

The 8th Conference on Health Care of the Chinese in North America

Meeting the Need of Health Education in the Era of Managed Care

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Abstract

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate that physician groups, HMOs and national health agencies can join forces with community providers to deliver culturally and linguistically sensitive programs for their clients or members.

In the era of managed care, preventive services and health education should be an important element for HMOs. In order to effectively reach its members, health education programs should be delivered in a culturally and linguistically sensitive setting of the members' ethnicity. In some large statewide HMOs, minority members may be underserved because they are not a large percentage of its membership. In such a case, the minority members should not be ignored. Plans should partner with physicians and community groups who can provide programs that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for these members. For example, the Chinese Community Health Resource Center (CCHRC), established in 1989, is an example of local physicians and hospital serving primarily the Chinese community. Since its inception, CCHRC has met the needs of various managed care programs and physicians groups by offering many bilingual and culturally sensitive health education programs: classes on a variety of topics, individual nutrition counseling and a health education library.

National community health agencies will also find it helpful to collaborate with community groups in developing culturally sensitive programs and services when focusing programs for minority target groups. For example, the American Heart Association collaborated with the local physicians, hospitals, and community providers to form the Chinese Community Cardiac Council (CCCC). The CCCC has played a major role in educating the Chinese community on issues related to heart health and has been recognized as a national model for other national agencies and local communities. The American Cancer Society also joined forces with the local community groups, health care providers, and CCHRC in developing and establishing the first linguistically and culturally based cancer information center and Cancer Education and Support Group for the Chinese community.

In conclusion, it is prudent for HMOs and health agencies to collaborate with the community in developing and delivering culturally and linguistically sound health education programs.