

Health Needs Assessment for Head Start Children

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Background: Head Start Program

- Preschool program for low-income families, providing comprehensive learning and care for children ages birth through 5 years old.¹
- Receives federal funds through the Department of Health & Human Services. However, each Head Start program is a locally designed and implemented model based on local community needs and resources.¹
- One of many government requirements involves yearly health check-ups and up-to-date immunization records for all children enrolled.¹
- NSCA elicited services from Jefferson Center for Urban Health to investigate why some families have a difficult time completing the medical record requirements.

Methods: Parent Interviews

- Designed 7-question, anonymous, open-ended survey.
- Received input from Head Start staff during survey development.
- Questions
 - What do you think of when you imagine a healthy person or family?
 - What do you do to keep you family healthy?
 - What would help improve the health of your family?
 - What helps or prevents you from getting healthcare for your family?
 - How do you feel about your child's doctor?
 - Head Start requires medical forms be completed on a regular basis for your child, and there is a deadline to complete them. What helps or prevents you from completing these forms by the deadline?
 - What could be done to help you complete the required health exams and forms for your child?
- 24 parents were recruited by the health workers at Head Start Center.
- Inclusion criteria was parents with & without complete medical records for their children.
- Interviews were conducted in person and over the phone.
- Used qualitative analysis after coding responses based on thematic groupings.

Results: Barriers to Children's Healthcare

- Identified multiple factors that affect the likelihood of child to have complete medical record status.
- List of factors include:
 - Single Parent
 - 3 or More Children
 - Access To Transportation
 - Less than satisfied with Provider
 - Difficulty Scheduling Appointments
 - Long wait-times
 - Lack of respect from Provider
 - Non-consistent PCP
 - Difficulty Completing Forms
 - Fees

Barriers Affecting Families with Incomplete Medical Records										
Family	Single Parent	2+ Children	Transportation	Dissatisfied with Provider	Scheduling Difficulty	Long Wait Times	Lack of Respect from Provider	Not Constant PCP	Difficulty Completing Paperwork	Total
A	X	X		X	X		X		X	6
B	X				X				X	4
C	X	X		X	X					4
D		X			X					2
E	X			X	X	X	X			5
F	X			X			X		X	4
Total	5	3	0	4	5	1	3	1	3	

Table 1. Tallies the number of barriers/factors that affect the families with incomplete medical records.

Medical Record Status	Average Number of Barriers
Complete	2.1
Incomplete	4.2

Table 2. Average number of barriers for families with complete medical records vs. incomplete medical records.

Impact when multiple variables affect a single family:

- 93% of families with 2 or less identified barriers had complete medical records!!
- 83% of families with 4 or more identified barriers had incomplete medical records!!

Conclusions & Path Forward

- While many individual barriers were identified that impacted the medical record status of a given family, most of these factors are beyond the reach of the Head Start Program.
- However, by identifying families with multiple barriers, the Head Start Program can focus its resources. Proactively supporting families that may have difficulties completing the medical record requirement.
- The NSCA Head Start interviews all families prior to entering into the program. Screening for these barriers will be included during the entrance interviews.

Quotes from Families

"There is always a different doctor. It bugs me, always 1001 questions because they don't know you."

"Cost \$5 for parking every time. No voucher. I didn't have the money, so we didn't go to the doctor."

"Dealing with phone services makes it difficult to get in contact with the doctor. Just wind up taking diagnosis in own hands (self-diagnosis for children)."

References & Acknowledgements

- "What Is Head Start?" PA Head Start Association. 1 Jan. 2014. Web. 30 Oct. 2014.

Thank You

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