Using a community partner health fair to assess and provide access to resources to a community in need

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Background and Objectives

We are a group of students from the colleges of pharmacy, nursing, health professions, graduate studies, and medicine within MUSC, along with one student from the Charleston School of Law. Our goal was to facilitate access to resources for a vulnerable population; our focus was Hispanic mothers. We partnered with the Low Country Pregnancy Center, using their facilities to host a bilingual health fair which focused on needs of mothers, children, and families.

Objectives:

- Increase health literacy in a Charleston minority group
- Provide written health-related resources to attendees
- Provide child/maternal related supplies to attendees in the form of raffles
- Provide face-to-face education of relevant maternal/child subjects

Methods

- Developed an information based program for our health fair attendees in which they would be able to learn about the following topics:
  - “When to Call the Doctor” – basic child health care
  - Breast Feeding Consultation/Women Infant Children (WIC) program
  - Nutrition for Pregnancy and Children
  - Legal Counseling
  - Prescription Information – GoodRx
  - Car Seat Installation
  - Mother Goose and Fatherhood Programming
- Obtained donations to provide attendees with supplies for child care
  - Lunch, diapers, wipes, sippy cups, stroller, pacifiers, bibs, bottles, children’s books
- Developed a bilingual pre and post survey to assess health care knowledge before and after the health fair

RESULTS

The majority of our attendees were 26-36 years old, Caucasian, female, spoke English as their primary language, and had a home income under $16,000.

Participants had a good general knowledge of basic child health and breast feeding. They felt comfortable finding resources on breastfeeding support, nutrition, and legal counseling.

Conclusions

- Successfully completed an interprofessional collaboration to design and execute a community health fair
- Provided dedicated time to address the specific and individual needs of our attendees
- Facilitated a thorough and well planned health program for our attendees that increased their health knowledge and provided child care supplies
- Collected $675 in donations comprised of food, diapers, wipes, stroller, bouncy chair, sippy cups and children’s books

Limitations and Recommendations

- Limitations:
  - Physical location of the fair (i.e. not visible from a main road and was not easily accessible by public transportation)
  - Partnership with the Lowcountry Pregnancy Center limited our options for a physical location and the services we could provide
  - Timing of the event coincided with President’s Day weekend and Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE)
  - Current political climate may have made certain minority attendees wary of attending
- Recommendations:
  - Conduct future service project in a centrally located and easily accessible location (i.e. a clinic, church, or some other popular location open on Saturdays)
  - Select location or partnership that will allow for health screenings at the event
  - Consider time of event and potential schedule conflicts
  - Establish a timeline for recruitment that aligns with the date of the event
  - Develop a well-defined marketing plan that targets the specific population of interest
  - Establish partnerships earlier to use as promotion for the event

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