

Carroll County United Health and Wellness team notes April 7, 2010

Homework:

1. Look at the work done by the team and have the larger group weigh in by April 19th.
2. What is one action the team can take in each of the focus areas over the next 90 days to see movement? (The actions are the tool for engaging more of the community in these efforts - things the teams will bring to the community – these are the things we need your help to do.)

The group reviewed the A3 as it was put together by staff, including the measures, levers and hypotheses. Questions posed to the team helped focus the group to determine some of the target measures that were considered more important or ones that could be more easily influenced by the community work. The questions also helped the group answer whether or not the hypotheses and levers that were presented in the A3 represented what the group had been talking about up to this point at previous meetings.

Measures

The team agreed that accessibility to all kinds of healthcare (mental, physical) was pivotal to affecting overall health outcomes in Carroll County.

Community awareness on two levels – educating the general public about the issue of accessibility as well as helping those referring people to medical care to increase their knowledge of various resources in the community – was also an important target. Potential ways to measure these things include the number of visits to a clinic or clinic utilization numbers that service providers already collect.

Hypotheses

With the new focus, potential new hypotheses that come out of that could include:

- If more people are aware of the resources in the county, they will become healthier by accessing them more.
- If more people can access healthcare, they will become healthier because they can get access to the services they need.
- If there is an increase in community awareness, more people will become aware of the issue and work to change it.
- If screenings/tests are made more available/accessible, more people would get screened/tested.
- If there's less of a stigma around mental health, substance abuse, or obesity (treatments), more people will try to access services.

Leverage points

Some additional leverage points that came up include a stigma – stigma about health issues such as mental health, substance abuse and obesity or stigma about using community health services because of income or lack of insurance

Also, there are community resources such as the community health centers and veterans care, but people don't know about them. For example, there are 2 area clinics that offer a sliding scale fee for their care (including mental health care) – White Mountain Community Health Center and the Sacopee Valley Health Center, while both are known in the community's they are located in, the scope of their services are less well known particularly for people who live the farthest away from where the services are located.

Actions

The group also discussed potential actions that could be taken, including:

- Holding health fairs with tests and screening and tables with resources for substance abuse, mental health services, and weight loss services as well as services available to veterans.
- Running a “clinical open house” tour, with using the new public bus service that would take various service providers/referrers (welfare officers, social workers, or school nurses) from one clinic or center to another and educate about the services and the new bus service at the same time.
- Highlighting what various organizations are already doing.
- Tying health fair activities to social events to reduce the stigma (including schools, PTAs) (by having table space for substance abuse treatment, mental health treatments, etc.)
- Publish bus schedules as a way of getting people to the hospital. (you can now get to the hospital because the bus stops there)

Other things that came up:

- There are very few private mental health providers that accept Medicare, especially up north.
- Some community clinics are offering mental health help, but few know about it.
- It would be good to help promote the civic groups that help with medical issues, too (Lions – eyeglasses, etc.)
- Is there a way to encourage professionals to come here (i.e. specialists)?
- Schools collect health information (insurance & immunizations) for every child.
- People are aware that it’s not just about making healthcare more accessible that will make people healthier; it’s about people participating, too.
- “Health” encompasses mind, body and spirit. If people feel connected, they live longer.
- Many arrests are linked to mental health
- Open an office that’s centrally located where people can get information or resources.
- Do a “measure your waist” campaign to raise awareness of the connection of weight to general health.

Because of the low number of people participating in this month’s meeting, the group expressed some interest in having another meeting before May 5 or a longer meeting on May 5. Is this possible or necessary? Staff will review this with Jay and communicate back with the team.

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, May 5 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.