



The RealResults, Inc.

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Yanick Abellard, MPH
Executive Director
Intercultural Family Health Education Center, Inc.
2300 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd., Suite 103
West Palm Beach, FL 33409

Dear Ms. Abellard:

The edited documentation you requested is attached. The study was quite limited in scope. A more detailed study is necessary to describe the population, and to explore whether the changes in client health status were associated with project interventions. You may want to build a control study into the new grant starting in July, or do a higher level statistical analysis of the existing project. Either option would involve input of all client and service data into the computer database.

Good luck with the proposal.

Sincerely,

Courtney Shippey, BHS, MPH
Health & Human Services Consultant

INTERCUTURAL FAMILY HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER
Involve Haitians in Closing the Gap

IMPACT EVALUATION

Background & Introduction

The Intercultural Health Education Center (IFHEC) started implementation of the Involve Haitians in Closing the Gap project in January 2001. This project was funded through the Florida Department of Health through its Closing the Gap grant program. The United Way of Palm Beach County provided some matching funding. The project now provided services in neighborhoods of Boynton Beach, Lake Worth, Lantana and West Palm Beach.

The Closing the Gap project is a comprehensive neighborhood-based screening and referral program built around a core of targeted health education and home visitation. Teams of trained, indigenous paraprofessionals, named Neighborhood Health Advisors (NHA) deliver screening, referral, advocacy and transportation services to clients. The NHA are able to communicate in the language of the target group, be cognizant of, and culturally sensitive to, the cultural norms of the targeted group, be able to work unusual hours, and be willing and able to work in exceptional locations. The NHAs function as lay health advisors.

The project aims to reduce rates of diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular illnesses among Haitians residing in the pockets of poverty along the 1-95 corridor area, from West Palm Beach to Boynton Beach in Palm Beach County. The goal of the project is to Reduce the rates of diabetes and cardiovascular illnesses primarily among Haitians in Palm Beach County. The broad strategy is the delivery of targeted, direct, ethnically and

culturally sensitive diabetes, hypertension and cholesterol screening, prevention education, referral and advocacy, build around an aggressive program of home visitation, follow-up and church-based educational activity. Interventions were directly primarily at neighborhoods that have large population of Haitians.

The target neighborhoods are characterized by low socio-economic status, low literacy, limited access to health and social services, high crime rates and general low outcomes for health and social development.

Incorporated in 1994, IFHEC is a minority-run, not for profit, community-based organization. For the past seven years, IFHEC has been providing targeted health education programs to Haitians living in Palm Beach County, through faith-based community outreach and radio programs. IFHEC collaborates and cooperates with a number of public, charitable and private partners, to organize and implement this project.

The following report provides details of an informal impact evaluation of the Involve Haitians in Closing the Gap project. The evaluation results suggest that the project was successful in improving access to care and in increasing clients' capacity to manage their diabetes or cardiovascular illnesses.

Description of the Impact Evaluation

A. Purpose

1. To determine the extent to which participants show improvement 4-6 months after the first intervention.
2. To guide program management decisions.

B. Evaluation Design and Implementation

Investigative Questions

Did clients show improvements in their blood sugar levels and blood pressure levels after receiving program interventions?

Method

Table 1 shows the distribution of screening interventions between March 2001 and November 2001. All clients who showed elevated readings upon screening received referrals and education interventions using multiple strategies as appropriate.

Table 1. Distribution of Clients Screened by Type of Screening & Results.

Screening Type	Initial Client Screenings	No. Elevated Reading
Hypertension	1006	497
Diabetes	996	246
Blood Cholesterol	403	62

Sampling

To effectively measure improvement in disease status sample clients had to be in the program for at least four months and has received at least three screenings. 82 clients met these criteria, and all were selected for study.

Data Collection & Analysis

Information about the sample client's health behavior was collected using an interview schedule and client file review. Clients were asked how frequently did they practice certain health behaviors before enrollment in the program and after meeting the criteria for inclusion in the sample. See the attached interview schedule between March 2001 and November 2001.

Improvement in systolic blood pressure readings for clients with initial readings of **140/90 – 159/ 99** was categorized as follows:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 15% or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 10% to less than 15 %.
- No Improvement: Decrease of less than 10 %.

