invasive procedures because the words can be difficult to translate into Hmong.
- Use the AT&T interpreter phone line if no interpreter is available.

##### Appointment times:

Schedule longer appointment times for Hmong patients.

- You may need more than one visit to explain a new diagnosis.

##### Communication styles:

Be aware of traditional Hmong communication styles.

- When communicating with a Hmong person of the opposite sex, not using direct eye contact demonstrates respect for the patient.
- Saying “no” to a Hmong patient demonstrates disrespect.
- Maintaining physical distance during an initial encounter is important. As trust develops, Hmong patients become comfortable shaking hands.

Provide educational materials in Hmong and English.

- Hmong patients may not read either English or Hmong. Provide written materials in both languages because another member of the family may be able to read at least one of the languages.
- Review instructions orally and ask for a return demonstration. Hmong may say “yes” to indicate that they have heard you, but still do not understand what you said.

Explain a disease by comparing it to a familiar household process.

- There may not be a translated term for chronic illness such as diabetes.
- Explain a disease by comparing it to familiar household items such as using heating in the home for temperature control.

**Providing Culturally-Appropriate  
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# **HMONG**



## **DVD Interview with May Hang**

**When:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Where:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1 CEU for each 50 minutes of attendance**



Minnesota's Quality Improvement Organization

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# Certificate of Participation

## Hmong DVD Interview with May Hang

Health Care Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Certifies that

Name of Attendee: \_\_\_\_\_

Participated in the Culture Matters Continuing Education Session and has earned

\_\_\_\_\_ Contact Hour(s)  
(1 Contact Hour = 50 minutes of education)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month          Day          Year

May Hang is a Hmong immigrant from Laos who first came to the US at age four under adverse circumstances common to Hmong People. May is the first Hmong Advanced Practice Nurse in Minnesota. Although there are relatively few Hmong registered nurses in Minnesota, they are the bridge between traditional and western beliefs for the Hmong community. Currently, May practices as a family nurse practitioner focusing on common acute family illnesses. She continues to work closely on a voluntary basis with culturally-specific programs for Hmong elders.

**Learning objectives:**

1. Assess your current understanding of the Hmong culture
2. Discuss the role of religion, traditional health care beliefs, and family structure of the Hmong people and the impact these factors have on health care
3. Discuss ways of building trust with Hmong patients
4. Identify specific culturally sensitive practices that you can incorporate into your work with Hmong patients

## Self Reflection Assessment

*There are no right or wrong answers to this assessment.*

<b>Familiarity</b>	Very familiar	familiar	Somewhat familiar	Not familiar
1. How familiar are you with the proper way to address patients from the Hmong community?				
2. How familiar are you with the health care beliefs of the Hmong community?				
3. How familiar are you regarding the religious beliefs of the Hmong community?				
4. How familiar are you regarding common illnesses/diseases of the Hmong population?				
<b>Comfort</b>	Very Comfortable	Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Not Comfortable
5. How comfortable are you when caring for Hmong patients with limited English proficiency?				
6. How comfortable do you feel caring for Hmong patients who use herbs or medications from another country?				
7. How comfortable are you caring for Hmong patients that require advice from their families and clan before making decisions on health care matters?				
<b>Awareness</b>	Very Aware	Aware	Somewhat Aware	Not Aware
8. How aware are you of your own cultural identity?				
9. How aware are you of stereotypes that you may have regarding other cultural groups?				
10. How aware are you of your own biases and prejudices?				