



COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM DOESN'T ONLY BENEFIT LOCAL POPULATION, IT GIVES THE PROVIDERS LESSONS, TOO.

PROJECT LEADERS: DR. ALDABBAGH, PGY3, DR. ABBAS, PGY3, PROJECT MENTOR: DR. VYPRITSKAYA, PROJECT MEMBER: DR. GUTIERREZ

Internal Medicine Residency Program, Capital Health, Trenton, NJ

Problem statement

Low health literacy is common among patients with chronic medical conditions especially for diabetic patients. Limited health literacy adversely affects diabetic management and is related to morbid complications. We found that patients who have chronic medical problems were having a hard time following up with their PCP for their basic healthcare, especially during the Covid pandemic.

Project Goal

The main purpose was to make Trenton population understand basics about diabetes and general measures to control the disease to prevent complications.

We prepared 5 educational simple language sessions in power point presentations for the general public. These presentations were modified after discussing them with the internal medicine residents at Capital Health.

Project Method/Intervention

Our team of 3 faculty and 12 residents volunteered to collaborate with Eastern services Worker Association (ESWA), which is a low income worker group, providing health education outside in the hospital's backyard, the majority of the population in this group are Hispanic. Some of our residents are native Spanish speakers.

We were doing weekly educating sessions starting with a small introduction, with the onsite translator and then dividing the attendees into small groups with one provider in each group. We started our sessions with letting them ask questions, more than just providing information.

The questions were about what they eat, what are their struggles, and their physical activity levels. Our first session was about what do they know about diabetes, the second and third one was about nutrition. The fourth session was about physical activity, teaching them tips for easy exercises. The fifth session involved the complications of diabetes.

The patients were very interested in being educated about the Covid vaccine and how to prevent the disease. The Covid pandemic has shed a light on the importance of general health and questions about how to support your immune system.



Dr. Kaniz Zehra Abbas prepares to administer flu vaccination for an ESWA member.



Results and outcomes

We noticed that many of the people had their own struggles of just getting a good quality of healthy food.

Many struggles were mentioned, including but not limited to their time to cook healthy food, it's easier to get donations from the charity association which doesn't include healthy options. And they are limited to health literacy about nutrition.

We also provided information for uninsured patients who don't have a PCP to come to our resident family health clinic.

We assembled a list of healthier donations for their food banks which were distributed and accepted to supporting organizations.

During these sessions, 20 quick and healthy food recipes were provided to them.

We were able to educate large groups of the Trenton population about the benefit of a flu vaccine to prevent a double pandemic during the beginning of the flu season. We were able to provide 50 FREE Flu shots to the attendees. Patients were interested about information regarding the Covid vaccine and we were able to distribute masks and hand sanitizers during our sessions.

Conclusion

We believe we have a responsibility to partner with our community to promote and protect their health and well-being during this difficult time.

Our focus was about improving hand hygiene, getting the flu shot and Covid vaccine, fight obesity and the importance of seeing your primary care physician for a wellness visit.

We noticed these interactive sessions benefitted both of us. As providers in healthcare, we learned how important it is to listen to our patients, take a deep dive into their lives and struggles and find a practical tool to help each individual with their own needs. How to change our way of obesity counselling by listening more than giving advice, as this advice may not be applicable to some of these patients due to their own life struggles.

We learned how to involve the patient with decision-making and with conversation more than before.

This project improved our skills on knowing closely what community we are taking care of in the hospital, to better communicate with them and counsel them.

We believe this can be an ongoing project for our residency program, to continue to engage in our community and provide them with better healthcare.