

FQHC Oral Health Research Network: Case Study of the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic

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Research & FQHCs

- Traditionally, research conducted by government agencies, universities or other large institutions.
 - FQHCs may participate but generally are NOT key players in developmental and planning process, or research topics
- Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) model
Growing attention and interest, model's focus:
 - Equitable partnerships
 - Sharing power and resources
 - Reciprocal appreciation of the knowledge
 - Invest in community capacity building

Do Current Research Networks Satisfy the Promises of CBPR?

■ Dental

- Recently NIDCR funded - Private Practice-Based Research Network

■ Medical

- Primary Care Practice-Based Research Networks (AHQR funded)
- Pediatric Research in Office Settings (PROS) network
- Cooperative Research Network (COOP), Dartmouth College
- Practice Partner Research Network (PPRNet), U. South Carolina
- Kentucky Ambulatory Research Network
- Pediatric Eye Disease Investigator Group (PEDIG)

■ Non-Profit

- Institute for Community Research (ICR) (Hartford, CT)
- Community Based Collaborative Research Consortium (CBCRC)

Traditional Research Networks

- Research initiations, goals, interests, topics and designs prioritized by agencies or institutions, NOT by communities or local health centers' staff.
- Focus on deficits & needs NOT on strengths & assets-- captures negative aspects of community
- Focus on outcomes NOT root causes
- Stereotyped values and bias, generally negative views
- Outcome data misinterpretation creating more stigmatization for community

Need for FQHC Research Network

- Practice-Based Research Networks have own agendas and commonly follow traditional research models
- Community-University Partnership Networks are learning to work with communities but weight still towards university's agenda & interest
- Current researchers do not utilize community experts and members to best understand and serve the community via research
- Researchers lack cultural competency and in depth understanding of health issues of underserved communities
- Researchers lack the community's perception of its health and needs

Need for FQHC Research Network

- Will acknowledge power and expertise of the community and FQHCs serving the community
- Will focus research to address their needs and strengths
- Will invest in the local community and improve capacity
- Will utilize FQHCs and communities to disseminate findings & translate findings to useful programs improving health

The Key Players in a FQHCs Research Network

■ Clinics or Centers

- Board of Directors, Executive Director, Executive Committee, Administrators, Clinicians, Staffs

■ Communities

- Leaders/representatives, outreach workers, clinic employees, community orgs/groups, general public

■ Institutions

- Institution, Universities, Researchers
- Funding Agencies, Grantors

Getting FQHCs Started in Research

- Promote dialog & interest in evaluation & research useful to FQHCs
 - specific or general interest, introduction to research steps
- Provide in-service on CBPR approach, Research Ethics, Basic Evaluation & Research Methodologies and Significance
- Assist in development of a Research Review Committee (made up of clinicians, non-clinicians, and community members)
- Assist in development of a Community Advisory Committee
- Assist in review & evaluation of FQHCs annual needs assessment for potential research topics, ideas
- Promote FQHCs to pro-actively seek collaborators with similar interests or needs to conduct research addressing concerns
- Allow opportunity to hear from community members about their health priorities

Challenges of Starting FQHCs Research Network

- FQHCs, Clinician, Community buy-in
 - Usually buy-in starts with clinician
 - Engage in clinician's interest and experience
 - Clinician recommend to Board of Director & Executive Committee
 - Establish Community Advisory Board

- FQHCs manpower, time, & resources
 - Determine & establish mechanism for equitable and appropriate funding to reimburse manpower & resources
 - Determine feasibility of research funding to hiring additional staff for research project

- FQHCs commitment & responsibility to Network
 - Establish Steering Committee and organizational structure
 - Establish clear guideline for responsibility & involvement
 - Participation in research project is voluntary based on clinic's interest in the topic.

