

Update

Conducting Effective Outreach to Family PACT Clients

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As busy healthcare providers, conducting outreach activities may often seem a time consuming and daunting task, yet, it can be one of the most effective ways to increase your client base. Outreach can help strengthen the link between your agency and other healthcare providers and help you develop beneficial working relationships with other community-based organizations.

Outreach is often thought of only in terms of face-to-face activities. However, outreach can be conducted in a variety of modalities in addition to having a physical presence in your community. Outreach can be conducted through the use of such things as print materials, distribution of promotional items, advertising on the radio or television (e.g PSAs), and through internet channels (such as maintaining an agency website, developing a podcast, or participating in chat rooms).

In an effort to assist you in strengthening your outreach efforts, this newsletter will discuss how you can go about developing an outreach plan, pose the answers to some questions that may effect the successful implementation of outreach activities with your specific client population, and provide a list of several outreach strategies that have been used by other FPACT Providers.

Developing an Outreach Plan

Before you choose the strategies you will use for outreach to potential Family PACT clients, it is beneficial to develop an outreach plan that takes into consideration the specific composition of

your client population, the barriers to care that may exist for them, and the demographics of your community.

Is your client base primarily non-English speaking? Do you serve a large migrant or immigrant population? Do you offer specific services for adolescents? Do your clients have a difficult time accessing care during regular business hours? Does your community have an adequate public transportation system? Do organizations within your community (such as schools, churches, civic organizations, and social service agencies) hold a positive and supportive attitude toward your provision of family planning services?

Once these questions have been answered, you can begin to narrow down which outreach strategies will be most effective in reaching potential new Family PACT clients.

Before Developing Your Outreach Plan

Let's take a moment to look at some issues you may want to consider as you begin to design your outreach plan and choose specific outreach activities.

What is the primary language spoken and/or read by your target audience?

- Offer print materials in the language spoken and/or read by your clients.
- Use bilingual and bicultural employees when staffing health fair booths or exhibits.
- If you are doing outreach to teens, try to use younger staff people to whom the teens can relate.

Important Date to Remember

November 25, 2007

(Dual use period begins on May 23, 2007 and ends on November 25, 2007, so apply as soon as possible for your NPI).

Every healthcare provider, whether they are individuals or organizations, must obtain an NPI for use to identify themselves in HIPAA standard transactions. Even providers who do not bill for services may need to disclose their NPI to providers who order lab tests or refer patients for diagnostic testing, etc.

Make sure to register your NPI with Medi-Cal as the final step.

You can find more information about the NPI and how to register at:
www.medi-cal.ca.gov
 or
www.cms.hhs.gov/NationalProvdentStand/

Effective Outreach, continued...

What is the literacy level of the clients you are trying to reach?

- *In general, produce print materials at a third grade reading level. Low literacy level, multilingual materials are available at <http://www.healthed.org/Inmagic/SearchCatalog.htm>.*
- *Create pictorial-based materials for clients with a low literacy level or those unfamiliar with a written language.*

What is the age of the target population you are trying to reach?

- *Be mindful of the messages you send. The language and messages you use for adults will be different than those you use for adolescents.*
- *Promotional items are great as incentives to bring clients into your services, but they should reflect the interests or needs of your targeted outreach population. For example, movie tickets might work for teens whereas gas cards might work better for adults.*

Where will you reach the most people?

- *Locate the hubs of social activity within your community such as teen centers, senior centers, farmer's markets, etc.*

Where do your clients get their information about healthcare?

- *Promote your services where clients usually obtain general information about services.*
- *For advertising purposes, determine whether they are likely to listen to the radio, watch television or read the newspaper.*
- *Supply other social service agencies used by your client population with materials about your services. If your clients tend to get their information by word-of-mouth, consider making changes in your clinic that would encourage your existing clients to tell others about your services.*

What if your community doesn't support the promotion of family planning services?

