Proposed Evaluation of a Mobile Health Unit Program in Rural Arizona

Melissa Ferrell, MSN, FNP-BC DNP Candidate, The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona

Background

- Rural Native American residents often experience limited access to quality healthcare services and face significant health disparities, resulting in poorer outcomes.
- Under-utilization of healthcare services is related to poor health outcomes, increased cost of care, and delayed treatment of disease.
- Arizona department of Health Services data showed American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have worse than average standing on a variety of health indicators when compared to all other ethnicities (ADHS, 2011).

- Poor health indicators include:
  - Decreased ability to access healthcare due to geographic distance and limited means of transportation
  - High rates of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, alcohol induced chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, and shortened lifespan
  - Low socioeconomic status
  - Cultural factors influencing lifestyle and behavioral patterns (Warme, 2006)

Mobile Health Unit Program

- One Southwestern Arizona Native American healthcare system utilizes a Mobile Health Unit (MHU) program to:
  - Improve access to care
  - Increase utilization of healthcare services
  - Foster continuity of care in collaboration with traditional healthcare services
  - Program consists of 4 MHUs –
    - Family Planning
    - Birth control, STD testing, gynecological services
    - Pediatric Dental
    - Routine dental care for school-aged children
    - Pediatric Outreach Mobile Unit
    - Health services and education for school-aged children
    - Public Health
    - Primary and preventative care across the lifespan

Problem

- The MHU program was implemented to increase accessibility of healthcare services to rural NA residents and school-aged children, increase the frequency of routine, preventative and follow-up care, and improve dental health in children.
- This formative program evaluation will provide stakeholders information to determine if the mobile units are reaching their intended target audience – residents not currently using healthcare services, evaluate what services are being utilized, and determine if the MHU program is effectively reducing health disparities and improving health outcomes.

Mobile Health Unit Services

- Family Planning
- STD pre-test, Papanicolaou test
- Pregnancy/abortion counseling
- Birth control
- Pregnancy

- Routine care
- Vaccinations
- Health screenings
- Referrals

- Pediatric
- School-aged children
- Lifespan

Population served

- Family Planning/STI prevention
- Pregnancy/abortion counseling
- Vaccinations
- Health screenings
- Referrals

Services provided

- Family Planning/STI prevention
- Pregnancy/abortion counseling
- Vaccinations
- Health screenings
- Referrals

Staffing

- NP, FNP, RN
- ILAB
- Staff
- Public health

Schedule

- Relating structure: 3 days a week to each district regularly meeting with community college
- Monthly visits to school district
- School-aged children
- Mobile health unit

CDC Framework for Program Evaluation

1. Engaging stakeholders
2. Describe the program
3. Focus the evaluation design
4. Gather credible evidence
5. Justify conclusions
6. Ensure use and share lessons learned

Stakeholder Needs

- Executive Leadership Team
- How will the formative program evaluation benefit the community?
- Healthcare Organizational Directors/Offerers
- Is the MHU program an effective means of improving outcomes through increasing access to and utilization of healthcare services?
- Clinicians
- Are the needs of the patients being sufficiently met in the mobile unit setting and are health outcomes improving?
- Community members
- Is the MHU program providing a feasible alternative to traditional healthcare services?

Aims of the Formative Evaluation

1. Identify patient demographics
- What patient population is using the mobile units?
- Is the target audience being reached?
2. Assess mobile unit utilization rates
- Are patient visits increased with mobile unit use?
- How do utilization rates compare with traditional ‘brick and mortar’ healthcare services?
3. Examine epidemiology and health status of the target population
- How does the health status of the MHU patients compare to the health status of the community?
- Are health outcomes improving and health disparities decreasing?

Focus the Evaluation Design

- Results and recommendations disseminated via:
  - Executive Summary
  - Formal power point presentation:
    - Tribal leadership team
    - Key organizational leaders
    - Program clinicians and staff

Ensure Use and Share Lessons Learned

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References