

**Health Director's Report
November 9, 2023**

Division / Program: Health Education & Community Transformation / Health Promotion & Wellness, Men's Health Council

(Accreditation Activity 10.1 – The local health department shall develop, implement and evaluate population-based health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials for the general public.)

Program description

- The Men's Health Council is partnering with Duke to identify effective methods for communicating health information to diverse communities.
- The Men's Health Council (MHC) of the Durham County Department of Public Health has a mission to "To educate, lead and inspire men to achieve their best health and overall well-being." The Council is led by an Executive Committee of 12 men and supported by a diverse membership of over 50 men and women (from age 17 yrs. to 84 yrs.). Physicians, nurses, clinical social workers, public health professionals, fitness specialists and other health professionals provide healthy living information to the Council. Several women are also active with the Council.
- The Council provides health forums, monthly community walks and health talks, and announcements about health events and opportunities to participate in research to MHC members and friends.
- On March 24, 2023, Julius Wilder, MD, PhD of the Duke Clinical Research Institute met with the MHC and asked leaders to partner with him on a grant from the Health Monitor Network. The grant is a three-year study to examine how diverse populations respond to various patient-education communication approaches such as print, digital and video communication. Dr. Wilder explains that "Numerous social drivers of health impact health, and these social factors often are beyond the reach of medicine. Low health literacy and inadequate patient education have a negative impact on the health of communities, especially communities of color and those considered socially vulnerable. Disparity in health literacy and patient education contributes to worse health outcomes, higher medical costs, longer hospital stays and greater risk of death."
- The mission of the Health Monitor Network's Magazine is to provide timely, trusted, user-friendly medical/health information and tools to their readers. Their grant to the Duke Clinical Research Institute is the first time the Health Monitor Network has funded a Health Equity Patient Education Study.

Statement of goals

- The MHC will assist Duke Clinical Research Institute in identifying the most effective methods for communicating relevant and important health information to diverse communities.
- The MHC will share patient education information created by the Health Monitor Network with MHC members and their families, friends, neighbors.
- The MHC will solicit feedback from individuals provided the described education materials on the effectiveness of the information provided via print, digital or video.

Issues

- **Opportunities**

- Duke Clinical Research Institute provides resources that support the Men's Health Council. In June 2023, Duke purchased blue t-shirts for persons attending the Father's Day Walk on June 17, 2023. The shirts read "Celebrating Men's Health Month" and "Men's Health Council of Durham County."
- In August, Duke covered the cost of having a registered dietitian and plant-based cook demonstrate how to prepare a plant-based meal which included providing food samples and recipes.

- **Challenges**

- Plans to support Duke's research efforts on this grant are pending approval by the Duke Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once IRB approval is received, specific actions needed by the Men's Health Council will be defined.

Implication(s):

- **Outcomes**

- No data has been collected. IRB approval of the research proposal is pending.

- **Service delivery**

- Duke will collect and share information on effective methods for communicating health information to patients.

- **Staffing**

- 1 Public Health Education Specialist (partial allocation of responsibilities)
- Men's Health Council Executive Committee (volunteer leaders)

- **Revenue**

- Purchase of t-shirts for Men's Health Month Walk on June 17, 2023 by Duke.
- Payment of services for a nutrition specialist and a healthy meal demonstration at the August 2023 MHC Community Walk.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:

- Continue working with Dr. Julius Wilder, Duke Clinical Research Institute, on identifying effective ways to communicate patient information to diverse populations.

Division/Program: Replacing Dental Equipment on the Tooth Ferry Mobile Dental Unit (Accreditation Activity 31.6: The local health department shall have an inventory of equipment that includes a plan for replacement.)

Program description:

- As the Tooth Ferry is preparing for school visits in the coming month, the Division had Benco Dental come out to perform preventative maintenance in October. At the same time, the team obtained quotes to order a new autoclave (cleans and sterilizes

instruments) and cavitron (ultrasonic scaler which uses high frequency vibrations and water flow to clean the teeth).

