Promoting Equity in Health Information
Partners for Health Information and Health Information Partners (HIPS)

[1]Richard Billingsley, RN, MSLS, Information & Instruction Coordinator; [1]Betsy Gardiner, RN, MSLS, Reference Librarian; [2]Karyn L. Pomerantz, Research Scientist, MLS, MPH;
[2]Eduardo Pezo, MPH: Research Assistant; [1]Patricia Wilson MIS, Associate Director, Public Services.
[1]Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library, [2]School of Public Health and Health Services, The George Washington University

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER — WASHINGTON DC

Partners for Health Information and HIPS Goals 🔍

- Overcome racism in online health information access and use among low-income working class residents who use community health centers in Washington, DC
- Expand awareness of reliable health information for health professionals and the public
- Develop multi-racial and ethnic collaborations among community organizations and the university
- Promote health literacy and health advocacy
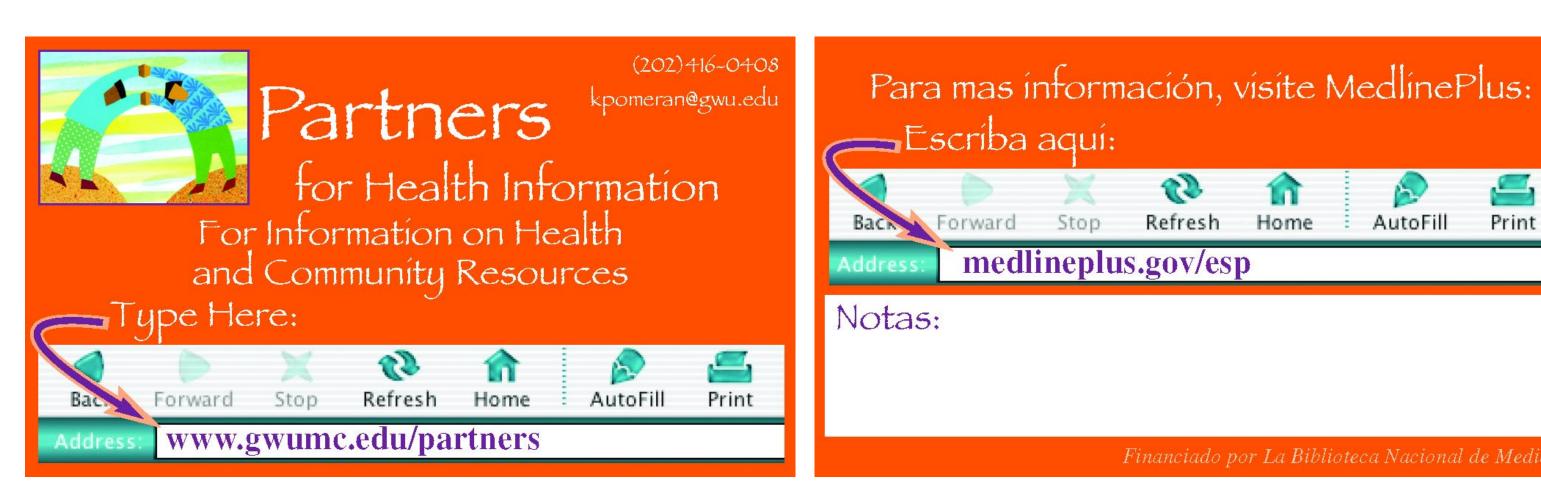
Community Assets and Needs 🔍

- Large inequalities in health status, literacy, and economic well-being with communities segregated by race and ethnicity
- Active community and health organizations that advocate for health, education, and housing, and are eager to partner
- 130 patients from six (6) community health centers ranked health and community information as their top choices but identified lack of access to computers, the Internet, and technology skills as significant barriers
- Health centers welcome electronic resources for their providers and patients, and patients are enthusiastic to learn

Principles of Outreach 🔍

- Everyone knows something about the Internet and everyone can learn
- Adult learners require practical, usable information and skills taught in a respectful manner
- Physical, not virtual, presence is essential

