



Spotlight Presentation 1-3: A Brighter Future for Primary Health Care Access for Seasonal Agricultural Workers

Presenters:

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Description:

Quest Community Health Centre's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Health Program (SAWHP) serves seasonal agricultural workers (SAW) in rural Niagara. This presentation will outline the unique experiences of SAWs in accessing health care, the SAWHP model of care and services, how evidence and research support the program, and the lived experiences of the clients SAWHP serves.

Session objectives and learning outcomes:

- Knowledge of Quest CHC's Seasonal Agricultural Worker's Health Program
- Understanding of the unique experiences of seasonal agricultural workers in accessing health care
- The importance of collaborating with community partners in addressing social determinants of health

Full description:

Outline of Program:

Quest Community Health Centre's Seasonal Agricultural Worker Health Program (SAWHP) has been serving the seasonal agricultural workers (SAW) in the Niagara region since 2010. The program began without any funding and has since grown into a program staffed with 1 full time Community Health Worker, 2 full time RPN/Client Coordinators, 1 full time and 1 part time NP, and 1 part time RN. In addition, we rely heavily on the support of our community partners and volunteers in order to provide needed services for SAWs both in the community and within our health clinic settings.

The SAWHP has a strong focus on interdisciplinary collaboration, not only within our SAWHP team but also in referring to and working with volunteer physiotherapists, registered dietitians, massage therapists, counsellors, and interpreters. The SAWHPs health clinics also include the support of nursing and medical students from Brock University, McMaster University and Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine in order to provide educational opportunities to these students as well as enhancing the care provided to SAWs. In addition, the SAWHP collaborates with Niagara Community Legal Clinic, Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Center, Farm Worker's Hub, and Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers in order to provide our clients with a holistic approach to their health and wellbeing.

Despite receiving OHIP, SAWs face many barriers to accessing health care. The SAWHP seeks to address the sociodemographic barriers SAWs face through the care and services we provide. This includes, but is not limited to, running health care clinics on weekends and in the evening when SAWs are most likely to have time off work, providing interpretation services for

health care appointments, assisting with transportation, coordinating client care to limit missed time from work, and providing farm visits for health promotion, chronic disease monitoring, and phlebotomy. In addition, the SAWHP ensures continuity of care by providing SAWs with transfer of care letters and pertinent documents to take to their primary care provider in their home country.

The SAWHP works closely with community partners such as Southridge Community Church, Cornerstone Community Church, St. Alban's Community Church, and the Migrant Farmworkers Project to host our healthcare clinics and who also provide clients with community connection, thrift-store style hubs, and social events. In addition, the SAWHP collaborates with Positive Living Niagara and the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group to further address barriers faced by SAWs as well as to run community events such as the annual Care Fair and Bicycle Safety Rodeo. The relationship SAWHP has built with these community partners has allowed for the referring of clients between services.

Evidence/Research-informed Decision Making.

Measurable Results:

The SAWHP uses data collected by their IT team in order to see trends in statistics related to the clients they serve and the care they are providing. The SAWHP uses these statistics to program plan for the following season and to determine the areas/farms where more outreach may be needed within the Niagara region. The SAWHP has been involved in multiple research projects some of which have helped to bring awareness to rural physicians to improve access to care for SAWs.

Adaptation into the Future:

Like many health care facilities during COVID, the SAWHP was able to pivot from their traditional in-person clinics to providing care primarily

virtually. This shift allowed the SAWHP to continue to provide much needed health care to the SAWs. It also allowed the SAWHP to adapt in order to offer more services virtually moving forward, which has provided greater access to SAWs who may have additional barriers to coming to clinic such as long work hours or distance from clinic sites. The SAWHP is also able to address the barrier of distance to clinics with a newly acquired mobile clinic which allows us to provide rural SAWs with accessible, private, and comprehensive health care at their location.

The acquisition of new funding and subsequent growth in staffing in the SAWHP is a testament to how the program continues to expand to meet the evolving needs of SAWs into the future.