

LOCAL HEALTH EXPO BUILDS COMMUNITY GOODWILL AND INCREASES AWARENESS OF PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE

Keperra Family Practice, Queensland
GP Partners

CHD & DIABETES CHANGE PRINCIPLE 5
Develop effective links with key local partners

Summary

Keperra Family Practice has a strong focus on community health and wellbeing. Located in a shopping centre, alongside a number of other health providers, gave the practice the opportunity to build on their already strong partnerships and hold a health exhibition in the local shopping centre.

The expo's aim was to promote community health and educate the public on proactive and preventative health care. It was a huge success and drew a lot of positive feedback, along with an increase in active patients to the practice.

Background

Keperra Family Practice is located in the northwest suburb of Keperra in Brisbane, Queensland. The practice comprises of six full time and five part time general practitioners (GPs), as well as two registered nurses and an endorsed enrolled nurse. Some GPs have specialised interests including women's health, men's health, children's health, skin cancer, hypnotherapy and travel medicine. The practice also runs indigenous health and immunisation clinics.

The practice is situated near a range of other health services including x-ray, pathology, pharmacist, dentist, gymnasium and optometrist. Each of these services have come together to form a Health Connection committee. The practice is committed to improving the health of individuals, families and the community, by providing timely, whole person care. They have a strong focus on health promotion and disease prevention.

To continue developing their community care, Keperra Family Practice, along with the rest of the Health Connection group, decided to organise and administer a local health care expo, to be held in the local shopping centre.

Process

The idea to run a health expo came about from the principal of Keperra Family Practice recognising the need for greater community awareness of preventative and proactive healthcare. The first step to making this possible was to determine whether any of the practice's local health partners would be interested in being involved in a health expo.

At a meeting with members from the local Health Connection group, the idea of a community health expo was well supported. It was decided that the local shopping centre where the practice is situated, would be a good venue for the expo. The practice principal set up a meeting with the shopping centre management and the exhibition was approved.

In order to manage the exhibition, an event organisation committee was assembled, with the practice manager nominated to coordinate. The committee held monthly meetings, for six months prior to the event and weekly meetings one month immediately prior to the event.

The practice manager, approached staff at the practice and other members of the Health

"As the practice manager, I always looked at the big picture, and often struggled to achieve the end. The Collaboratives taught me how to take 'baby steps' in everything we do. Consequently, larger projects, like a health expo, are now more achievable."

– Sue, Practice Manager



Connection regarding their availability and willingness to attend and present on various health topics. Presentations included information on skin cancer and Vitamin D, diabetes, asthma care, childhood immunisations, depression and men's health. Chairs were arranged for the presentation audience in the centre, but passersby also stopped to listen. Prizes were awarded at the end of each presentation which encouraged audiences to stay until the end, as they had to be present to claim a prize with their free raffle tickets, handed out during each presentation.

Each health provider set up their own stall with educational information and literature. Local shop owners were also welcome to set up a stall, with some providing free healthy food samples and the local beautician offered free facials. Other draws to the expo included free gift bags for attendees, which included literature and brochures, balloons, pedometers, a BMI tape measure and other promotional and information material, donated by local businesses. Attendees were also able to have free blood pressure and sugar level tests done by the practice's two medical students and nurses. The optometrist also provided free eye tests.

The centre management donated a weekend for two at a health resort as the major door prize for the event. To enter the draw, customers of the centre who spent \$30 or more in the weeks leading up to the event were given an entry form to fill out and drop in a barrel. This was drawn at the end of the expo and the winner needed to be present to claim the prize.

Outcomes

Holding the expo at the shopping centre proved to be a great success for the practice, and surrounding businesses.

- According to the centre management, traffic throughout the centre almost tripled on the day of the expo.
- The practice waiting room was "buzzing" with feedback from patients for several weeks after the event.
- Staff who were involved at the expo provided positive feedback and stories and are keen to

participate in another expo.

- Keperra Family Practice saw an immediate increase in new patients
- From the feedback received and the buzz in the practice, it is clear that the practice have increased community awareness about preventative and proactive health care.
- The event also motivated staff to look at other ways to educate and advertise about community health issues.
- The practice was able to demonstrate and build on their team work skills, by working with each other, their Division, the local shopping centre's management and the Health Connection group,.
- The practice conducted a survey of 100 patients after the expo was held and the results showed an increase in patient satisfaction. Some comments include:
 - "When are you doing that again?"
 - "I did not know that the practice was here until I attended the expo."
 - "It was great to have our blood sugars tested as well as blood pressure."
 - "It's great to see the practice being so community oriented."

Looking forward

The practice, along with the rest of the Health Connection group and shopping centre management intend to make the community health expo an annual event.

Conclusion

Along with the rest of the Health Connection group, Keperra Family Practice found the community health expo to be a huge success. The practice succeeded in educating their local community about the benefits of proactive and preventative health, as well as increasing their patient population.

