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Bilingual Prescription Drug Safety for Santa Cruz County

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Abstract

Community Prevention Partners (CPP) is a coalition dedicated to improving community health in the Santa Cruz County. CPP helps improve community health and safety through policies and environmental changes. CPP is dedicated to prevention in alcohol, cannabis and prescription drugs. Everyday more than 130 people in the U.S. die after overdosing on opioids. The opioid epidemic has affected the Santa Cruz county greatly as the incidence of overdose and abuse is rising. In the Santa Cruz County, there is lack of awareness on prescription drug safety. This project focuses on making information available to community members about securing, monitoring and storage through a bilingual survey online and on paper, informational class to Spanish speaking parents, and pamphlets. CPP will continue to spread awareness of prescription drug safety in collaboration with partnering agencies to the residents of the Santa Cruz County.

Keywords: *Community Prevention Partners, CPP, opioid epidemic, prescription medication safety*

Agency and communities served

Community Prevention Partners is “a coalition of individuals and organizations who mobilize for policies and environment changes to improve community health and safety” in the Santa Cruz County (CPP,2018, p.1). Community Prevention Partners falls in the Prevention Services department of the Santa Cruz County. It’s mission states that it “is dedicated to building a diverse community that promotes health and wellbeing and enhances youth and community safety through sustainable alcohol and drug prevention efforts” (CPP, 2018). CPP serves the Santa Cruz County which is home to 262,382 people (Census, 2018). The median household income is 70,088 and there are 214,929 Whites, 2,374 Blacks, 12,169 Asians, and 89,587 Hispanics living in Santa Cruz County (Census,2018).

CPP works with the community which consists of schools, parents, youth organizations, health facilities, law enforcement and community which aids in reducing alcohol, cannabis, and prescription drugs (CPP, 2018p.1) CPP has three different initiatives which are Alcohol policy, Marijuana, and Rx Drug Initiatives. The Alcohol initiative helps limit youth social and retail access to alcohol through public policy, education and compliance with alcohol laws (CPP,2018). The Marijuana limits youth access to Marijuana through policy awareness and consequences (CPP,2018). The Rx Drug initiative decreases access to Rx drugs through education about proper storage, monitoring and disposal of prescription drugs (CPP,2018). People who abuse Rx painkillers get their drugs from different places. According to the Community Prevention Partners website, 55% of people get their Rx painkillers free from a friend or relative, 17.3% are prescribed by a doctor, 11.4% are bought from a friend or relative,

4.8% took from a friend or relative without asking, 4.4% bought from a dealer or stranger and 7.1% was obtained from another source.

Problem Description

In the Santa Cruz the rate of opioid abuse is growing. According to Health Improvement Partnership (HIP) of Santa Cruz County in 2016 188,311 opioid prescriptions were written in Santa Cruz County. Thirty-four residents of Santa Cruz County died from an opioid overdose in 2016 (HIP, 2016). The opioid epidemic affects the nation as well. There was 20.5 million U.S. residents 12 years or older with substance use disorders in the U.S. in 2015 (JAMA, 2017). Two million of these residents were addicted to prescription pain relievers (JAMA, 2017). People who are prescribed medications are not securing or locking up their medications which in some cases leads to theft of the medications. Some people are selling their prescribed medications and not taking them. Doctors could be overprescribing if they do not check CURES report and patient is getting prescribed same medication by multiple doctors (Griggs. 2015). The community also benefits from the prescription drug monitoring programs such as CURES which stands for Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (Griggs et al.,2015). The report is available to be accessed by prescribers and dispensers (Griggs et al.,2015). This year 2019, the law went into effect which mandates prescribers to check before writing prescriptions for controlled substances (Haffajee et al.,2015). This law will help the community by helping to recognize the potential for abuse or dependence and getting patients and the community the help they may need to prevent addiction or overdose. As of January 1, 2019 physicians and other

prescribers must offer patients who take opioids Naloxone, which reverses and opioid overdose (NIH, 2018). The way Naloxone works is by binding to opioid receptors which reverses and blocks the effects of opioids (NIH, 2018). According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention the elimination of prior authorizations for patients to receive Naloxone prescription would help lower the incidence of overdose as well (CDC, 2019). If these risk factors continue then overdose, prescription drug abuse and easy access to prescription drugs will continue and increase. Drug overdose deaths are the leading cause of injury and death in the U.S. with 115 people dying from drug overdose in a day. There is potential for more deaths resulting from prescription drug abuse if people do not get the help they need.

