



2015 Agency partner case studies

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THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER OF WEST PALM BEACH



Presenters

George Papadimitriou and Jose Ruiz

Mission Statement

The Community Health Center exists to share the love of God by providing non-emergency medical and eye care to those who do not have access to health care services, and assist them in establishing a continuum of care through conventional health care systems to promote a healthy body, mind and spirit.

Day in the life

As a patient walks in the door, he/she is greeted by an administrative assistant (staff or volunteer) and asked to sign in. Then the patient is asked to step into the administrative office to then go through an eligibility screening for services (done mostly by volunteers). If the patient is eligible for our services, he/she is then asked to follow an RN or Medical Assistant (volunteer) for a preliminary medical work up prior to seeing the physician. Once the physician (volunteer) is ready, the physician then examines the patient, provides treatment (when necessary), prescriptions/medications, education and instructions for labs. The patient is then taken back to the admin area for check out and to begin any referral processes, as needed. Patients are then given an opportunity to schedule an appointment with our Optometrists to at least get an annual eye exam, with the possibility of acquiring glasses through us, either free or minimal cost.

Our patients range from the working poor (those with 2 or 3 jobs) with kids. May have elderly parents. The average age of a patient is around 40 and predominantly female (60% female/40% male). To get to the clinic, many get rides, borrow transportation, have their own car, take public transportation or walk. Diabetes, hypertension and questions on how to get medication or have questions about the medication they have management is most prevalent cases.

The clinic has about 55 people total who work for the clinic; only 6 are paid staff. 10 of them are student volunteers from PBAU/Nova/FAU/South University. They are working toward medical or health-care related degree. Some of the volunteers are still working while some of the volunteers are retired.

Problem to be addressed

The Community Health Center of West Palm Beach would like to find a solution to better manage, track, engage and recruit volunteers. The CHC provides free medical and eye care to the uninsured in Palm Beach County. All of our healthcare providers are strictly volunteers. Without the volunteers, there would not be a free medical and eye clinic in West Palm Beach for the uninsured. We have recently lost volunteer physicians, optometrists, nurses and admin volunteers because of the inability to keep track of them all and manage their schedules properly. This solution would be beneficial not only to our organization but the patients we see as well.

MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
OF PALM BEACH COUNTY



Presenters

Lucy Jerome, Brittany Rapuano

Mission Statement

Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County works to improve mental wellness in our community.

Day in the life

While MHA is a small organization with only 10 staff, we do a lot of good with few resources. On any given day, a mental health professional could be working with children in a pediatrician's office screening for early signs of mental illness while another professional could be providing direct in-home care for a family with a child that has depression or anxiety. Yet another staff member could be talking to people on our Helpline (801-HELP) who are contemplating suicide or is just feeling isolated and in need of help. Still other staff are leading support groups at our Peer Place Support Center for adults with serious mental illness or training them in our supported employment program.

Problem to be addressed

The average age of onset of a mental illness is 14 years but it takes 10 years before treatment is available. Many young people are showing early signs of depression, anxiety, eating disorders and more serious mental illness like Bi Polar and Schizophrenia. However, they don't know where to go for help and many are embarrassed to discuss these issues. They feel alone and isolated.

A recent mental health screening site at Mental Health America has had an incredible 250,000 hits from people who are taking simple screenings for common mental illnesses. If they are moderate to severe, they are referred to the local Mental Health Association for follow up. Of those 25,000 screenings, 80 percent were from young women between the ages of 18 and 30.

Young people find it difficult to reach mental health professionals and/or connect with others to get more information about mental health and substance use disorders. The Mental Health Association of Palm Beach County would like to find ways to engage young people in discussions around mental health and early identification of mental illness.

PARENT-CHILD CENTER, INC.
D/B/A COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Presenter

Susan Eby

Mission Statement

We partner with communities to change the odds for our children and families facing social, emotional and financial adversity.

Day in the life

Community Partners is a multi-service family and community development organization located in Riviera Beach. Each day we serve low-income and at-risk children and parents – reaching over one hundred daily – who are seeking greater independence and stability in their lives. We concentrate our efforts in the high-risk zones of Palm Beach County where poverty and the complex issues it creates calls for strategic social change. Common issues we address daily include proper childhood development, positive parenting, behavioral health (problems due to trauma, abuse, neglect, substance abuse, domestic violence) and threatened basic needs. We offer a skills-building approach to families and communities related to housing, financial literacy, community empowerment, and child & family mental health. Whether in our offices in Riviera Beach or in community centers, schools and homes throughout the county, our mobilized staff personally engages with clients referred to us from a large network of sources. We work diligently every day to provide expert, high-impact solutions to the problems plaguing our marginalized neighborhoods and families.

