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5-5-2011

Health Information Literacy Outreach: Meeting the Needs of the Latino Community in Providence, Rhode Island and Rural Seniors in Western Maine

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Focused Health Information Literacy Outreach

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Community Assessment

Purpose: To guide decisions related to a new approach to health information outreach by NN/LM NER and set in motion partnerships with community organizations.

NN/LM NER is one of eight regional offices funded by NLM http://nnlm.gov

Methods: Key informants in underserved communities (rural Maine and Providence, Rhode Island) were identified. A semi-structured interview protocol was designed to explore community confidence in using the Internet to find health information and local resources to support access and use. All interviews were conducted in person. Data were coded and organized into themes.

Results: Nineteen key informants (10 from Providence; 9 from Maine) were interviewed. Key findings:

• Latinos get their health information from sources they know and trust, including the radio. A network of minority health programs offer computer access, training, and support.

• Maine has a growing senior population and community-based organizations support public health efforts. Public schools, adult education centers, and libraries offer computer access and support.

Tailored Outreach

Based on needs assessment results, NN/LM NER tailored outreach efforts to reach the Latino community in Providence, Rhode Island and older adults in Western Maine.

Latinos in Providence, Rhode Island
NN/LM NER trained foreign trained health professionals to use MedlinePlus.gov in Spanish. Trainers taught English learners at a local adult education center how to search for and evaluate health information on the Internet. Trainers also conducted community outreach via the radio.

Adult learners showing off their public library cards at a health information and the Internet training in the Dorcas Place computer lab

Older Adults in Western Maine
NN/LM NER partnered with community-based organizations in Western Maine to offer trainings on MedlinePlus.gov and NIHSeniorHealth.gov. We trained community service providers, and older adults and their care givers, and exhibited at senior-focused health fairs.

Older adults at a health information and the Internet training in the Auburn Public Library computer lab

Program Evaluation

Tools: Training pre-/post-evaluation and follow-up evaluation to assess participant knowledge and use of NLM resources.

Providence – Consumer Pre- (n=42) /Post-Evaluation (n=30)
• 7% had heard of MedlinePlus.gov before the training
• 35% said they were confident in their ability to evaluate health information on the Internet before the training
• 81% said they were more confident in their ability to evaluate health information on the Internet after the training
• 96% said they were likely to use MedlinePlus.gov after the training

Maine – Consumer Pre- (n=50) /Post-Evaluation (n=33)
• 2% had heard of NIHSeniorHealth.gov before the training
• 26% said they were confident in their ability to evaluate health information on the Internet before the training
• 57% said they were more confident in their ability to evaluate health information on the Internet after the training
• 52% said they were likely to use NIHSeniorHealth.gov after the training

Service Providers – Follow-Up Evaluation (n=20)
• 80% had used MedlinePlus.gov since the training
• 37% had used NIHSeniorHealth.gov since the training
• 84% had shared what they learned with others

Next Steps: Document process and lessons learned for future application in other underserved communities in the region.