**APEC Project - Integrative Medicine and COVID-19 Care**

1. **The Background of the Project**

Since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had huge impacts on people’s lives and healthcare systems. Till November 2023, over 6.98 million people have lost their lives to COVID-19 worldwide. Many COVID-19 patients suffered long-term physical and psychological symptoms caused by different variants of SARS-CoV-2. In addition to developing vaccines and potential drugs, finding more comprehensive ways to efficiently combat this unprecedented health crisis is extremely important and urgent.

Integrative Medicine (IM) covers a broad range of systems and practices, including applications of diet, nutrition, and supplements, mind-body practices, physical exercises, lifestyle adjustments, herbal medicine, and other traditional medicine approaches, such as acupuncture/acupressure in combination with conventional medicine. IM has been adopted as an attempt to improve patient outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Asia Pacific Economic Cooperations (APEC) economies have shown strong interest in potential IM approaches, procedures, and tools to combat COVID-19 and other infectious diseases, as well as to improve healthcare in general.

In 2021, on behalf of the US, OCCAM proposed an APEC project titled ‘Integrative Medicine (IM) and COVID-19 Care’. With support from Thailand, Indonesia, Chinese Taipei, and other APEC economies, as well as the Health Working Group (HWG) of APEC, the project is to demonstrate how IM can help build better, more effective, and efficient healthcare systems for countering COVID-19 and related diseases. Both developed and developing economies in APEC came together to share and learn about current science-based medical practices for preventing, coping with, and treating COVID-19. Special focuses were given to areas such as the integration and comprehensive care of patients with COVID-19, related care efficiency, safety, feasibility, deliverability, cost-saving, and COVID-19 control policymaking.

**2. The Objectives of the Project**

1. To conduct comprehensive research for developing a preliminary document of ‘Recommendations and Guidelines of IM for COVID-19 Care’
2. To host an APEC virtual workshop on IM and COVID-19 Care on September 20-22, 2022.
3. To systematically review and incorporate the workshop outcomes into the ‘Project Report’ and official version of ‘Recommendations and Guidelines of IM for COVID-19 Care’ in the form of publications for disseminations.
4. To form an APEC working group to promote the IM applications on COVID-19 care and other diseases, as well as future international collaborations.

**3. The Summary of the Project**

For the first time, with 13 APEC economies participating, this APEC project provides an overview of efforts to foster open discussions and collaborations among medical providers, researchers, policymakers, and government officials in APEC economies on IM approaches to COVID-19 care. These efforts are expected to promote action in APEC economies regarding IM and COVID-19 care to improve the quality and efficiency of interventions for COVID-19 management. While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to various APEC economies and beyond, it has also provided an opportunity to transform conventional healthcare interventions and delivery models to include IM approaches for the improvement of patient outcomes. Program efforts will promote open discussion across APEC economies to support international collaborations, build trust, and establish policies for areas such as data collection and sharing, laboratory testing, and symptom reporting. Long-term, these efforts will be a call to action for the establishment of international frameworks which are presently lacking, but desperately needed to support global collaboration and public health. The efforts documented in the ‘Project Report’ and ‘Recommendations and Guidelines of IM for COVID-19 Care’ (see links below in part 4) will facilitate collaborations among APEC economies around clinical care, basic research, and healthcare policy for IM and COVID-19 care. The US will continue working with other APEC economies through IM in emerging strategies to combat this global pandemic.

**4. Project Outcome Documents**

To find the detailed information of this project, two project outcome documents have been attached below.

* 1. Project Report

<https://www.apec.org/publications/2023/07/project-report-of-integrative-medicine-(im)-and-covid-19-care>

* 1. Recommendations and Guidelines of Integrative Medicine (IM) for COVID-19 Care

<https://www.apec.org/publications/2023/11/recommendations-and-guidelines-of-integrative-medicine-(im)-for-covid-19-care>

**5. Workshop Videos**

To view the three-day APEC Workshop details, please visit the following weblinks:

Day 1 - [Integrative Medicine (IM) and COVID-19 Care Workshop-20220920 Day 1 (vbrick.com)](https://nci.rev.vbrick.com/#/videos/aa1d6a04-621e-42af-aca5-e567036152a2)

Day 2 - [Integrative Medicine (IM) and COVID-19 Care Workshop-20220921 Day 2 (vbrick.com)](https://nci.rev.vbrick.com/#/videos/0e556810-f04a-4b85-b223-9b66bf3f7c2d)

Day 3 - [Integrative Medicine (IM) and COVID-19 Care Workshop-20220922 Day 3 (vbrick.com)](https://nci.rev.vbrick.com/#/videos/2db9e7b0-c147-4439-86ea-c38f5a79e608)