Access Care Texas: Getting Our ACT Together for Health

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Background
Approximately 23% of Bexar County residents are uninsured.1 With the push for increased access to healthcare and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), opportunity exists for approximately 214,000 uninsured Bexar County residents to obtain insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace.2 However, given the complexity of the ACA and glut of misinformation surrounding the bill, it is anticipated that many will need assistance in accessing the benefits available through the ACA. In the US, San Antonio ranks 7th in population and 60th in income literacy,3 a key predictor for a person’s health status.4 Thus, addressing these health literacy challenges is important to help individuals in our city and county obtain insurance and improve overall health.

Project Objectives
• Promoting health literacy by educating community members about health insurance and how to use the ACA Marketplace
• Educating current and future healthcare providers about the ACA and how it impacts their patients
• Forming community relationships to facilitate insurance enrollment

Methods
• Created five leadership teams: Communication; Information; Publicity; Implementation; Monitoring & Evaluation
• Engaged volunteers from Medical, Nursing, and Dental programs, as well as community members and University of Texas San Antonio and Trinity University undergraduates
• Hosted an Orientation featuring presentations by Teresa Niño from the CMS and Dr. Thomas L. Schlenker, MD, MPH, from the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District
• Organized ten interprofessional teams of up to 20 trained student/faculty “Champions for Coverage”
• Identified sites for events using “S.I.R.V.” (Safe, Invited, Relevant, Valued) parameters
• Compiled health literacy-friendly material for dissemination, including brochures in Spanish and English about the ACA
• Evaluated program outreach efficacy through observational survey data collection at project sites
• Assessed educational objectives via pre- and post-surveys of trained volunteers and volunteer satisfaction

Uninsured Population in San Antonio by Zip Code

Sites Visited

Unprojected products delivered to volunteers and community participants:

INTERNAL
Monthly Newsletter to Participants/Stakeholders
Leadership Emails and Participant Updates
Internal Wiki Portal/Archiving all artifacts
Educational Materials and Local Resources
Postings developed iteratively through each event

EXTERNALLY
Project Title, Slogan, and Logo
Printed Educational Materials in English and Spanish


Results
• Volunteers reached out to 25 sites in the community, 11 of which reported data
• Volunteers interacted with over 1,250 community members, ages 15 – 65 from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds
• Pre-orientation, 83% of respondents indicated that they had a low understanding of the ACA. Afterwards, 62% of respondents indicated an increase in knowledge
• 88% of respondents were confident or extremely confident in their ability to communicate information about the ACA to others. 86% stated that this CSL project had benefited them
• As of April 2014, according to SA2020, the enrolled number of San Antonio-area individuals through the Health Insurance Marketplace is over 67,000

Local Challenges
• Lack of available Navigators and Certified Application Counselors
• Refusal of federal aid for Medicaid expansion
• Wary community members coupled with rampant misinformation regarding the Affordable Care Act
• Significant language barrier in many areas of the city

Future Project Goals
• Educate individuals in the community on how to use their newly-acquired health insurance benefits
• Provide additional locally-tailored health literacy information via partnerships with San Antonio organizations and communities
• Evaluate participant understanding and utilization of health insurance benefits
• Simplify data collection methods
• Continue to educate future health-care providers about the challenges of obtaining and maintaining health insurance for underserved populations

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References
2. Teresa Medina, e-mail message to Anupama Kapadia, March 20, 2014.