

Title

Camden, New Jersey: Building a United Front

Summary

Camden city's 10.3 square miles is home to three different hospital systems with few, if any, independent pediatric and OBGYN physician offices. Our vision was to enlist healthcare providers (HCP) to echo the same message WIC has been sharing with expecting moms about breastfeeding and nutrition. An important component to successful strategic implementation was building partnerships with healthcare providers or in our case healthcare systems.

Challenge

WIC has often been described as the formula agency by clients, social service and healthcare providers presumably because they were unaware of the full scale of services WIC offers. Camden has no independent or stand-alone (private practice) pediatrician or OBGYN providers. These specialist work directly within hospital systems like Cooper Hospital and Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital. The primary challenge presented was trying to develop partnerships with hospital networks versus individual practitioners which meant learning to navigate corporate obstacles.

Solution

To dispel the myth, of WIC being a formula agency, our first steps were to educate healthcare providers who could potentially have the greatest impact on our clients – pediatricians and OB's. We met with Dr. Hussain, a pediatrician at Cooper Hospital and Dr. Westover an OBGYN specialist. We discussed some of the barriers and challenges their patients face with enrolling in the WIC program and breastfeeding. Staff education efforts were also extended to outpatient pediatric and OBGYN clinics. With feedback and support by providers, we repurposed MN WIC's WIC Rx pads as a referral tool to be distribute to HCP, social service agencies, child head start programs. This provided those programs and agencies an easier and less time consuming way to refer families.

Results

We are currently working on distributing the WIC Rx pads look forward to reporting the success of this initiative.

Future Directions

Successful outcomes of CPHMC's initiative rely on collaborative efforts from the community and coalition members. The WIC clinic and partners work, interact, and serve the same population and we recognize working in a silo can only add to the barriers Camden residents face. Building relationships and achieving our objective for improving access to healthy foods and beverages, although a slow process can make an impact in our community. We will pursue new partnerships, encourage and support our coalition and continue to work together to strengthen the clinical linkages.

Quote

"My doctor hasn't talked to me about WIC yet"

Contact

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