

farmworker health services, inc.

Innovative Outreach Practices

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Emergency Preparedness

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[Influencing State-Level Policy on Behalf of Farmworkers 2007, North Carolina Farmworker Health Program \[top\]\(#\)](#)

What is the practice?

NCFHP participates in several state-level task forces in order to influence policy and be a voice for farmworker issues. Because farmworkers are not always included on certain policy and programmatic agendas, NCFHP strives to ensure that policymakers are aware of their presence in the state and their unique needs. In 2006, NCFHP made significant contributions to the North Carolina Office of Minority Health and Health Disparities' (OMHHD) Hispanic Health Task Force and the North Carolina Emergency Management Human Services and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Disaster Coordinator's committees.

What makes the practice innovative?

Through involvement on the Hispanic Health Task Force, NCFHP staff were able to inform the development of a Community Health Workers curriculum used for a Lay Health Advisor Program. Originally, the curriculum only addressed issues affecting Latinos in the state as a whole, overlooking farmworker-specific demographic data and cultural information. NCFHP staff highlighted the unique vulnerabilities of this population and shared information on popular education techniques that are effective with farmworkers. As a secondary and unexpected result of this effort, the OMHHD now collects and disseminates farmworker demographic data and health information on their Latino Fact Sheets.

As a result of increased advocacy and education with the two emergency management and disaster committees, consideration for the state's farmworker population has been incorporated into emergency response plans. Before NCFHP's participation on these committees, disaster response agencies were relatively uninformed or unaware about farmworkers and their unique lifestyles and living conditions that impact these organizations' abilities to respond effectively. NCFHP recently trained state disaster coordinators on issues such as the barriers farmworkers face in accessing emergency shelters, the challenge of communicating with non-Spanish speaking emergency responders and how to provide financial reimbursements to farmworkers during the recovery period when they have already left the area. Though these efforts are relatively new, it is anticipated that the critical discussions started by NCFHP will ensure that North Carolina farmworkers are no longer overlooked when emergencies occur.

[Picking Blueberries to Raise Money for Farmworkers and Increase Cultural Competency 2007, Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers, Inc. \[top\]\(#\)](#)

What is the practice?

Each year, Southern Jersey Family Medical Centers, Inc. (SJFMC) asks staff to take a few hours one morning in July to pick blueberries in order to raise money for a Farmworker Emergency Fund. SJFMC staff work with different crew leaders each year to organize the activity. Flyers are distributed around the health center asking family, friends, and other staff members to make pledges based on the amount of blueberry flats picked. Although it has been the outreach staff primarily who have volunteered their time for this event, clinical staff have also participated.

What makes the practice innovative?

Approximately 8-12 staff participate in this effort every year picking between 20-30 flats of blueberries. Last year, the effort added \$400 to the Farmworker Emergency Fund, the proceeds of which are used to fill a gap when assistance is not available. There are many organizations that help with food, clothing, and medicines for farmworkers, but many times, for one reason or another, some farmworkers do not qualify for these programs. There are also instances of farmworkers in abusive or dangerous situations who need emergency monies for transportation or temporary housing.

In addition to raising money, this event helps SJFMC staff increase their cultural competency by gaining a better understanding about the nature of farm work and building rapport with farmworkers by working side-by-side with them in the fields.
