

Developing Community-Academic Partnerships to Enhance Breast Health Among Rural and Hispanic Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Women

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Purpose/Objectives: To examine effective strategies for building community-academic partnerships for the promotion of breast cancer education and outreach among rural and Hispanic migrant and seasonal farmworker women, mostly from Mexican descent.

Data Sources: Published research and education articles and books, community-education models, personal experiences, and community key informant feedback.

Data Synthesis: Effective community partnerships for enhanced education and outreach include a framework based on a network of partners with common goals, communication processes based on trust, and bilingual/bicultural and culturally competent staff.

Conclusions: A sustainable community partnership can be achieved through systematic but flexible approaches to community planning. Involvement of community members in the development and implementation of education and screening activities helps ensure that community needs are met. Relationships based on mutual respect are key.

Implications for Nursing Practice: Nurses can act as catalysts through community capacity building to create community-academic partnerships to reach medically underserved populations with cancer screening, outreach, and education through the delivery of strategies that are based on common goals.

Significant advances in cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment are occurring, yet disparities continue in the burden of cancer among ethnic minority and medically underserved populations (Haynes & Smedley, 1999). Although certain segments of the population realize and benefit from the gains in scientific inquiries, others do not. Reducing health disparities among minorities is a key objective as recorded in *Healthy People 2010* (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 1998).

The state of Florida has a large population of approximately 600,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers, mostly of Mexican origin, making it the fourth largest population of migrant and seasonal farmworkers as well as their dependents in the United States (Arrieta, Walker, & Mason, 1998). However, the exact number remains uncertain because of the high mobility and the

Key Points . . .

- ▶ Hispanic migrant and seasonal farmworkers represent a particular subgroup of women (poor and minority) who face a number of barriers to mammography, including lack of insurance, limited access to health care, low education and literacy levels, cultural and linguistic differences, and immigrant status.
- ▶ Effective community partnerships can help identify gaps in the continuum of responsibility of care and services for vulnerable populations and collectively identify ways to bridge these gaps.
- ▶ Open and ongoing communication is key to the foundation of a strong community-academic cancer center collaboration.
- ▶ Increasing the network of partners continually infuses new ideas, energy, and strength into a partnership.

constant fluctuation of this population. South and east Hillsborough County are rural areas of Florida in the surrounding Tampa region where agriculture is represented strongly, thus attracting many farmworkers. In many cases, farmworkers do not seek preventive health care, including routine cancer screenings, because of complex factors such as chronic poverty, cultural norms, lack of transportation and health insurance, fear, lack of understanding about cancer symptoms and importance of cancer screening, nomadic lifestyles, and limited English and

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