

Teaching Across the Curriculum: Nursing Collaboration Positively Impacting Youth and Legislation

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Purpose

Collaborative practice is essential to improve the health of our community. Nursing faculty identified a common health issue that affects our vulnerable youth populations.... Vaping.

Electronic cigarettes (E-Cigs) or vaping has become prevalent in society with marketing and packaging designed to entice adolescents to engage in this risky behavior.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) adolescents who partake in vaping or using other forms of electronic cigarettes are more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future (CDC, 2018).

Methods

Through the creation of a faculty partnership consisting of two senior level nursing courses: community nursing and health policy; faculty, students, and community leaders came together with one voice to address the vaping epidemic.

Students and faculty provided peer education, focused interventions, alternatives to vaping, and gained legislative support to impact accessibility and marketing of materials.

Outreach

Community Health faculty and students worked to provide educational programs capturing at risk students at two central city middle schools in a Northwest Pennsylvania community. Over 600 students were taught about the hazards of vaping using lecture, demonstration, hands on activities, and the completion of a pre and post test.

Health Policy students worked collaboratively with the course professor to research vaping, and develop a formal position paper regarding vaping, ecommerce, and the targeted marketing of these dangerous products to our youth. Students were divided into three lobbying groups and met with State House of Representatives and Senators representing Northwest PA.



Results

Audiences impacted were vulnerable inner-city youth, middle school educators, and nursing students...our future leaders, who participated in one or both events (teaching and lobbying). Pre and post test results indicated the teaching program was effective in delivering the message to youth regarding education on the dangers of vaping.

State legislators were educated on vaping and targeted marketing campaigns directed to youth through the development of a position statement and active face-to-face lobbying. This approach gained support to promote legislation designed to curtail aggressive marketing techniques employed by the vaping industry.

Conclusion

Nurses are entrusted to improve the health of our community. Through collaboration across the curriculum, community leaders, faculty, and students addressed the vaping epidemic by providing education, focused interventions, gaining legislative support, and providing safe alternatives to vaping.

Utilizing this collaborative model, created as an exemplar, other academic and community specialties can adapt this structure to create and implement interdisciplinary models of care.

The combined efforts, by utilizing multidisciplinary experts and through the integration of two separate courses to promote wellness, were highly successful in both the education of inner-city youth and impacting legislative changes.

By incorporating a multi-course curriculum approach, we brought awareness and a call to action in a myriad of ways. Students recognized how individual courses build upon each other to impact and advocate for the populations they serve.

Working together for a common cause allowed all involved to experience the full effect of seeing a project from start to fruition with the realization that we, together, can make a difference.