

Training Service Providers to be Advocates for Health Promotion in CVD: Reducing Disparities

Process of Creating Change

Key to addressing the risk factors for heart disease and stroke is to educate the public about prevention and to promote awareness of the signs and symptoms of heart attack and stroke, and the need to call 9-1-1. Community health workers provide a critical link to the hardest-to-reach populations, the same populations at greatest risk for CVD. Thus, GSBHC organized a training to provide skills-based education on the prevention, detection, and management of CVD for community health workers and front-line service providers.

“Taking Action Against Cardiovascular Disease in Our Communities: A Training for Service Providers” took place on May 5, 2006. It attracted 67 service providers from a variety of organizations, including

hospitals, community-based providers, community health centers, universities, health plans, and churches.

The program began with a discussion of CVD prevalence in Brooklyn, detailing zip codes with disproportionately high levels. Lectures followed on the different kinds of stroke and heart disease, risk factors, signs & symptoms, treatment methods, cultural considerations, and disparities. The importance of time in receiving treatment was discussed using case studies. Other examples included photos of celebrities who experienced strokes, to highlight the incidence of CVD, particularly African-American celebrities, who were easily identified by the participants.

The forum addressed the role CBOs can play in reducing disparities in CVD. Examples of community-based strategies were presented, and partnership opportunities were discussed. Written materials were disseminated, including SUNY Downstate’s *Report on Diseases of the Heart and Stroke in Brooklyn*, National Stroke Association educational materials, a list of Brooklyn stroke centers, and fact sheets.

The program ended with an open panel discussion, which generated enthusiastic participation, providing the audience an opportunity to share their experiences.



One participant suggested the need for “more health forums like this...so we as providers will be able to deliver better service to the community.”

Evidence of Change

Participants self-reported in anonymous evaluations that the training provided them with knowledge to better serve their clients by increasing their awareness of CVD. Many appreciated the opportunity to learn about what others are doing to reduce CVD in their communities. Crucial was the information regarding disparities particular to Brooklyn. The widespread appreciation of the open discussion at the end evidences a need for such trainings and spaces for similar discussion in the future. A large number of respondents asked for more events of this type.

Costs Incurred

\$560 for food and \$450 for space.

Other Money Leveraged

The intervention relied on partnerships to bring together the necessary resources for a successful training. GSBHC partnered with hospitals, educational institutions, physicians, nurses, and CBOs in order to link experts with providers in a training forum with the most relevant curriculum. We received in-kind contributions of time from all of our partners, particularly the speakers at the event, and in-kind consulting on curriculum development. In addition, we were able to hold the event in space provided at a discount.

Lessons Learned

- ◆ One major successful element was our partnerships with several institutions in putting together the content and organizing knowledgeable and engaging speakers.
- ◆ When asked what they would improve, participants said that the event should have been longer. The only criticisms were logistical, in that the program did not start on time and the slideshow screen was too small.

Type of Change: Practice
Risk Factor: Information about CVD, particularly stroke
Location: Professional forum, Brooklyn, NY
Reach/Impact: 67 participants and their institutions



New York State Department of Health-
Healthy Heart Program