IDENTIFYING FAMILIES WITH FOOD INSECURITIES DURING WELL CHILD VISITS AT THE ADULT AND PEDIATRIC HEALTH CARE CLINIC

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BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

• Food insecurity is defined by the USDA as lack of consistent access to nutritionally adequate food.
• Food insecurity is a major social determinant of health and is associated with poor health outcomes in children and their families.
• An estimated 400,000 children are affected by food insecurity in North Carolina.
• The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends screening for food insecurity however, up to 40% of pediatricians are not completing the appropriate screening or providing resources and support for their patients.
• The Duke Endowment via Carolinas Collaborative has promoted quality improvement projects to improve screening processes and interventions including an initiative at the ECU Adult and Pediatric Health Care (APHC).
• Prior to this project, there was no process for screening for food insecurity at the ECU APHC.

AIM STATEMENT

By March 2021, to screen and document food insecurity in at least 60% of all patients under 18 years old presenting as well child checks to Thursday resident clinic.

Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity in households with children, 2001-2018

RESULTS/OUTCOMES

PDSA CYCLE 1 – SEPTEMBER 2020

• Discussed break down of general flow of clinic and identify barriers to collecting information.
• Mapped out access points between patient and team members.
• Identified areas where paper screening could be implemented and provided in a patient centric manner.
• Determined location of documentation in the medical record in the social section and within the note for the visit.
• Decided to screen for “hunger vital signs” in all pediatric patients under 18 years of age during well child checks.
• Determined how to pull hunger vital signs as a statistic.
• Starting point was 0% under chart review.

PDSA CYCLE 2 – OCTOBER 2020

• Implemented Microsoft Teams for chart data collection and collaboration.
• Implemented dot phrases for social history documentation: “foodinsecurity” and “foodinsecurityresources”.

The Hunger Vital Sign™

For each of the following statements, please circle one: tell me which one is “often true,” “sometimes true” or “never true” for the past 12 months, that is since last [name of current month].

1. We (I) worried whether our food would run out before we (I) got money to buy more.
2. The food that we (I) bought just didn’t last and we (I) didn’t have money to get more.
3. Would you like help for this today? Yes/No

• Make paper copies and give to MAs (bright green color) and document if resources are given (in AVS).

PDSA CYCLE 3 – DECEMBER 2020

• Resident informational conference about the project.
• Started to collect data on all days of resident clinics.
• IT discussion held to help update social documentation flowsheet to easily document information and pull data.
• Updated food insecurity resources in the EHR.

PDSA CYCLE 4 – JANUARY 2021

• Discussed and encouraged everyone to utilize and document paper questionaries for all well child checks.
• Updated food insecurity resources dot phrase.

CONCLUSIONS

• Children and their families at ECU APHC are experiencing food insecurity and seeking help.
• Implementation of a clinic-based quality improvement initiative has resulted in 40% increase in documentation of food insecurity screening and identification of need.
• The next step is to utilize the EHR system to accrue data efficiently through a new social determinants of health section.

LIMITATIONS

• Inconsistent data collection within the clinic.
• Utilizing paper screening versus electronic health record.
• Change of electronic health record within the study period.
• Keeping the food resources dot phrase consistently updated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all the staff at APHC for their help with implementing this project.

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2.Feeding America. Hunger in North Carolina. 2021. https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/north-carolina#-title%3dNorth%20Carolina%2c%202020%2c%200%2c%2020people%2c%200people%2c%204443%2c%204%2c%200%2c%200%20people%2c%200children%2c%200children%2c%200+people%2c%200people%2c%200people%2c%200food%20needs.