

Elevating our Engagement: An Evaluation of Launching a Community Board at a Student-Run Free Clinic

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Background: The DAWN Clinic is an interprofessional student-run free clinic (SRFC) that provides primary care to uninsured patients in Aurora, Colorado. There is no literature describing feasibility or models of community advisory board (CAB) formation from an SRFC. The Community Leaders of DAWN (CLD) was created in 2018 with a mission to promote healthy communities in Aurora. The purpose of this project is to share the process and outcomes evaluation of the inaugural year of DAWN's CLD community board.

Methods: Interventions included a kickoff day, monthly group meetings, and planning committee meetings. Mixed-method evaluation utilizing pre-post surveys, student-leader exit surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews assessed the facilitation process and impact of the community board on the community, community members, and student leaders. Quantitative data analysis employed frequencies and means; qualitative data analysis included two coders using a constant comparison analysis.

Results: The CLD included eight actively involved community members. Some disconnect existed between qualitative and quantitative findings related to group cohesion, self-efficacy, and conceptualization of oneself as a leader. Regular attendance was a serious challenge, yet a strong sense of "family" still emerged, and all members organically identified themselves as community ambassadors. Skilled facilitation, translation, and flexibility via technology were key processes for success. The CLD was successful in challenging DAWN leadership to increase access to care. Student leaders gained confidence in their skills as leaders and ability to create a functioning community board.

Conclusions: This evaluation provides DAWN with an opportunity to improve community responsiveness through working towards continued sustainable engagement. Appropriately, additional CLD members will be recruited to engage with DAWN as ambassadors for their community.