Causes to agency Problem	Agency-Specific "micro-level" problem addressed by Project	Consequences to Agency
medications not secured or locked	community not aware of rx safety	Agency not getting information to enough community members
medications being sold once prescribed		
Causes to broader Health Problem	Broader "macro-level" Health/Social Problem	Consequences to Society
medications not secured or locked	High rate of opioid use, abuse and overdose in U.S.	U. S. deaths due to drug overdose increasing rapidly
Medications being sold once prescribed		

Project Description

The project proposed is concentrating on the Rx safety initiative. The title of the project is Bilingual Prescription Drug Safety for Santa Cruz County. CPP worked on the Rx initiative and project that has different components. One of the components is a list of doctor’s offices to

where pamphlets can be distributed at with prescription drug safety information. There is also a survey with prescription drug storage and disposal questions that has been translated into Spanish and has been approved by the Santa Cruz County. The survey was approved in November of 2018. This brings awareness to people who take the quiz. If people are not able to read then a CPP member will read the survey to them. When people take the quiz they will also be given pamphlets with Rx safety information which are available in both English and Spanish. Parents of youth who speak Spanish and have little education may not have access to the internet and may not be able to take the survey online or receive information about prescription drug safety otherwise. For this reason some of the tabling was done at the Watsonville farmers market, which is held in downtown on Friday's. CPP is helping awareness through education. A list of places for safe Rx disposal of unused medications has been made as a form of information for community members. People are able to have these pamphlets with the names of pharmacies and other disposal sites to properly dispose of prescription drugs. The main part of the project is to deliver Spanish informational segments to parents of youth. The curriculum includes the information on the pamphlets developed by CPP members about prescription drug safety and disposal. The parents will be able to ask questions and use the suggestions on proper prescription drug safety and storing of them. This information can prevent from someone taking their medications at home if they are properly stored. This information will also be able to be passed on to friends and family members of who attend the classes. Parents may also give their

children advice about the dangers of prescription drugs if for example the youth is being offered prescription drugs at school. The purpose of this project is to bring awareness and educate the community on prescription drug safety practices. The agency expects to distribute the pamphlets list of disposal sites to as many doctor's offices and community members as possible. The agency would also like as many members of the community to be aware of this information and possibly reduce the opioid epidemic, and the deaths that it causes.

The community would benefit from being informed on prescription drug safety practices. Like stated previously the opioid epidemic needs to be addressed in Santa Cruz County and it starts with educating and bringing awareness. In a study in North Carolina across four counties in the state they found that increasing community readiness helps promote prevention of opioid misuse and abuse (Ringwalt et al.,2018). The study included community members and organizations and it proved to be effective because it raised awareness through sharing via statistics, social media and community meetings (Ringwalt et al.,2018). It also advised on the importance of reducing stigma that comes with opioid use. This information would be great to implement into any community to help in the fight against the prescription drug or opioid epidemic. The community also benefits from the prescription drug monitoring programs such as CURES which stands for Controlled Substance Utilization Review and Evaluation System (Griggs et al.,2015). The report is available to be accessed by prescribers and dispensers (Griggs et al.,2015). This year the law went into effect which mandates prescribers to check before writing prescriptions for controlled substances (Haffajee et al.,2015). This law will definitely help the community by helping to recognize the potential for abuse or dependence and getting patients and the community the help they may need to prevent addiction or overdose.

