

Executive Summary:

Fairview Hospital's community was primarily white-Caucasian and English speaking until recently. As the proportion of Hispanic and other cultures has increased, the hospital realized the importance of providing culturally competent care to all its patients. It began by educating its management about the importance of providing culturally competent care, and then expanded the education program to various departments in the organization. Each education program included a pre-test and a self-learning packet, followed by a post-test to track learning progress. Each unit is also provided with reference materials about various cultures, as well as copies of all documents in both English and Spanish. The organization has a program in place to translate new documents into Spanish and existing documents into other languages as necessary, as well as verbal translation services available to non-English-speaking patients.

Organization Size: 25 beds

Program/Initiative Description:

Providing Culturally Competent Care: When Fairview Hospital realized the need to provide culturally competent care to the community's increasing Hispanic population, the organization began an initiative by hosting a "kick-off" with its management. At the kick-off, hospital leaders served various Spanish dishes, engaged the management in role-playing, and showed video clips to help management understand how things could go wrong in a health care setting if providers are not prepared to deal with various cultural differences. Management was also given a pre-test to judge their knowledge of the cultures prominent in the community. Members of the kick-off session were then given a self-learning packet, followed by a post-test to identify their increase in knowledge in the area.

Once Fairview Hospital's management understood the need to focus on culturally competent care and had a basic knowledge of the issues, the hospital began applying a similar process to other units and departments. The program goal was to make a substantial improvement every three months in the organization's understanding of and ability to provide culturally competent care. As each department went through the testing and self-learning phase, the hospital ensured that the departments were equipped with the proper reference materials so they were able to immediately implement what they had learned. The reference materials provide information that ensures culturally appropriate care.

In addition to education and reference materials, Fairview Hospital translated all documentation into Spanish. The majority of this translation was performed in a

short period of time because the hospital was applying for Critical Access Hospital designation. Part of the designation survey process specified that all documents, including patient discharge information, patient satisfaction surveys, and patient education material must be available in Spanish. The hospital utilized a Certified Medical Interpreter (a native Spanish-speaking employee) for the majority of its written translation, but it also contracted with a corporation to provide additional translation services, for other languages. Each department has a copy of the translated documents, and is aware of the procedure to follow when a new document needs to be translated. Additionally, the hospital contracts with Micromedex to get disease and discharge information translated.

Fairview Hospital also has 10 bilingual employees who are utilized for interpreting services when necessary. These interpreters follow the hospital's interpreter policy and code of ethics and attend a class that reviews the hospital's code of ethics and certifies them as a competent interpreter. The course places interpreters at different levels, designating in which situations their services can be used. In addition, the hospital utilizes the AT&T line as a translation service and community volunteers, who generally speak with the patient and provider simultaneously on a speakerphone. Fairview co-sponsored an education/certification program for Medical Interpreters. We worked jointly with AHEC and other agencies.

Establishment of Program/Initiative:

The initiative began in 2002, and the hospital is continuing to enhance its ability to provide culturally competent care.

Racial or Ethnic Disparities Problem the Program/Initiative Was Designed to Address

- The community is predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon, and English speaking. The Hispanic population was initially difficult for community members to adjust to, and there is a growing population of Hispanic community members.
- Some members of the Hispanic community were not comfortable visiting the hospital, and the hospital's community health center experienced an increase in the number of Hispanic patients who were visiting there as they became ill.
- Although still only 2% of the total population, the Hispanic community is visibly growing.

Community Links:

As the primary health care provider in a rural community, Fairview Hospital works with many social service agencies regularly to facilitate access to services. The Community Links program is an outreach effort launched by Fairview Hospital in 2002 to promote communication between Fairview Hospital and other service agencies, as well as to improve the communications between agencies themselves. In 2002, a meeting was dedicated to address the Hispanic community, the needs we see and, with the help of representatives of this community, the needs we don't see. Sharing experiences increased awareness

among providers as to the experience of being an immigrant to this community and increased the community's awareness about services and programs that are available.

One example of the outcome of this effort was the invitation Fairview Hospital and other providers received to share information through a special outreach effort conducted by ESL students themselves. Through this interaction, valuable relationships have been established and feedback on perceptions based on experience has been brought back to our organization, increasing our awareness and sensitivity to the needs of this community.

Major Objectives

- Increase the cultural competence of the hospital's staff every quarter.
- Help all patients feel more comfortable when they receive care at the hospital.

Significant Results

- Patients appreciate the hospital's translation service and the organization's willingness to strive to make every feel patient comfortable and accepted.
- The hospital's diverse employees value its efforts to work toward creating collaborative relationships with the Hispanic population.

External Partners in the Program/Initiative: None

Limitations or Problems Encountered

- Finding the financial resources to fund translation of documentation, as well as on-call translators.
- Translating documents in a timely manner. Often a physician will give an hour's notice before discharging a patient, but if any of the patient's paperwork or medical instructions need to be translated, the translation services organization requires 24 hours to translate a document.
- Employees are very busy, and it is difficult to pull them from their patient duties when there is a translation need.

Estimated Cost of the Program, To Date: \$2,500.00

Advice to Other Organizations That May Want to Start a Similar Program

- Help management understand why there is a critical need for addressing cultural diversity to get "buy-in" from the beginning.
- Emphasize education of both management and employees.
- Follow-up education programs with references for each department or unit to ensure that the necessary implementation resources are available.
- Don't reinvent the wheel; look for tools that have already been created and implement what works for your organization and community.

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