- *Try promoting your family planning services in conjunction with other healthcare services such as cancer awareness, chronic disease, immunizations, etc.*
- *When working with schools that may be hesitant to support family planning services for teens, identify goals that you have in common and build your outreach activities based on that commonality. For example, the school may be uncomfortable agreeing they have the goal of reducing teen births, but they would most likely agree that they share the goal of wanting teens to be healthy.*
- *Actively reach out to other agencies and organizations in your community. Support the activities they conduct and have a presence at their activities whenever possible.*

What if your clients have a hard time accessing services due to lack of transportation?

- *Partner with local transportation agencies and consider offering gas cards, bus vouchers, or taxi vouchers as promotional or incentive items.*

Successful Outreach Strategies Used by Family PACT Providers

Listed below are a number of outreach strategies that have been used by other Family PACT Providers. Depending on your staff capabilities and resources, these may be helpful in designing your agency's outreach activities.

Develop Partnerships - Collaboratives with community-based organizations in your area to reach clients in need of services. OFP funds community-based programs that providers can partner with to reach adolescents. Go to www.familypact.org/providers/screening-guidelines-and-tools for information on locations of Teen Pregnancy Prevention agencies by county.

Print Materials - Brochures and flyers can be posted throughout the community. Advertise your services in telephone books, school calendars, and in community resource lists.

Promotional Items - Distribute gas cards, bus vouchers, stress balls, magnets, pens, etc. as incentives for clients to come in for services.

Radio and Television Advertisements - Contact radio or television stations that provide programming in the languages spoken by your clientele to air advertisements and public service announcements.

Websites - Maintain your own website, post information about your services on community websites, or provide a link to your website on the website of other social service agencies.

Health Fairs and Other Community Events - Staff a booth or exhibit not only at health events but other community events, such as farmer's markets, school fairs, etc.

"In-Reach" - Coordinate with other divisions within your agency/clinic. Make sure they know how to identify potential Family PACT Clients. Ensure they know how to refer to you and likewise, that you refer clients for other services outside of the scope of Family PACT.

Effective Outreach, continued...

Educational Presentations - Conduct educational presentations about your services at schools, civic organizations, and social service organizations.

Make Your Clinic More Client Friendly - Provide materials for teens in your waiting room and patient rooms, be flexible with your hours, use hot lines, make follow-up calls to patients before and after appointments, hire diverse staff.

For more detailed information about each of these strategies and specific examples of creative and innovative outreach activities that have been successfully implemented by Family PACT Providers, log on to www.familypact.org/providers/screening-guidelines-and-tools and download a copy of **Reaching Out for Success: Family PACT Provider Guide to Effective Outreach**.

Easy Ways to Make Your Clinic More "Male-friendly"

It is important to remember that males generally come in for family planning visits when they are exhibiting sexually transmitted infection symptoms or are aware of a partner with symptoms. The question is whether there are particular strategies that can be used to make their visit at your clinic more comfortable and how these strategies may encourage them to come in for preventive care in the future.

- Have some magazines in your waiting room and exam rooms that appeal to males.
- Put up posters that address male health issues.
- Put brochures about male health issues in your waiting room.
- If a male accompanies his partner to a family planning visit, ask her if she would like her partner to be a part of her visit.
- Educate males on family planning issues during their visit.
- Hire male clinic staff and give the male patient the option to speak with a male if it would make them more comfortable.
- Train staff on the special needs of male family planning clients. Some helpful training tips can be found at fpmtc.org or meeproductions.com.

Places to Conduct Adult Outreach

Often times, outreach efforts focus on adolescents but here are some ideas on where you can conduct outreach to potential adult Family PACT clients.

- Community Colleges
- Apartment Complexes
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program
- Laundromats
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes
- Homeless Shelters
- Substance Abuse Programs
- Social Service Agencies

Provider Feedback

Did you find the information in this newsletter helpful? Would you like to suggest changes to improve the newsletter?

The Office of Family Planning invites your feedback to improve the Family PACT newsletter and suggestions for topics for future publications. Or, if you have other ideas and suggestions related to the Family PACT Program, we'd like to hear from you.

Please call the Provider Resource Line:
1-877-FAMPACT (326-7228)