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ABSTRACT

Introduction: African Americans and the Latinx community make up the largest proportion of minorities who experience the most severe health disparities. However, on average African Americans experience worse access to care, lower quality of care, and poorer health outcomes than the nation as a whole (Riley et al, 2016). African Americans seek primary care through private physicians' offices at only two thirds the rate of Whites. Additionally, African Americans' preferential use of non-primary care sites as a usual source of care restricts their relative exposure to the potential preventive health benefits of primary care experiences. Furthermore, preferential use of non-primary care sites like the emergency department as a site of usual source of care correlates with poorer health outcomes across a variety of diseases (Arnett et al., 2016). The Interprofessional Community Clinic (ICC) is a student-led free clinic that provides a variety of health services free of charge to the uninsured citizens in Lake County to help offset this issue. However, prior to this project's implementation in 2020 less than 3.5% of uninsured African Americans utilized the clinic's services and from the first phase of this project, it was identified that lack of knowledge of the clinic was the main barrier. Now in the second phase, we have found that the number of African American utilization has increased to 9.3%.

Methods: Year one of phase two was conducted from August 2020-present and implemented some of the suggestions received from community leaders during phase one on how the ICC can improve its outreach to the local African American population with an emphasis on improving awareness of the ICC's existence and services through advertising and partnering with community organizations. In year two of phase two we have reviewed factors that potentially contributed to the success of the increase in the number of uninsured African American utilization and have created ways to further increase this number via sustainability due to the transition to residency of the main principal investigator of this project.

Findings: During the first year of the second phase, a Lake County Community Church and Local Business Directory Excel spreadsheet was created. It has been continually updated and projected to be completed in July 2022. A letter to our community partners and sustainability draft are in progress and will also be completed in July 2022. A medical student who assisted me with the first year of phase two provided insight on what worked and areas needing improvement for future success. Two current ICC executive board members shared current plans for the clinic and how they can assist in helping achieve the projects goals for continual community outreach in the local African American community.

Conclusions:

Despite major improvements made since the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, African Americans still continue to experience health disparities in accessing health care. The ICC is continually working on improving its outreach to the local African American community in Lake County and currently creating a sustainability plan in place to prevent these efforts from ceasing.

Keywords: Access, advertise, African Americans, awareness, free clinics healthcare, health disparities, ICC, student-led free clinics, sustainability, utilization

BACKGROUND

For over 400 years, African Americans comparatively have demonstrated poorer health outcomes than non-Hispanic Whites. Reaching back to the mid-20th century, the US government documented that African Americans were far more likely than non-Hispanic White Americans to have a wide range of potentially fatal illnesses (1). Furthermore, chronic disease burden, morbidity, and mortality are all significantly higher among young adult Black Americans than the U.S. population as a whole. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Black Americans' life expectancy in 2020 was 3.6 years shorter than non-Latino White Americans. 10 In 2020, the leading causes of death among Black Americans were heart disease, cancer, and COVID-19 (2). Although African Americans are the second largest group in the US, followed by Hispanics, they tend to carry the burden of many diseases in the United States.

OBJECTIVES

- Complete Lake County Community Church and Local Business Directory Excel spreadsheet
- Complete Letter to Community Partners
- Complete Sustainability Plan Draft

METHODS

- Phase one (conducted from December 2019-June 2020) was divided into three parts
 - Part 1 covered background information gathered about perceptions of the health and healthcare service usage of the local African American community, including major health issues and where they go for selected health services similar to what the ICC currently provides.
 - Part 2 evaluated general knowledge of the ICC
 - Part 3 gathered information about perceived barriers to healthcare in the African American community of North Chicago, Waukegan, and Zion.
- The first year of phase two (conducted from August 2020-June 2021) applied and implemented some of the suggestions received from community leaders during Phase 1 on how the ICC can improve its outreach to the local African American population
- The second year of phase two (conducted from January 2022-present) evaluated the progress made over the last two years and worked with new ICC exec board members about ways to sustain the project beyond my graduation.
 - Interviewed student project volunteer
 - Interviewed current ICC executive officers
 - Update Lake County Community Church and Local Business Directory Excel spreadsheet
 - Create letter to community partners
 - Create draft sustainability plan

RESULTS

- Completion Projected for July 2022
 - Lake County Community Church and Local Business Directory Excel spreadsheet
 - Letter to Community Partners
 - Sustainability Plan Draft
 - Final will be determined at that time
- Project Insight
 - What worked and areas of improvement
 - Current ICC plans and how to incorporate the project's goals for future success

CONCLUSIONS

- Contributions to the increase of uninsured African American utilization of ICC services
 - Community Partners
 - Serving as a resource
 - Utilizing their resources
 - 60th District Electronic Community Board
 - Church Advertisement
 - Representative Flyer
- Sustainability
 - Prevent the cessation of a successful program
 - Terminating an effective program leads to negative effects for community involved host organization
 - Program initiation costs are high
 - Community experiencing unexpected program termination lose trust when future programs are to be introduced



FREE HEALTH SERVICES
FOR UNINSURED ADULTS
TELEHEALTH APPOINTMENTS

ARE YOU

- Stressed?
- Sad Often?
- Grieving?
- Having Problems with Family or People In Your Life?
- Feeling Like You Have No One To Talk To?

ARE YOU STRUGGLING

- with Losing Weight?
- with Taking Care of Yourself?
- to Keep Up with Your Health?

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Feeling down?
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SPANISH INTERPRETERS AVAILABLE

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