Statement of goals:

- To ensure quality service in clinic and Tooth Ferry, the Dental Division has preventative maintenance contracts in place for servicing its equipment and a process to replace the same.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - In having two Public Health Hygienists, the Dental Division can assign one to the Tooth Ferry to provide services (thus the need for a cavitron).
 - The Department's Finance Administrator identified funds to replace the equipment.
 - After reviewing options, Benco Dental provided discounts for the autoclave and cavitron.
- **Challenges**
 - Because of the cost to replace both items, the Division will identify funds in its annual budget to replace one piece of equipment at a time (based on schedule) so that operations are not interrupted.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - The requisitions for the equipment were processed in October and it is hoped the equipment will be received by mid-November.
- **Service delivery**
 - A technician from Benco will work with the Division to ensure the equipment is set-up properly and is working as designed.
- **Staffing-** Division Director oversaw process with assistance from the Finance Team.
- **Revenue** – N/A – The new Midmark M9 cost \$5,968 and Cavitron Select cost \$2,155.
- **Other** –N/A

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

New equipment will be maintained as prescribed.

Division / Program: Nutrition/NC-FIT Program (Accreditation Activity 10.2 - The local health department shall develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the Community Health Assessment)

Program description

- NC-FIT Program (Formerly Incarcerated Transition Program) is a partnership with UNC-Family Medicine/Dr. Evan Askin who ensures funding is secured to cover cost for primary medical care, substance use treatment, and behavioral health services for those released back to their community with chronic conditions. The program is modeled after the national Transition Clinic Network model based out of California and the primary care provider for Durham residents is Lincoln Community Health Center.
- NC-FIT program referrals come from local re-entry partners as well as state and federal prisons that are managing the release of incarcerated citizens back to Durham County.
- This report summarizes where the program stands currently as both Community Health Worker positions became vacant during the month of October.

Statement of goals

- Connect Durham residents, who happen to be formerly incarcerated, to primary health care to address chronic conditions and manage their health care needs.
- Assist those residents with connection to other local re-entry programs or general services to increase positive outcomes for transition back to the community via referrals to housing programs, job services resources, food access, social security, etc.
- Recruit staff to sustain program goals and prepare to connect clients to Medicaid for additional health care support via Medicaid Expansion options.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Address health inequities via referrals to services and education of clients on how to navigate the resources available.
 - Decrease recidivism, as clients connected to resources to manage their basic needs are less likely to become repeat offenders.
- **Challenges**
 - Connecting to clients as soon as possible due to their limited access to phones and sometimes housing.
 - Keeping clients focused on healthcare appointments due to barriers they are facing around employment, transportation and securing long-term housing options superseding their health needs.
 - Currently, referrals have been suspended for this program while recruiting to fill the 2 vacant Community Health Worker positions.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - Currently DCoDPH has 54 active clients receiving services via NC-FIT. Program was averaging 10 new referrals a month from July 2023 until the recent suspension of referrals.
- **Service delivery**
 - Clients are typically assigned to one of two Community Health Workers for this program. Clients complete a thorough intake that addresses health care needs as well as goals on which the client would like to focus.
 - Based on a client's need level, contact is maintained on a weekly, monthly, or

quarterly basis to ensure that health care appointments are maintained, prescriptions are picked up, and follow-up occurs on referrals/services that are in place with other community resources.

- **Staffing**
 - The needs of the current active clients are at the follow-up status, and all are being maintained by the Site Coordinator/Program Manager.
- **Revenue**
 - UNC Family Medicine secures grant funds that cover the cost of invoices submitted by Lincoln Community Health Center for NC-FIT clients.
 - UNC provides basic medical supplies such as canes, blood pressure monitors and glucose monitors that are maintained on site and limited cellphones with up to 3 months of services for participants.
 - Grant funds cover emergency Uber rides for basic health care appointments for those not eligible for other services. All funds are administered by UNC staff at DCoDPH's request for supplies.
 - As of 10/24/2023 UNC is assessing the use of grant funds to possibly support housing needs for clients for up to 3 months while in transitional living homes.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- As of 10/31/2023, 95% of clients have been contacted and provided the contact information for the Site Coordinator/Program Manager to maintain needed vouchers to cover the cost of medical appointments.
- Clients that were listed as high-risk have been contacted and those that responded and were eligible for Medicaid (due to their age/disability) have been set up with Medicaid Transportation or informed on how to set up this service to minimize disruption of care.
- Community partners have been informed of the vacancies and suspension of referrals and are assisting in reminding clients to call for their vouchers as well as informing previous clients of the vacancies as they may be a good fit for the positions.
- Both Community Health Worker job requisitions have been posted. One closed on October 25, 2023, and the other will close on November 6, 2023. There are currently 35 applicants to screen for potential interviews.