

Shining Light on Partner Experience: Highlights from an Evaluation of the Utah Cancer Screening Project

Sharing evaluation findings with those from whom data is collected promotes equity, inclusivity, and facilitates shared decision making

Summary:

From 2017-2019, the Utah Cancer Control Program (UCCP) partnered with a network of federally qualified health centers for the Utah Cancer Screening and Prevention Project. Project partners worked to implement evidence based interventions (EBIs) to increase cancer screening rates in Utah. In order to evaluate the ongoing implementation and sustainability of the project strategies, a mixed methods evaluation was conducted by UCCP staff which included key findings and recommendations. Results from the evaluation were shared with project partners, which prompted and enabled renewed collaboration amongst partners to take actionable steps regarding the recommendations from the evaluation.

The Challenge:

The Utah Cancer Screening and Prevention Project, a collaborative effort between partners across government, nonprofit, and healthcare systems, began in 2017 with the goal of increasing cancer screening rates for patients of Federally Qualified Health Centers across the state. Strategies for increasing screening rates included assessing, planning, and implementing Evidence Based Interventions (EBIs). Annual cancer screening rates for each FQHC were reported to project funders, however, after two years of efforts the data provided no clear evidence of change, with an average of only +2% change in breast cancer screening and -0.75% change in cervical cancer screening. This quantitative data alone provided no actionable steps for project partners moving forward, so evaluators from the Utah Cancer Control Program (UCCP) decided to gather additional qualitative data better understand how the project was progressing.

Action Taken:

A small evaluation team from the UCCP conducted in person site visits at each of the 6 participating FQHCs in Oct-Nov of 2019. They interviewed frontline staff responsible for implementing EBIs at their clinic about their experiences over the past two years including successes they had achieved, barriers they had encountered, and additional support they felt they needed to continue the project. Evaluators were able to identify common experiences, persistent barriers, and models for successful activities. They provided an overview of their findings and a list of recommendations in a written report and a series of oral/visual presentations to project partners in Dec 2019-Jan 2020.

Impact of Evaluation:

Project partners learned that implementing EBIs for increasing cancer screening at the clinic level can be a difficult process that takes time, attention, and dedication. By taking time to visit each site and hear directly from staff, the evaluators were able to better contextualize the quantitative screening data they had collected and tell a more complete story of how the project was progressing. Most importantly, the additional qualitative data provided clear and actionable steps for how project partners could move forward in the next program year to sustain what was working and provide support to change what was not working. The findings have since been presented at other meetings and used to facilitate discussion, support funding for additional grants, and provide direction for ongoing project efforts amongst various project partners.

Partner Quote:

“The written report and presentation was incredibly valuable in illustrating the outcomes of the project. AUCH was able to share these results with our project officer, the board of directors, and the Quality Improvement Forum. The report was also helpful in showing clinics who did not participate in the project, see the value of the project with data.”

–Project Partner Natalie Stubbs, Training and Technical Assistance Program Manager at the Association for Utah Community Health

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