

Abstract

- **Innovative partnership** in 11 rural Appalachian counties results in an increase in the number of women seeking age appropriate breast and cervical cancer screenings.
- **Target group:** women aged 50 through 64 who were under or uninsured and had rarely or never been screened.
- **Recognized barriers to screening:** insurance, access to medical services, Appalachian culture, rurality, low income, lack of understanding about the importance of annual screenings, perceived level of risk for these cancers, and lack of knowledge about availability of screening services through the county health department.
- **Pilot counties:** Blount, Campbell, Carter, DeKalb, Fentress, Greene, Loudon, Overton, Scott, Smith and Warren.

Background

- **State Partnership:** TN Breast and Cervical Screening Program (TBCSP), University of Tennessee (UT) Extension, American Cancer Society's (ACS) Mid-South Division, National Cancer Institute's (NCI) Mid-South Cancer Information Service and the Knoxville Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure partnered in 2003 to address the higher than average mortality rates for breast and cervical cancer in 11 rural Appalachian counties.
- **Part of a National Partnership** created with ACS, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NCI, USDA and 8 states: Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, South Carolina and Tennessee.
- **County UT Extension educators** skilled in outreach interventions and understanding of screening barriers unique to women in their respective counties.
- **County health departments** provide enrollment and screening to eligible women. Women referred for mammograms and Pap test follow-up if needed.

Methods

- Educational materials developed and/or identified.
- County UT Extension educators trained in basics of breast and cervical cancer, value of early screening for cancer and role/services of the TBCSP.
- County UT Extension educators facilitated county partnerships/coalitions with representatives from state partner organizations and community stakeholders.
- County partnerships used evidence-based outreach interventions or developed outreach interventions unique to reaching women in their respective counties.
- Seven counties advertised a "free" screening day.
 - Pelvic, Paps and clinical breast exams were provided to all.
 - Eligible women enrolled in the TBCSP were referred for mammograms.
- TBCSP screening data from 2003 was used for the baseline in each county along with control counties.
- Detailed information about screening and diagnostics were gathered from the data file of women enrolled in the TBCSP.
- Funding Sources: TBCSP, UT Extension, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, National Cancer Institute.

Results

- All counties experienced a significant increase in screening rates for women aged 50 through 64 as compared to control counties.
- Fourteen free screening days attracted women in the target group as well as women with insurance.
- In 2006, UT Extension educators with county partners conducted 283 educational programs/events reaching 2,850 women.
 - Outreach programs included Mother/Daughter Teas, Women's Teas, African American Church Service Programs, Women's Day Fairs, Church Delivered Educational Programs, Health Fairs
- In 2006, promotional strategies were used to reach women with messages about the benefits of breast and cervical cancer screening using exhibits (39), newspaper articles (39), radio programs (29) and TV programs (5).
 - 340,479 community contacts made

Discussion

- TEAM UP TN reached the never and rarely screened woman.
- TEAM UP TN interventions increased screening rates among the target audience - women aged 50 through 64.
- County partnerships do work in expanding outreach to rural Appalachian women with education and screening services.
- Combining the outreach capacity of UT Extension with the service delivery of TBCSP, rural Appalachian women are increasing their understanding about the need for screening and are seeking screening services in their communities.

Conclusion

- Women will seek breast and cervical cancer screening services if made convenient, culturally sensitive and with no additional cost to them.
- Women will seek screening services if they understand the benefits to their health.
- Interventions focusing on social and religious settings have allowed TEAM UP TN to reach older women, African American women and Latino women in rural Appalachia.
- External funding is critical for program coordination, travel, and purchasing incentives and educational materials to attract community participation in education and screening events.

For Further Information, Contact TEAM UP TN Steering Committee Co-Chairs:

Bobbi P. Clarke, PhD, RD, Professor, Health Specialist and Co-Director, UT Center for Community-based Health Initiatives, Public Health Education Program, University of Tennessee Extension
865-974-8197

bclarke@utk.edu

Mary Jane Dewey, MS, Director TN Breast and Cervical Screening Program, TN Department of Health
615-532-8494

Mary.Jane.Dewey@state.tn.us

Steering Committee Members:

Kathy Brown, PhD, MPH, CHE, RN, Director, Community Services, Knox County Health Department and Knoxville Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure

Ashley Leonard, MS, UT Extension Educator, Greene County

Gail Lowery, Program Manager, NCI's Mid-South Cancer Information Service

Linda Owens, RN, Coordinator, Upper Cumberland Regional Office, TN Breast and Cervical Screening Program

Robbie Melton, MS, UT Extension Educator, Overton County

Janie Monday, MS, UT Extension Educator, Smith County

Christopher Sneed, MS, UT Extension Educator, Blount County

Angel Strange, MSW, Health Initiatives Director, ACS's Mid-South Division

Pat Wheeler, RN, Coordinator, Eastern Regional Office, TN Breast and Cervical Screening Program