Problem to be addressed

Given the amount of overwhelming need, our greatest struggle is attempting to help people as quickly and efficiently as possible, so they may begin their journey to success right away. It is imperative that the population we serve receive care as quickly as possible upon referral, otherwise as time passes some may require more intensive mental health services such as residential treatment or involuntary hospitalization. The very first step - processing client referrals so we can begin immediate treatment -- has long been an unmanageable problem that delays clients from receiving help right away.

Currently Community Partners' Parent-Child Center receives 119 referrals for mental health services through the intake department per week. All demographic information from the referrals is manually entered into our electronic medical record (EMR) system by two full time staff. Manual data entry is time consuming and can lead to errors. These referrals are often incomplete and lack the necessary information needed to begin client services. Client treatment is further delayed when staff is then required to take additional steps through emails and phone calls to obtain proper information. This manual system of data entry is causing a "bottleneck" effect; clients are not able to move through the referral process and receive services in a timely manner due to the intensive labor of manual entry and the problem of incomplete referrals.

PALM BEACH COUNTY FOOD BANK

Presenter

Perry Borman



Mission Statement

The Palm Beach County Food Bank collects and distributes food to organizations on the front-line of hunger relief. We are dedicated to fighting hunger and food insecurity in Palm Beach County.

Day in the life

The Palm Beach County Food Bank has 4 programs. In the Food Recovery and Distribution, we collect surplus food from local organizations (i.e. farms, distributors, grocers, etc.), return it to our warehouse in Lantana and distribute to more than 105 agencies (at no cost) that take on the daily responsibility of feeding the hungry in our community. A food bank is to a food pantry or soup kitchen what wholesale food distributors (such as Sysco, Cheney Bros, etc.) are to restaurants and country clubs. These front-line hunger relief agencies which are located from Tequesta to Boca Raton and west to Belle Glade and Pahokee feed more than 80,000 individuals per year.

The Weekend Nutrition Program provides backpacks of healthy food every Friday afternoon during the summer to children participating in summer camp sites. In 2014, we assisted more than 1,700 children and their families (via 19 summer camp sites). Nutrition Driven, a mobile food pantry with a core nutrition education curriculum provides healthier food and education more directly into underserved areas. A key partner for this program is the University of Florida/Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS).

The Food Bank also manages a Benefits Outreach program which helps eligible residents apply for federal food benefit assistance. Annually we assist more than 700 families secure \$1.1 million..

Problem to be addressed

According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) , at least 40% of the entire food supply goes to waste every year and consumers spend twice as much on food they waste (in the neighborhood of \$140 billion) as the government spends on the entire SNAP program (food stamps). While local hunger relief organizations exist to collect and distribute food, a broader solution is required to directly connect prospective food donors with food distribution agencies in a system that address issues such as ease of donation, geography and timeliness.

Palm Beach County suffers from a 15% food insecurity rate. Food insecurity is a condition related to the supply of food, and individuals' access to it. Concerns over food security have existed throughout history. The problem we see is that food donors (i.e. restaurants, caterers, hotels, etc.) with excess food are not connected to food recipient agencies and therefore we cannot make use of useable food.

VITA NOVA

Presenters

Jeff DeMario, with guest Kirk Brown, and Georgina Rodriguez



Mission Statement

Help young adults achieve independence by providing a stable, nurturing environment that includes housing, counseling, and education.

Day in the life

Vita Nova has three locations that provide services for older foster youth ages 18-25. These include our residential apartments, main office and thrift store.

On any given day, and any given location we are presented with challenges related to a young person disconnected from resources after leaving foster care. These include: homelessness, hunger, lost important documentation, missing healthcare or help with work or school. Calls from recipients start as early as 7:30 some mornings and we find that most crisis happen on holidays or Fridays after 4:30pm.

No matter what the situation or when we get a call our participants are always treated with a sense of respect and urgency. We know that every interaction from Vita Nova has the potential to save or improve a life.

Problem to be addressed

In our world the time it takes for our clients to request a referral and receive the service can be the difference between life and death. Unfortunately, social service agencies do not have budgets to quickly connect those who are struggling with resources they need in the fastest time possible. Oftentimes, foster youth cannot get help when they need it most. How can we get foster youth help when it is required?
