

Team Members: Sarah B. Orr, Jane Heal, Kathy Shuster, Tabbi Daly, Becky Martens
Team Leader: Eileen Katchen
Executive Sponsor: Becky Thomas

PLAN

Identify an opportunity and plan for improvement.

Area for Improvement

"Support for Low Income Families Workgroup" is a community coalition charged with looking at the needs of low income families in Springfield, VT. One meeting was dedicated to looking at the utilization of the Free and Reduced Lunch Program (F&RLP), for which families eligible for 3 Squares Vermont or Medicaid automatically qualify. Members of the workgroup networked with the Springfield school system and determined that the F&RLP was being underutilized. The Springfield District Office felt that they could assist in increasing enrollment by educating all Springfield WIC families with a child in school or heading to school about the program.

Target Goal

By September 30, 2013, there will be a 25% increase in WIC families with eligible children that are aware of the Springfield School District's F&RLP.

Baseline Data

During school year 2011-2012, the Springfield School system had a 67% Medicaid population. That year, 58% of the total school population was enrolled in the F&RLP. As of September 30th, 2012, early data indicated that 63% of the total school population was enrolled in the F&RLP. This number is subject to change, as the school year is still in progress.

What change ideas (theories) did you have before you started testing changes?

Multiple educational methods were thought to be the best approach to educate families about the F&RLP.

DO

What ideas for improvement did you test?

Prior to the launch of this project, Martha Tarbell, School District F&RLP Coordinator, provided training on the F&RLP to WIC staff. A display board was created for the WIC waiting room that described the F&RLP, provided menus, and encouraged WIC participants to apply. The flyer below was created and handed out by WIC certifiers for all eligible Springfield WIC families. The WIC certifier also briefly discussed the program and encouraged families to apply.



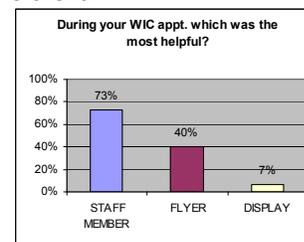
After their WIC appointment, families that had been encouraged to enroll were called by the Change Leader to determine if they remembered learning about the F&RLP, if they were already aware of the program, what educational method was most helpful (staff member promoting the program, flyer, or the display board), and if they planned to enroll their child in the program. They were also asked if they had any questions about the program.

STUDY

What were the results of your test(s)? What is your final post-change data compared to the baseline data?

- 73% of our study group said they were aware of the F&RLP before their appointment
- 93% said they remembered learning about the program during their WIC appointment
- 100% of the participants who said they were not previously aware of the program remembered discussing it at their WIC appointment.
- 60% of the group said they intend to sign their child up for the F&RLP

Also noted was that the direct discussion with the WIC certifier was the most effective method of communicating the information to the client.



ACT

What lessons did you learn from the process? How will this change be sustained?

Our team was encouraged to learn that the most effective intervention was based on our relationships and personal interactions with our WIC participants. We were also encouraged to see that our interactions with WIC participants led to an increased awareness of the F&RLP. We will not know the exact figures determining the actual effectiveness of the project until F&RLP enrollment figures are calculated at the end of the school year.

"Some clients held preconceived ideas that the F&RLP offers unappealing and unhealthy food choices. Many of these beliefs came from their own experiences when they were enrolled in the program. This project enabled us to challenge these beliefs and educate parents about positive changes that have been made in recent years." -Eileen Katchen, Change Leader

"I'm glad we were able to contribute directly to a multi-agency effort to address poverty, food insecurity and obesity in our community." -Becky Thomas, Executive Sponsor

This change will be sustained by continuing this project every year during the months of June, July, and August. This will allow us to promote the F&RLP each summer prior to the beginning of the school year. It is our goal that through this initiative, more families will benefit from F&RLP, and as a result, childhood nutrition will improve and childhood obesity will decrease.