

Strategies to Address the Opioid Epidemic in Black/African American and Hispanic/Latino Communities

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

Opioid Prevention and Treatment Strategies in Latino Communities ***Pierluigi Mancini, Ph.D.***

The opioid epidemic has touched every State in the United States. However, most of the attention has ignored the effects of this epidemic in racially and ethnically diverse communities.

This presentation described how, utilizing the Strategic Prevention Framework, we can develop and deliver a bilingual, bicultural substance abuse prevention program to address prescription drugs, opioids, and other substances in Hispanic and Latino communities.

Through the use of different environmental strategies, we can increase the awareness of the problem in the community and develop solutions to recognize and prevent prescription drug misuse in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

A successful prevention and a successful treatment strategy were presented. The Prevention strategy demonstrated how a Latino community's level of readiness was increased from Level 1 to Level 3 in preparation for making actual change. The treatment strategy demonstrated how an agency grew from one individual clinician in a small office to an organization serving over 150 individuals per day with over 40 bilingual, bicultural clinicians serving children, adolescents, and adults in English, Spanish, and Portuguese across the entire spectrum of behavioral health issues.

Project RECOVER ***Ricardo Cruz, M.D., M.P.H.***

Despite known mortality benefit through receipt of medications for opioid use disorders (MOUD), minority individuals (Black and Latinx) with opioid use disorder are less likely to be engaged and retained in MOUD after completing acute treatment services and have high rates of opioid-related mortality. This presentation described Project RECOVER (Referral, Engagement, Coaching, and Overdose Prevention Education in Recovery), a project funded by the Office of Minority Health/U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Empowered Communities for a Healthier Nation Initiative. Project RECOVER utilizes culturally and linguistically diverse Recovery Coaches who deliver interventions to engage racially/ethnically diverse individuals after completion of acute treatment services to link, engage, and retain them in treatment for opioid use disorder, primary care services, and harm reduction with the hope of decreasing opioid-related overdose deaths in these communities.

Dougherty Alliance for the Prevention of Opioid Use Disorders (DAPOUD)
Mary Langley, Ph.D., M.P.H., RN, ICPS

The Dougherty Alliance for the Prevention of Opioid Use Disorder is a 3-year prevention grant received by Morehouse School of Medicine from the Office of Minority Health to address opioid misuse among African Americans in a rural and/or micropolitan community. The collaborative is composed of key local government and non-government representatives in the target area of Albany, Georgia, Dougherty County. The population of Dougherty County is less than 100,000; almost 71 percent of the population is African American with a poverty level almost three times the State of Georgia.

The presentation addressed two of the primary objectives of the project: (1) to achieve a lower teen rate of prescription pain pill misuse and (2) to increase utilization of substance abuse services for African American men and women. Prevention activities were discussed during the presentation: (1) Student assembly and reenactment of the sequence from opioid overdose to death to almost 3,000 high school students, (2) Interactive training-Narcan training to first responders and other community partners, and (3) Support of the clergy. Georgia is in the Bible Belt; therefore, religious belief is important in all aspects of life. Because of the dichotomous mission of the African American Church (spiritual and social), the involvement of the church in sociopolitical issues is key to the success of community outreach and information dissemination in addressing the emerging opioid crisis in the African American community. Lessons learned and important steps for the replication of the project were also included in the presentation.

Strategies to Address the Opioid Epidemic for African Americans in Detroit
Andre L. Johnson, M.A.

Detroit Recovery Project (DRP) is a nonprofit organization in Detroit that was established in 2005. DRP is a peer-led, peer-run, and peer-driven organization that is licensed through the State of Michigan to provide prevention, treatment, and recovery support services. DRP's slogan is "Doing It Together." DRP has Federal, State, and City governmental partnerships and has collaborated with local universities and organizations to strategize and address the opioid epidemic for African Americans in the City of Detroit. According to the 2018 Census Bureau, 71.9 percent of Detroit residents are Black or African American. The data from the Wayne County Medical Examiners shows that a high percentage of the suspected fatal opioid overdoses consists of African Americans. Together we are examining the data and configuring strategies to combat this epidemic. In addition, we have created initiatives such as the System for Opioid Overdose Surveillance, Love Detroit Youth Coalition, and DRP. With these initiatives, we are able to develop strategies to have an intensive outpatient team trained in medication-assisted treatment, establish MOUs with other medically assisted treatment providers (Methadone, Buprenorphine, Suboxone, etc.), and promote the benefits of Narcan. Together we are able to build a united front to combat this epidemic.