

Title:

Handling Crises Head On: India Home's COVID-19 Reponse

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Abstract:

New York City was the hardest hit globally by COVID-19, and Queens specifically was one of the hardest hit boroughs. This pandemic especially highlighted and exacerbated disparities in Queens's communities of color, as it did with South Asian immigrant older adults (the primary clientele of India Home). This is an intersectionally vulnerable group of older adults, likely to face comorbidities of diabetes & hypertension, live in overcrowded housing, face low English proficiency, low digital literacy and come from a variety of immigration statuses. During this crisis, this population faced heightened food insecurity, social isolation, mental health issues, financial insecurity, housing insecurity, and legal issues. As such, India Home took a holistic approach to addressing these issues, and quickly transitioned and implemented a number of programs in response while maintaining our core value of cultural competency. We started a robust food delivery program to provide culturally sensitive home-delivered meals & groceries for low income seniors. We shifted all of our senior center activities to a virtual platform using Zoom to help maintain our seniors' physical and social health. We provided remote case management and wraparound services through which seniors have had access to crucial benefits from the safety of their homes. We also provided virtual ESL & technology classes to help equip the community with valuable skills and increase their independence. Since the beginning of this pandemic, India Home delivered 9,900+ meals, delivered groceries to 900+ seniors, provided 16,000+ telephone reassurance check-ins, and reached 10,800+ service units through educational talks, nutrition talks, yoga, meditation, exercise, ESL, technology, citizenship & art classes to date. Through this presentation, India Home will be able to share lessons learned and how to address heightened needs of communities in crises to be able to stabilize them for the "new normal" that we will be living in.