Implementation Process

The project was implemented with pamphlets and safety dispensing list, Spanish prescription drug safety information segment and tabling. While tabling the pamphlets were distributed. Data was collected through the survey. At the Spanish prescription drug safety informational segments the survey was also used to gather data on how many Spanish surveys were taken. CPP collaborated with La Manzana Community Resources to table at their events and provide informational segments about prescription drug safety with approval from Sandra Rodelo who is a Parent Educator at La Manzana. The Rx initiative project has different members. The coordinator is Mary Mason. Rebecca Carter worked on the survey and disposal list. The tabling was done by a CHHS CSUMB student and Rosie Murillo who works for the Santa Cruz County. CPP partners up with HIP which stands for Health Improvement Partnership of Santa Cruz on the prescription drug initiative. For the two Spanish prescription drug safety segments there was no consent needed as it was all adults and the survey was anonymous. The segments were located in Watsonville at La Manzana Community Resources in one of their classrooms. One of the challenges for the project was getting the survey approved. It is what kept CPP from being able to table and get out into the community. The other challenge was the number of parents who attended the segments as the first segment there was only one parent who attended. For this reason there was two segments, to be able to reach as many parents as possible.

Project Assessment Process

The expected outcome of the project was that the prescription safety information would reach as much of the community as possible. The way that the progress of the project was measured is

by the number of surveys taken by spanish speaking community members and the number of people who received information about prescription safety information. There was a total of twenty-four spanish surveys taken. There was approximately 40-60 pamphlets and flyers with prescription drug safety distributed at the spanish segments and tabling. The expectation was to reach as many as possible community members and there was no specific number.

Findings and Results of Assessment Process

The findings with the project implementation was that not many of the spanish speaking parents were able to attend the informational segments. There was two classes in which the informational segments were given and a grand total of 11 parents were presented with the prescription drug safety information and given the flyers and pamphlets. There was not an expected amount of parents that were to be reached, but the hope was to reach as many as possible. The reason for the low attendance to the classes could have been because of the weather. The classes were held during winter and both of the days of the classes it was raining. The strengths of the project are the fact that CPP collaborated with La Manzana to bring awareness to the spanish speaking community of Santa Cruz County. The fact that the student from CSUMB who gave the informational segments is spanish speaking made the project possible. The limitations to the project was that there was only a certain amount of people who received the prescription drug information. The reason for this is because the classes at La Manzana have a maximum capacity when signing up for them.

Recommendations

The results of the project have shown that not enough of the Spanish speaking, Hispanic population in the Santa Cruz County are being exposed to the information about prescription drug safety, disposal and storage. Eighty-one percent of the population in Watsonville are Hispanic or Latino (Watsonville, 2019). The project implemented should be continued with the help and collaboration of the partners involved in prescription drug safety in the Santa Cruz County. It would be a good idea for the Spanish classes to be held in the spring or summer time as weather does impact the attendance.

This project relates to the broader “macro-level” because the opioid epidemic is nationwide. The Santa Cruz County and the nation need help in reducing or eliminating opioid abuse. According to Elinore McCance-Katz who is the assisted secretary for Mental Health and Substance use, “Medication-Assisted treatment (MAT) combined with psychosocial therapies and community-based recovery supports is the gold standard for treating opioid addiction” (NACCHO, 2019). There is research that states that drug use begins in adolescence or young adulthood (NIH, 2019). The suggestion is that intervening early in childhood can change the outcome of someone using or not using drugs (NIH, 2019). The most important thing is to get people help who need it and to help prevent opioid abuse, use and overdose.

Conclusion and Personal Reflection

Every community can benefit from a program to educate the people in the community about dangers of opioid abuse. Through education and awareness and community readiness the community can fight against this epidemic. To better understand the project, more research on opioid use in the Santa Cruz County is needed. It is important to get the information to as many

Santa Cruz County community members and provide those who need help with the resources available in the community.

The most important insight gained from this project I am taking is how important it is to teach our community about different topics, in this case about prescription drug safety. The biggest lesson learned throughout this Capstone project is to stay open minded and take on new experiences because you learn and grow from every single experience you are exposed to, and allow yourself to be exposed to. In ten years I will be continuing to grown and learn and everything is always changing. I will remember how this project on prescription drug safety helped me to remember to give everything a chance, as I might learn more than I thought I would. I would let future CHHS students know that they should approach their field placement and senior year with an open mind and ready to learn from every experience that comes at them.

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Appendix

Scope of Work

Prepare capstone presentation in selected format	Present at dress rehearsal for grading	May 10, 2019
Final Presentation for Capstone Festival	Final presentation at Capstone Festival	May 15 or 16, 2019