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Operation Immunization Involvement with the BiNational Health Fair

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Background/ Objective

The BiNational Health Fair was started by the Mexican Consulate and the South Omaha Community Council and a consortium of local organizations including but not limited to: local universities, the Immunization Task Force, and the OneWorld Community Health Center (OneWorld). Initially, the Operation Immunization (OI) group was involved in the BiNational Health Fair through immunization education and further advanced to providing immunizations. Community engagement with the BiNational Health Fair and OneWorld allowed the opportunity for pharmacy students to provide services to an underserved health population, including immigrants that are only Spanish speaking. Pharmacy students that participated in this event are not required to be bilingual, but several are. Additional professional interpreters were available on site as needed. The objective of this Innovative Practice Report is to describe the involvement of the OI student group with the BiNational Health Fair in South Omaha through influenza vaccines and immunization education.

Methods

The OI students volunteered at the BiNational Health Fair with our community partner OneWorld. This event offered immunization screening and administration of influenza vaccines. Student volunteers were solicited using an online scheduling tool. Prior to the event, students participated in a brief orientation. Students and pharmacy faculty arrived 15 minutes prior to the start of the event and responsibilities were reviewed. Immunization screenings required the students to review each immunization on the adult immunization schedule with the patient to recommend further vaccines they may qualify for at a later date. After the event, the students received a follow up survey asking for feedback on their experience.

Collaborating Partners



Results

During the 2019 BiNational Health Fair event, students provided influenza vaccines and screenings to patients to a predominantly Spanish speaking community. Vaccinations screenings provided the opportunity to inform an underserved population on the importance of remaining up-to-date with the vaccine schedule. There were 11 chapter members present along with six faculty, serving 157 patients. Anecdotaly, students reported positive experiences with working with a population that speaks a different language. Some students that attended also spoke Spanish and could communicate with patients. Students recognized the language barrier their patients have in the Omaha community that may prevent them from receiving essential health services. Students also saw the need for more events like these so patients can know more about their own health and medical needs. They were also able to use the Ignatian Values that intertwine with the curriculum, joining in solidarity with those who are vulnerable to provide empathetic and compassionate care.

Reflections from Participants

Question: *What do you feel you gained from this experience?*

“It was an insightful look into my own Latino community, their struggle with language barriers and, in some cases, the need for more events like these to be in the know of their own health and medical needs. Giving them more detailed explanations as to why they should keep up with their vaccinations and how they can help their health and their children gave a sense of accomplishment, ensuring more health services provided for such a big community.”

“From this experience how much easier health care would be if I was bilingual in Spanish. Additionally, I learned from this experience that the patients were all very thankful that we were holding this event. Every person I helped said thank you and it was truly eye opening that even the little that in healthcare are so important.”

Question: *Reflecting on Ignatian Values, did this engagement encourage you to live out one or more of these values?*

“Cura Personalis, care for the person. It was completely targeted towards the care of a community that may be left out of some opportunities based on the language barrier or other factors. Being a bridge for them to get the care and information they deserve was incredibly fulfilling.”

“I think this encourages me to live out the value Cura Personalis. Some people are afraid of needles, so when giving vaccinations you are caring for their health, but also have to care for their emotional health by calming their nerves.”

Vaccination Clinics



Implications

The students that participated in this event worked in collaboration with OneWorld to provide influenza vaccinations and immunization education to a predominately Hispanic population. This partnership with OneWorld has allowed the students to hone their knowledge and gain confidence in their ability to help educate the public on the importance of vaccinations. Lastly, this event allowed the students to experience the Ignatian Values to provide empathetic and compassionate care.

Vaccination & Screening Data