Improvement in systolic blood pressure readings for clients with initial readings of **160/100** and higher was categorized as follows:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 20% or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 10% to less than 20 %.
- No Improvement: Decrease of less than 10 %

Improvement in diastolic blood pressure readings for clients with initial readings of **140/90 –159/99** was categorized as follow:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 10 % or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 5 % to less than 10 %.
- No Improvement Decrease of less than 5 %.

Improvement in diastolic blood pressure readings for clients with initial readings of **160/100** and higher was categorized as follows:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 15 % or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 5 % to less than 15 %
- No Improvement: Decrease of less than 5 %.

Improvement in blood sugar readings for clients with initial readings of **140 – 199**

was categorized as follows:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 30 % or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 15 % to less than 15 %.
- No Improvement: Decrease of less than 15 %.

Improvement in blood sugar readings for clients with initial readings of 200 and higher was categorized as follows:

- Marked Improvement: Decrease of 40 % or more.
- Some Improvement: Decrease of 40 % to less than 15 %.
- No Improvement: Decrease of less than 15 %.

Findings

Of the 82 sample clients, 33 (40 %) fell within the 30 – 49 years age group, and 49 (60%) were 50 years of age or older. Forty-four (54%) of the sample clients were female, and 38 (46%) were male. Only 25 (30 %) sample clients spoke English, and 57 (70 %) did not. Similarly, 30 % of sample clients had health assurance, and 70 % did not. Table 2 shows the distribution of clients’ education level. Most clients had achieved only elementary or middle school education. As shown in Table 3, most of the target clients lived in West Palm Beach or Lake Worth.

Table 2: Distribution of Sample Clients by Educational Level.

Level of Education	No. of Sample Clients	%
Elementary School	35	43
Middle School	20	24.5
Some High	11	13.5
High School Graduate	5	6
Some College	1	1
College Graduate	1	1
None	9	11
Total	82	100

Table 3: Distribution of Sample Clients by City of Residence

City of Residence	No. Sample Clients	%
West Palm Beach	40	49
Lake Worth	23	28
Boynton Beach	12	15
Lake Park	4	5
Riviera Beach	2	2
Delray Beach	1	1
Total	82	100

TABLE 2: Distribution of Sample Clients by Changes in Blood Pressure or Blood Sugar Readings, March 1, 2001 -- November 30, 2001

Sample Category	Number of Clients			Total
	Marked Improved	Some Improvement	No Improvement	
BP: 140/90 – 159/99	7	2	1	10
BP: 160/100 and higher	21	9	1	31
Subtotal	28	11	2	41
Blood Sugar: 140 – 199	5	3	1	9
Blood Sugar: 200 and higher	20	10	2	32
Subtotal	25	13	3	41
Grand Total	53	24	5	82

Table 2 Shows that of 42 sample clients who showed elevated blood pressure readings on entering the program, 28 (68 %) showed marked improvement after receiving IFHEC intervention, 11 (27 %) showed some improvement and 2 (5 %) showed no improvement.

Of 41 sample clients who showed elevated blood sugar readings on initial screening, 25 (61 %) showed marked improvement upon receiving IFHEC intervention, 13 (32%) showed some improvement and 3 (7 %) showed no improvement.

Table 2 also shows that approximately 75 % of sample clients showed remarkably high blood pressure or blood sugar readings on entering the program.

Conclusions and Discussion

Target clients showed improvements in their blood sugar levels and blood pressure readings after receiving UDCRC program interventions.

The results of this limited study suggest that the IFHEC's Closing The Gap project interventions had a positive impact on target clients. Most of the clients who received interventions showed marked improvement in their health status. These findings present prima facie evidence that project interventions work.

The data showed that clients that showed elevated blood pressure or blood sugar readings on entering the program tended to have higher readings indicative of severe, poorly managed, or undiagnosed disease. Upon receiving program interventions, most clients showed marked improvement as demonstrated by significant reduction in blood pressure or blood sugar readings.

As clients achieve reduction in elevated blood sugar or blood pressure, they reduce their risk factor for catastrophic complications of stroke and damage or failure of vital organs. Such reduction in blood pressure and blood sugar also promotes a more healthy and productive daily existence.

More rigorous studies are needed to pursue the relationship between interventions and actual changes in clients' health status, taking into consideration other variables that may influence changes among the target population.