Strategies 🔍

- Supplies health centers with resources, such as computers for patients and staff, licenses to medical databases for staff, a web site of health and community resources, biweekly visits, and hands-on classes sponsored by PIA
- Takes health information where people work and live with a focus on community health centers
- Makes health information connections with organizations and people with similar missions and values
- Develops technology skills and awareness of health and community resources among staff members and people they serve
- Teaches adult learners at Even Start, teen health promoters at Mary's Center and the Latin American Youth Center, and HIV day treatment center clients at Max Robinson Center
- Uses coaches to train and support new Internet users
- Exhibits at health fairs and conferences

Results 🔍

Over the course of four (4) years, Partners has:
- Made over 1000 visits to introduce over 4500 people to MedlinePlus and similar resources
- Staffed over 30 exhibits and health fairs
- Taught over 100 classes
- Helped 5 community collaborators implement their own programs
- Catalyzed the formation of Health Information Partners - HIPS

Community health center staff responding to surveys report over 75 percent use scientific and consumer health resources:
- *"We use health information in our clinic and offer a regular class with Partners on accessing health information in our diabetes classes.*
- *So many patients want to know in easy words their problems, and it is great to bring them health information that they understand.*
- *Clients reported after accessing information on the net they felt less anxious and more informed about their health. Some clients have used information from the web to initiate conversations from health providers, and it has driven some of their treatment strategies.*
- *It's important to help guide use toward reputable sites, and take an interest in what patients may be reading on the web."*

Community based focus groups and workshop evaluations reveal high interest among Latino parents, clients with HIV, and teens:
- *"I use the Internet as my third opinion.*
- *I'm going to take this information to my family and colleagues.*
- *Teach us more about HIV."*

Lessons Learned 🔍

Successful outreach and training require:
- Frequent onsite presence and persistence over years
- Integration within the organization's mission and routines and relationships with staff members and clients
- Involvement in regional health and related organizations
- Inclusivity regarding people and diseases, and language that emphasizes unity and acceptance
- Ability to work with people from different social classes and historical experiences
- A social justice framework in which health information is a small but necessary component of overcoming inequality

Challenges include:
- Integrating new information practices into daily life
- Identifying resources useful for particular literacy levels and needs
- Designing evaluations that capture our work and document long-term effects, such as behavioral and health status outcomes
- Balancing administrative/research responsibilities with program implementation
- Funding all program participants

Major Outcome: Health Information Partners, HIPS

a community health information outreach partnership, funded by NLM in 2004.

UDC/State Education Agency, Adult Education
Adult education and health literacy outreach on wheels

Project of Intermediate Advocates (PIA)
Peer educators taking health information to the community

DC Public Library / Washington Highlands Library
Health literacy classes and the Lifelong Learning Center for Health

DC Area Health Education Center
Health professional education for community service

GWU School of Public Health and Health Services
Prevention and community health promotion

GWU Himmelfarb Library
Educating and equipping health professionals with information

ISCOPES
Partnering students with communities to promote health

Unity Health Care and Community Health Centers
Providing safety-net care

MidAtlantic Public Health Training Center
Developing skills of the public health and community based workforce

La Clinica del Pueblo
Serving Latino families with medical care and social services

So Others Might Eat
Serving homeless individuals with clinical, mental health, and substance use care

Children's Health Centers SE
Serving children and teens in Wards 7 and 8

Primary Care Coalition of Montgomery County, Md.
Supporting the safety-net centers of Montgomery County

Health Action Forum of Prince George's County
Building the safety-net in Prince George's County

DC Department of Health: Project WISH and Healthy Start
Conducting outreach to prevent women's cancers and infant mortality

RIGHT, Inc.
Developing housing opportunities for people with AIDS

Family and Medical Counseling Service, Inc.
Providing medical care, social services, and computer training for people with HIV and AIDS, and other conditions

Health Services for Children
Supporting families with children with special needs

Metropolitan Washington Public Health Association
Organizing to reduce health disparities

Partners for Health Information
For Information on Health and Community Resources
Type Here:
www.gwumc.edu/partners
(202) 416-0408
kpomeran@gwu.edu

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