Increasing Senior Enrollment in 3SquaresVT

Mohammed Almzayyen
Mark Dammann
Javier De Luca-Westrate
William Jeffries
Jeffrey McLaren

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery
Part of the Community Health and Preventive Medicine Commons, and the Health Services Research Commons

Recommended Citation
Almzayyen, Mohammed; Dammann, Mark; De Luca-Westrate, Javier; Jeffries, William; McLaren, Jeffrey; Mujalli, Diana; Patadji, Stell; Romero, Melissa; and Smith-Dieng, Angela, "Increasing Senior Enrollment in 3SquaresVT" (2011). Public Health Projects, 2008-present. 57.
https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/comphp_gallery/57

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Public Health Projects, University of Vermont College of Medicine at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in Public Health Projects, 2008-present by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact donna.omalley@uvm.edu.
Authors
Mohammed Almzayyen, Mark Dammann, Javier De Luca-Westrate, William Jeffries, Jeffrey McLaren, Diana Mujalli, Stell Patadjji, Melissa Romero, and Angela Smith-Dieng
Increasing Senior Enrollment in 3SquaresVVT

Mohammed Almazayyen1, Mark Dammann1, Javier De Luca-Westrate1, William Jeffries1, Jeffrey McLaren1, Diana Mujalli1, Stell Patadjii1, Melissa Romero1, Angela Smith-Dieng2

University of Vermont College of Medicine1, Hunger Free Vermont2

Methods

Focus group
- Representative from community, health care, home based, and religious organizations that work daily with seniors in Vermont were invited to participate via email, phone, or referral.
- 17 of 34 invited organizations participated in three 90 minute focus groups of 4-9 participants; 15 standardized questions were discussed.

Data analysis
- Audio recording, data transcription, and observers.
- Solutions were categorized under one of three major categories: simplify application, educate, and advertise.

Results

“…I don’t think people realize that 3 squares money is federal money that comes into VT that’s not accounted for in the state budget, therefore if people realize that they can say “well, I’m doing my part to help VT’s economy…”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Insecure</th>
<th>Eligible</th>
<th>Enrolled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Focus group participant estimates of food insecurity, 3SquaresVVT eligibility, and 3SquaresVVT enrollment of Vermont seniors.

Figure 2: What can be done to increase enrollment in 3SquaresVVT?
Answers provided from focus groups all fell within one of the following categories. Text in bold indicates examples that were mentioned in at least 2 of the groups. Underlined text are ways that the Campaign can collaborate with specific community organizations as to increase enrollment in 3SquaresVVT.

Solutions

Make application 1 pg with larger font
- Home visits to help with application
- Provide Registration help at grocery stores
- Train family members to complete application
- Provide transportation to application centers
- Translate application
- Host enrollment days
- Application Help Line

Focus on application
- Include application with yearly tax forms

Educate the Community
- Educate Medical Centers about Hunger
- Word of mouth spread the word
- Train caregiver network about program
  - Educational workshops for care givers
  - Teach organizations about program
  - Provide online access to 3SquaresVT eligibility information
  - Hold staff meetings at health centers
  - Work with VT Medical Society to increase awareness

Recruit
- Senior advocates/champions
- Politicians

Family
- Train caregivers
- Train children of seniors

Media
- State-wide campaigning (how can enrollment help VT)
- Social networks to reach out to children of seniors
- Provide personal stories
- Target radio stations
- Rebrand the program

Public Spaces
- Flyers at post office, grocery store
- Shopping bag stuffers
- Change name of campaign (childhood hunger to seniors)

Discussion

Most representatives from participating community organizations knew that the Food Stamp program in VT was rebranded as 3SquaresVVT. However, most participants were unaware of specific eligibility requirements to obtain benefits. Surprisingly, despite the fact that most group participants work closely with seniors, they did not accurately estimate 1) The number of seniors who are food insecure in VT, 2) The number of seniors who qualify for 3SquaresVVT benefits, and 3) The number of eligible seniors enrolled (Fig1).

We asked participants what they thought the barriers were for seniors not enrolling in 3SquaresVVT. Each group constructed a list of barriers that they ranked starting with what they thought most adversely affected senior enrollment. When compiling the lists, we found that generational pride was the highest ranked barrier, which is consistent with previously published literature.

Finally, each group brainstormed ways to increase enrollment. Our findings are summarized in Figure 2. According to results, leaders within the senior care community would benefit from additional education concerning 3SquaresVVT. This could lead to increased senior enrollment and decrease senior food insecurity in Vermont.

Conclusion

There was a general lack of awareness about the extent of elderly food insecurity and participation in 3SquaresVVT. Most participants underestimated or overestimated both issues. The top five barriers to low participation in 3SquaresVVT were generational pride, application difficulty, lack of awareness, insufficient advertising, and the assumption that they are ineligible. Solutions to increasing participation in 3SquaresVVT consisted of: simplifying the application process, educating the community, and increasing exposure to the program.

Reference


Wills, Parks. Food Review: Food Stamp Participation by Eligible Older Americans Remains Low. 2002.