

Healthy Communities, Healthy People Program Success Story

| Title | Partnering to Fight Diabetes in Highlands County: Standing Up for the Vulnerable |
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| Public Health Issue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The direct and indirect costs of diabetes were over \$174 billion in 2007 and 80% of those costs were for the treatment of complications. • Highlands County currently is ranked 9th in the state of Florida for diabetes. • Highlands County is a rural community with a large population of migrant works and uninsured/underinsured residents. • Diabetes self management education is an effective method in preventing or delaying the complication of the disease. • One Highland's County hospital offers diabetes education to residents at a fee of about \$900; due to high costs, many residents can not afford to participate in the program. • Without the diabetes self management education to successfully manage diabetes, those living with the disease are at an increased risk of morbidity and mortality due to the complications of uncontrolled diabetes. |
| Action | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Highlands County Diabetes Self Management Education Class is being offered at no cost to residents. • A written agreement was signed with the hospital based program to refer ineligible clients to the free diabetes self management education class. • Diabetes self management education classes are offered in English and Spanish at the Highlands County Health Department, local civic center, libraries, and faith based organizations throughout Highlands County. • Community partners raised awareness of the program and refer clients to program. Partners include: Healthy Start, a Rural Health Network, a health care center, and local physicians. |
| Impact | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness of program and the problem of uncontrolled diabetes. • Women whose pregnancies are complicated by diabetes are referred to the diabetes self management education program. • 37% improvement in the knowledge of the management of diabetes by program participants. • 80% increase in the amount of leisure time activity as measured 3 months post-program follow up. • All Highlands County residents have access to a diabetes self management education class regardless of income status, health insurance coverage, or spoken language. • A participant reported a 20 pound weight loss, daily physical activity and an improvement in his A1c level (measurement of glycemic control) from 8% (high) to 6.3% (near normal range). He attributed his success to the program. |
| Lessons Learned | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is important to solicit support and referrals from local health care providers, elected officials, and faith based organizations. • Attending community meetings, providing presentations at civic and other community groups, and publishing health education articles in the local newspapers contributed to the program's success. • Assess the community need for diabetes self management education, focus population, and the best venue for delivering the program. |