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Clinic in the Community Outreach

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Clinic in the Community Outreach

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Problem Identification

- Kennedy Park sits in the center of downtown Lewiston, ME adjacent to organizations that provide resources and support to the unhoused and New Mainers living in Androscoggin County.
- Last year, CMMC's Family Medicine Residency ran a health fair, Clinic in the Community, in the park. It was inadequately publicized, leading to poor attendance.
- The unhoused population struggles with outreach and trust, especially from medical providers.¹
- Lewiston and Auburn have a significant immigrant population, another vulnerable population.^{2,3}
- The goal is to create materials for outreach which follow best practice to increase community engagement which will hopefully lead to better access to durable preventative care for these populations.

Public Health Cost

- It is difficult to estimate the public health cost for lapses in primary care in Maine given that the state no longer has a department of public health. That said, there is county level data which is available from 2024.
 - In Androscoggin County, during the 2024 Point-In-Time Count 6,615 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness.⁴
 - Androscoggin County had an immigrant population of more than 4,000 people, representing 3.9% of the county population.⁵
 - This means that the population targeted by Clinic in the community represents approximately 9% of the population of Androscoggin County.
- Deferred or lapsed primary care in vulnerable populations worsens health outcomes and costs health systems valuable resources. Three barriers to maintaining primary care in resource poor populations in the US are appointment disinterest, competing demands, and insufficient systems.⁶

Community Perspectives

- Director, Community Health Nonprofit
 - Discussed the importance of identifying how New Mainers communicate and meeting them where they are. Most communicate using WhatsApp.
 - Brought up the constellation of organizations which provide resources to the unhoused and how important they are as a hub to disseminate information about events.
 - Organizations in Androscoggin county previously available to both the immigrant and unhoused populations are reducing staff or closing due to changes in funding from the government. Outreach from organizations such as CMMC is important to bridge that gap.
- MD, New Mainer's Clinic Provider
 - Brought up the difficulty of engaging immigrant populations in seeking primary care.
 - Immigrants have extensive vaccine documentation, required by law. This does not mean they have received preventative care. The challenge is providing that care once they settle in their new home.
 - Maine no longer has a Department of Public Health, and the burden of outreach is on the patients and providers as a result

Intervention

- Using best practice^{7,8}, material communicating the date, time, and purpose of the event was created. Three aspects were prioritized:
 - Use high-contrast combinations of text and background colors.
 - Use streamlined graphics to illustrate advice & instructions.
 - Use white space to separate paragraphs, sections, and embedded content.
- Given target populations reliance on social media for communication, digital only resources were created.

Clinic in the Community

Friday July 11th, 2025
Kennedy Park

Free preventative health care
for you and your family.

Find out more!



Results and Reflection

- Quantitatively, results can be measured by examining engagement at the Clinic in the Community in Kennedy Park with a comparison to year over year participation.
- Additionally, this outreach could be patient's first exposure to the Family Medicine Residency. Identifying patients who establish or resume care with the Family Medicine Residency starting at the Clinic in the Community would tangentially establish the impact of this material.
- There are qualitative results to be examined as well through engagement with both patients at the clinic and partner organizations who help distribute the material and communicate about the event.

Future Directions

This project is relatively self-limited as it establishes communication materials for a single event in the community. However, the principles used can be spread to other material. The Family Medicine Residency at CMMC is an important primary care resource in Androscoggin County. While its resources are spread thin, it is important that information about work the FMR program is doing is spread through partner organizations.

A few avenues for improvement of this material:

- Working with organizations and community members next year to expand the number of languages outreach material are distributed in.
- Adapting language in future years to be culturally appropriate, based on feedback and participation from community members.

Citations

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