

Title: Actual and Perceived Barriers to Public Health Utilization

Author(s): Shengying Vue, Michelle Draxten, Cheryl Stetz, Meredith G. Wagner

Primary author affiliation: Concordia College, Moorhead, MN

Author(s) who will be participating in the poster presentation session on March 7:
Shengying Vue

Abstract

Public healthcare plays a critical role in health and wellness promotion through preventative care. Unfortunately, in the United States, there is a disinvestment in public healthcare, leading to inaccessibility of public healthcare services and ultimately, poorer community health outcomes. The purpose of this needs assessment was to identify actual barriers to public healthcare access experienced among community members and perceived barriers to public healthcare access among healthcare providers. A survey instrument for community members and a survey instrument for public healthcare employees were created and developed. Community members ($N = 38$) were recruited to participate through the social media platform Facebook, and recruitment flyers. Public health care employees ($N = 42$) were recruited through email. Actual barriers to public healthcare utilization identified by community members were the perception of ineligibility, inability and difficulty locating a public healthcare facility, and time conflicts. These barriers were also reported by public healthcare employees to be perceived barriers as well as lack of transportation, communication difficulties, and fear of judgement. Based on the findings of this needs assessment, effort in creating, developing, and implementing public healthcare interventions addressing these actual barriers can be beneficial in increasing the accessibility of public healthcare services to community members.