

Community Success Story: The PATH Project, Year 1

McLaren Oakland Hospital

Summary

PATH (Personal Action Toward Health), also known as The Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management Program, is designed to help people learn techniques and strategies for the day-to-day management of chronic or long-term health conditions. It is a six-week workshop conducted in 2 1/2 hour sessions each week. Workshops are offered in convenient, easily accessible community locations, and are offered for free or at very low cost to participants. McLaren Oakland launched PATH specifically for cancer survivors in January 2013.

Despite many challenges during this year of the project, 12 PATH workshop series were executed and 83% of the enrolled participants completed the workshop. All participants stated they would continue to use at least one of the self-management tools that they learned.

Contact Information:

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www.mclaren.org/oakland/oakland.aspx



Challenges

Before this program started there were no cancer survivor programs in the Pontiac community. Also, twice as many people are uninsured in Pontiac (19.9%) as in Oakland County (10%). Seeing a great need to reach the uninsured, McLaren Oakland built the capacity for its services to cancer survivors in Pontiac.

Several barriers were encountered while implementing the project in the most recent year. First, it was very difficult to recruit lay leaders for training. The training session(s) are four full days during the week. Many interested individuals could not get work off to attend these training sessions and thus could not become lay leaders. Second, it was difficult to recruit 8+ participants for each workshop. Many people did not know what PATH was and several people were unwilling to attend because they believed the length of the program was too long. Thirdly, despite the various forms and multitude of advertisements, a majority of people still did not know what PATH was. It was difficult to find a method of advertisement that would reach a greater number of people. In addition, despite attending staff meetings and discussing PATH with hospital staff, it was very difficult to get physicians involved. Physicians have so much on their plate; many did not want to add one more thing to it, even though it could benefit their patients.

Moreover, there were times during the year when there were four workshops going on at once. These overlapping workshops made it difficult to recruit participants, especially if there were two workshops going on in the same county. Despite having multiple workshops going on at once, it was difficult to find an ideal time and day to hold the workshops. No matter what time of day the workshop was at, participants would recommend having it at a different time.

Solutions

Lay Leaders (Mentors): We plan on looking for lay leaders earlier, promoting the lay leader training more, and choosing different days/times for the training sessions.

Participant Recruitment: Workshop promotion will start earlier and efforts will be made to find locations that are more convenient for participants and to get the workshop host location to promote the workshop.

Public Awareness: More money will be budgeted for communication/advertisement for Year 2. To improve physician involvement, the PATH patient navigator will attend more staff meetings, and talk more one – on – one with various physicians about the PATH program. Physicians will also be given prescription pads to help refer patients to PATH.

Overlapping Workshops: Workshops will be held at different times and on different days so participants have multiple options and can choose the workshop that works best for them.

Results

Twelve workshop host locations were successfully recruited and 12 PATH workshop series were executed. All 12 workshops have been completed (100% completion rate). Overall, there were a total of 115 participants enrolled in the PATH workshops, and 95 participants completed the workshops. Thus the final enrollment rate was 96% and the completion rate was 83%. The enrollment rate is 1% higher than the selected goal of 95% and the completion rate was 9% higher than the goal of 74% completion.

All participants stated they would continue to use at least one of the self-management tools they learned during the workshops after the last session was over. The top five tools participants said they would use after the workshop ended were:

- Physical Activity (80%)
- Making an Action Plan (79%)
- Healthy Eating (78%)
- Decision Making (61%)
- Problem Solving (60%)

Eighty-three percent of participants said they were given information to help them live a healthier lifestyle, including what to eat and how to get active again after cancer treatment. The participants found the following information most helpful: low fiber diet, healthy eating, portion sizes, information on carbohydrates and fats, exercises in general and from the book, social support, making an action plan, pain diary, hydration, and nutrition. Twelve of the 72 participants replied that all the information in the program was helpful. Eighty-nine percent of participants said they did receive community resources to help them cope with their disease.

Look Ahead

To further support participants, the PATH Patient Navigator will follow-up with participants via individual phone calls approximately six months following their last session of PATH.