

Communication Plan for SC Diabetes Impact and Awareness – Leigha Faulkner

Issue

Diabetes is a major problem in the state of South Carolina with 1 in 8 adults having diabetes, which put South Carolina at 7th highest in the country for diabetes prevalence (2014). This is a problem not only due to the health risks and complications that stem from having diabetes, such as blindness, kidney failure, heart attack, stroke, and amputation, but the cost imposed for the cost of care and management of diabetes. It is estimated that diabetes will cost South Carolinians four billion dollars by the year 2020. Bringing awareness to the population is extremely important, especially those with prediabetes, in order to educate and prevent a further rise in diabetes.

Intervention

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) Division of Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and School Health asked me to develop a plan to bring awareness to diabetes and its risks in the form of marketing and visual materials/brochures. I planned everything during National Diabetes Month in November to further highlight the impact diabetes has on South Carolinians. My awareness plan included the following materials and events:

- Multiple bulletin boards throughout DHEC displaying diabetes facts and impact on SC
- World Diabetes Day Walk at Spirit Communications Park
- Signs and posters on display with contact information for National Diabetes Prevention Program (NDPP) and Diabetes Self-Management Education (DSME) program
- Blog posts and mass emails sent to DHEC employees

Impact

The communications plan provided DHEC employees and visitors with ample information regarding prediabetes and diabetes which enabled the population to make informed decisions about their health. Many called with questions about the NDPP as well as the DSME program and a sizeable percentage of those who called signed up to participate in the programs. There are several initiatives and programs that gained the spotlight during the span of the project, such as the Walk for World Diabetes Day, which had over 60 employees and participant walk a mile for diabetes. This project helped further advertise the purpose and mission of the Division of Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and School Health. It remains important that communication plans similar to this one continue to be implemented so that new education and information is circulated for people to stay informed for the purpose of making the right health decisions.

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