

Jefferson University Hospitals

THE CAREER SUPPORT NETWORK (CSN): Integrating chronic disease prevention and management programs and occupational therapy into a workforce development program for low-skilled, low-resourced individuals

Background - Fifty percent of low-skilled adults with physical and/or behavioral health problems do not keep their jobs within one year of being employed. The most frequent reasons for losing their jobs are physical and behavioral health problems.

According to the Partnership for Prevention - reducing just one health risk can increase productivity by 9% and reduce absenteeism by 2%. Absence management leads to a healthier workforce and maximizes a company's productivity and profit.

Partners in the CSN project, partly funded by RWJ Foundation and others: Federation of Neighborhood centers, Pennsylvania Horticulture Society, Orleans Technical Institute, Philadelphia Prison System, Job Opportunity Investment Network, JEVS

CSN Goal: Move vulnerable adults from short-term, dead-end jobs into long-term careers that pay family-sustaining wages by:

1. Increasing the number of vulnerable adults who will be employed in jobs with sustainable wages for a minimum of one year
2. Increasing the number of vulnerable adults with physical health conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and obesity who demonstrate improved disease management and self-efficacy
3. Increasing the number of vulnerable adults with mental and behavioral health conditions such as depression, anxiety, and addiction who demonstrate improved coping skills and understanding of their conditions
4. Reducing the recidivism rate

Results: 137 participants, including 50 Philadelphia prison inmates

1. 73 (53.2%) found employment with a sustainable wage (CSN goal = 53%) with 66 employers
2. Of the 72 individuals in the program for at least one year, 54 (75%) were employed for at least 1 year (goal was 85%). In Philadelphia 2011 only 52% of workforce development employees sustained employment for 6 months
3. 4 (8%) rearrested compared to 68% nationally (CSN goal was 10%)

The project greatly contributed to a collective impact model addressing the prison reentry system that is currently in progress.

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THE HEALTHY CORNER STORE NETWORK “HEART SMARTS” PROGRAM

Healthy Corner Store Initiative, developed by The Food Trust, is a program designed to: 1) increase fresh produce and low sodium, low fat products in stores; 2) provide store and community-based education on healthy eating and heart disease prevention; 3) train store owners to comply with city policies to curb tobacco use.

Heart Smarts is a pilot program and a joint effort of The Food Trust and Jefferson University Hospitals. It integrates cardiovascular risk screening and referral into the Healthy Corner Store Initiative - Blood Pressure, BMI, regular follow-up and referral to Primary Care, Quit Line, and Health Insurance Exchange.

Results –

Gender: 440 (56.6%) men and 334 (43.0%) female; 3 (0.4%) unknown

Age Range: 18 to 91, Mean = 46.3

Race/Ethnicity: Black – 454 (58.4%); White – 28 (3.6%); Asian – 19 (2.4%); Hispanic/Latino – 201 (25.9%);

Other/Mixed – 22 (2.8%); Unknown – 53 (6.8%)

During the pilot year, staff provided 977 screenings at ten corner stores including 777 individuals who were screened for BP, BMI, or both - 255 participants (75%) with pre hypertension or hypertension; the average BMI at baseline was 28.06; 69.6% were overweight or obese; 342 participants (44%) self-reported they were smokers; 30.9% were uninsured; 26% did not have a PCP

189 (24.6%) – normal readings; of these 81% did not know what their BP was; 322 (42%) had pre-hypertensive readings; of these, 212 (65.8%) did not know they were pre-hypertensive; 256 (33.4%) had hypertensive readings; of these 41.4% did not know they were hypertensive; 114 (15%) returned once or more for follow-up

Of the 90 participants with measurable weight outcomes, 38 (42.2%) showed an average weight loss of 8.31 lbs and decrease in BMI of 1.24 units.

Of the 46 participants with elevated BP who returned for screening, 23 (50%) showed an improvement of systolic BP (a decrease of ≥ 5 mm Hg) and 31 (53.4%) of diastolic BP (a decrease of ≥ 2 mm Hg).

Behavioral Measures:

1. 84.7% (n=111) of participants who participated in the Quick and Healthy meals lesson reported they would use fruits and vegetables to make these meals after attending the lesson.
2. 88.3% (n=111) participants who participated in the Fiber Lesson reported learning the benefits of fiber, sources of fiber and how to make meals that increase their fiber intake.

Smoking Cessation:

Of the 342 self-reported smokers, 13 (3.8%) reported an improvement in smoking cessation at a follow up visit or via telephone.

1. 4 of the 13 (30.8%) participants reported having quit smoking

The Food Trust plans to scale up the program in other Pennsylvania cities.