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinics

- Initial involvement with research --> Researchers directed
- Through experience, asserted an equal position with Researchers
- Gained interest in research addressing needs of communities.
- Developed Research Review Subcommittee (made of clinics directors and non-clinical members) which is also in charge of HIPAA Privacy Board
- Developed time-limited Community Advisory Committee for specific program or research
- Reviews clinics' needs assessment and community challenges for potential research topics
- Pro-actively seeks institutional collaborators with similar interests and expertise to jointly develop & conduct research (Co-PI grants)
- YVFWC and collaborators must abide to the Principles of Community-Based Research (University of Washington Model)

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinics

- Process for Accepting Outside Research -

- Research project proposed from outside the organization must have a “Clinic Sponsor”
- Clinic Sponsor serves as primary internal contact for the researcher
- Divisions involved with propose research provide input to Research Review Subcommittee
- Research Review Subcommittee determines applicability and interest in the research
- Once project is approved – Clinic Sponsor takes responsibility for making sure the researcher complies with YVFWC policies and procedures, and any conditions put on the project.
- Must have report back and allow for feedback prior to publication

First Steps in Forming Research Network

- Identify clinic clinicians with some interest in research
- Suggest, build and establish interest in evaluation & research of interest to clinicians to improve community health at FQHC
- Forming Steering Committee with equitable representation of researchers, FQHC, and community members
- Defining the Purposes/Goals of Network and structure
- Assess Strengths and Weaknesses in terms of Community Capacities and Disease Burden, Similarities & Uniqueness among FQHCs
- Prioritize agenda for Exploration, Research, and Program Development
- Identify Funders/Grantors & University/Agency Collaborators
- Develop Strategies to Develop & Design Research Projects to answer specific questions of interest to FQHCs

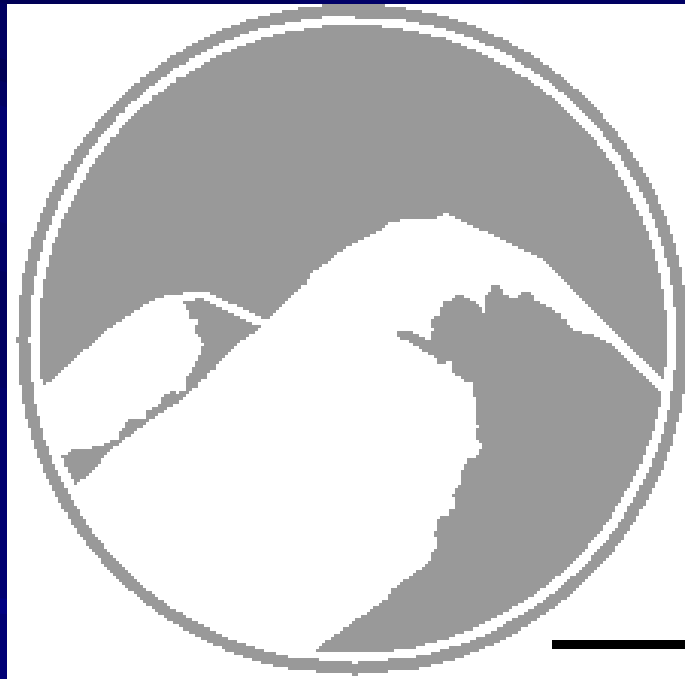
Key to Successful Researcher-Community Partnerships

- Trusting relationships
- Equitable processes and procedures
- Diverse membership
- Tangible benefits to all partners
- Balance between partnership process, activities, outcomes
- Significant community involvement in scientifically sound research
- Supportive partner organization policies and reward structures
- Leadership
- Culturally competent and appropriately skilled staff and researchers
- Collaborative dissemination
- Ongoing partnership assessment, improvement and celebration
- Sustainable impact

Benefits a FQHCs Research Network Can Provide to FQHCs

- Improve health & services through research collaborations with other FQHCs in addition to research intensive institutions
- Balance of Power between FQHCs and Institutions
- Enhanced ability to successfully carry out research projects of interest to FQHCs and the community
- Address health disparities through research at the local level
- Utilization of expertise and resources from Institutions
- Develop own expertise in research over time

The Center is supported, in part, by a cooperative agreement with the NIDCR/NIH



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