

Executive Summary:

In an effort to increase employment opportunities for the local Hispanic population, expand the number of bilingual health care workers, and increase the percentage of people with health care benefits, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation teamed up with the local Hispanic community organization El Barrio to establish "Creating Possibilities" or "Creando Posibilidades." The initiative includes three different programs: (1) an adult nursing care assistant training program; (2) a nursing academy; and (3) community outreach. Each of the three areas will focus on bringing bilingual workers into the health care field, educating the community, and eliminating economic and cultural barriers that currently restrict the quality of care available to a largely uninsured, unemployed, and uneducated population.

Organization Size: 1,000 beds

Program/Initiative Description:

Creating Possibilities/Creando Posibilidades: While the fastest growing population in Cleveland, OH, is Hispanic, economic, language, and cultural barriers limit their access to health care. Less than 1 percent of health care workers in the area are bilingual. Unemployment rates for the Cleveland Hispanic population (18 percent) far exceed the average rate. The Hispanic poverty rate is 27 percent and the high school dropout rate is upwards of 67 percent. In an effort to address both the need to provide quality health care and health care benefits to Cleveland's Hispanic population and the shortage of health care providers, El Barrio, a community-based organization focused on representing the needs of the Hispanic community, partnered with The Cleveland Clinic Foundation. Together, they created "Creando Posibilidades," a program aimed at increasing access to health care through employment in the health care system. It was reasoned that if a higher percentage of Hispanics were employed as health care workers, they would have the ability to provide better care because language barriers would be alleviated and the workers themselves would benefit from employment and health insurance benefits. The program consists of three different elements: (1) an adult nursing care assistant training program; (2) a nursing academy; and (3) community outreach.

The Patient Care Nursing Assistant School is open to individuals over the age of 18, with a high school diploma or equivalent, who also speak both English and Spanish. If selected for the program, the students participated in an intensive five-week training program consisting of both classroom and clinical components.

Students completing the program are offered positions as nursing assistants at the Cleveland Clinic. To date, five Hispanic students have completed the program.

The Nursing Academy Program, set to begin in fall 2004, is a partnership with the Cleveland Public Schools. Students participating in the program will enroll during their junior year of high school. During the regular school year, students in the Academy will enroll in advanced courses in the areas of math, science, and medical terminology. Students will also be trained in time management and counseling. During spring and summer breaks, students will take part in intensive clinical training and will work part time at the Cleveland Clinic. Students who successfully complete the Academy are offered assistance in enrolling in professional nursing programs and schools.

The community outreach programs focus on addressing the health needs of the community at large. It will also focus on exposing children at a young age to careers in health care and offer job-shadowing experiences.

Establishment of Program/Initiative: Creating Possibilities was established in June 2003.

Racial or Ethnic Disparities Problem the Program/Initiative Was Designed to Address: A need to address health care concerns on a variety of levels in this largely Hispanic community.

Major Objectives

- Improve the health of the Cleveland Latino community
- Increase access to and understanding of the health care system
- Address the nursing shortage by employing qualified candidates from a population with limited employment opportunities

Significant Results: Those who have completed the program have been very dependable, successful employees with a strong work ethic.

External Partners in the Program/Initiative: El Barrio, which provides social services to the Cleveland Latino community

Limitations or Problems Encountered: Human relations issues in dealing with a vulnerable population that are addressed as they arise

Estimated Cost of the Program, To Date: \$1,600/student for the Nursing Assistant School; costs for the other two programs have not been finalized

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

- Employ an objective interviewing tool.

- Secure a director who is truly vested in the program, will set the standard for all employees, and ensure the success of the program.

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