

Mapping a Strategic Plan for Health: Community-Based Participatory Research with Underserved, Low-Income, Urban Neighborhoods



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Introduction

In 2002, the Calvin College Nursing Department initiated a community-based nursing curriculum. They sought to spread community experiences across the curriculum and have those experiences be driven by the health needs of the community.

Background

- Community-Based Participatory Research (CPBR): a collaborative approach to inquiry where community and academia are co-teachers and co-learners 1,2
- Emphasizes shared power, building community capacity, and joint research with the goal of action, improving the health of the community 3
- Empowers the community to identify health concerns and solutions
- Connects resident voice to nursing student practicum experiences in community-based curriculum
- Partnerships formed with 3 urban, underserved neighborhoods in 2002
- Between 2002-2004, qualitative and quantitative data gathered through focus groups and door to door surveys to assess neighborhood strengths and health concerns
- Neighborhood meetings to report data and have residents identify top 5 health concerns & solutions
- Strategic plan documents top health concerns and solutions and links with nursing student activities
- One example of a neighborhood driven solution to address lack of access to care was developing a Community Health Worker (CHW) Program where residents are trained in basic health care and work with students promoting health and access to care in the neighborhood
- Between 2009-2011, students and CHWs collaborate on repeating same research process as in 2002-2004
- Update strategic plan

Funding for CBPR and CHW program received from Calvin College, Spectrum Health Healthier Communities Department and a HUD Community Partnership Outreach Grant

Focus Groups

Focus groups conducted by the Calvin College Nursing Program between 2002-2004 and repeated in 2009-2011

- Encourage residents to share views about neighborhood strengths, day to day concerns and health care
- Three focus groups conducted per neighborhood (results from 2010 focus group in Baxter / Madison neighborhood below)

Neighborhood Strengths

- **Good Neighbors** who take care of and watch out for each other
"We all kinda link to each other and look out for each other..."
- **Community and Neighborhood Resources**
"I like the Baxter Community Center cause I've been going there since I was 15."
- **The Churches**
"I think there are 7 churches in the Baxter area."

Barriers to Health Care

- **Limited or no medical / dental insurance**
"They cut all of us off of Medicaid and there's no reason why."
"There is a large percentage of people that just don't have any coverage."
- **High cost** of health care
- **Transportation**
- **Lack of knowledge of resources or when to seek help**
"People don't know where to go..."
- **Long wait** for an appointment or insurance
"It's a long time you have to wait...and that's crazy to me!"

Top Health Concerns

- **High Blood Pressure**
- **Diabetes**
- **Mental Illness/Depression**
"Every woman is on some...depression medication."
- **Asthma**
- **Alcohol / Drugs**
- **Lack of access to care or help**
"A community of people with no outlet, no help."
- **Obesity**
- **Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

Neighborhood Survey

Door to door health surveys conducted by the Calvin College Nursing Program between 2002-2004 and repeated in 2009-2011.

- Encourage residents to share ideas about their health and the health care system
- Systematic random sampling used to conduct health survey in each neighborhood.
- Survey in 2009-2011 conducted in partnership with Community Health Workers (CHWs)
- Between 128-191 surveys completed per neighborhood

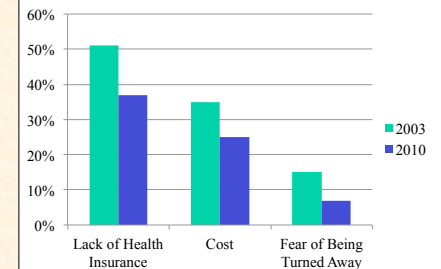


Strategic Plan

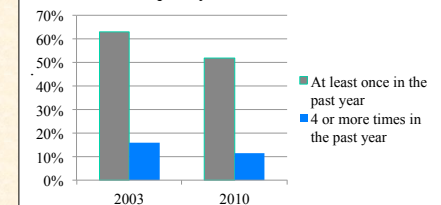
- Based on focus group and survey results, neighborhood residents identify top health concerns and solutions
- Strategic plan identifies neighborhood strengths, top health concerns, strategies to address concerns, and evaluation measures
- **Top 5 Health Concerns of Baxter / Madison**
 1. Lack of Access to Health Care
 2. High Blood Pressure
 3. Unintended Pregnancies and STI's
 4. Depression / Anxiety
 5. Obesity
- **Resident Driven Solutions**
 1. Community Health Worker Program
 2. Knowing Your Body Kit
 3. Depression / Anxiety Support Groups

Evaluation Baxter / Madison Neighborhood

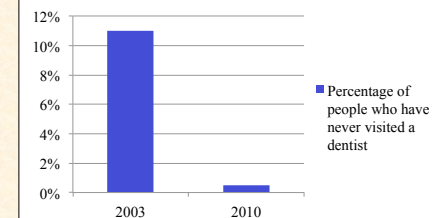
Barriers to Health Care



Frequency of ER Visits



Access to Dental Care



References

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2. Heffner, G., Zandee, G., & Schwander, L. (2003). Listening to community voices: Community-based research, a first step in partnership and outreach. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 8*, 127-139.
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