

Enhancing Pediatric Cancer Prevention Through Targeted Community Outreach and Education in Diverse Catchment Areas

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1. Background

The St. Jude Comprehensive Cancer Center (SJCCC) is a National Cancer Institute (NCI)-Designated Cancer Center dedicated to pediatric cancer research and treatment. With its primary location in Memphis, Tennessee, and a network of eight affiliate sites across seven states, SJCCC serves a diverse and geographically widespread catchment area. This diversity brings unique challenges, as health needs and risk factors vary significantly across different populations. Community assessments revealed high-risk health behaviors and disparities in cancer prevention knowledge, emphasizing the need for targeted education and communication strategies. Addressing these health disparities is critical for improving cancer prevention and health outcomes within the communities served by SJCCC.

2. Goals

The primary goals of this initiative are to increase community awareness of pediatric cancer prevention and risk factors, specifically targeting the diverse population within the SJCCC catchment area. This will be achieved through the development and distribution of tailored educational materials, designed to address the unique needs of each community. In addition, a comprehensive digital communication campaign will be implemented to reach a wide audience, with particular emphasis on childhood cancer survivors and their families. To ensure lasting impact and program sustainability, SJCCC will actively engage community health partners at each affiliate site, fostering collaborative relationships that enhance local involvement and resource accessibility. These partnerships will be instrumental in delivering education and support that resonate with and benefit the target communities, creating a network of shared commitment to cancer prevention and health improvement.

3. Solutions and Methods

To address the identified community needs, SJCCC developed a multi-faceted approach combining education, community engagement, and data-driven communication strategies. First, SJCCC conducted a comprehensive analysis of health behaviors and cancer risk factors within the catchment area. Based on these findings, the team created targeted educational materials addressing specific health behaviors identified. In addition, a culturally tailored communication campaign was launched across digital and social media platforms, incorporating feedback from patient family advisers to ensure relevance and impact.

4. Outcomes

With ongoing outreach efforts and the grant period still in progress, data on program outcomes will be collected, evaluated, and shared in 2025. Additional outcome data, including changes in community health behaviors and increases in cancer prevention knowledge, will be systematically analyzed and reported upon completion.

5. Lessons Learned and Future Directions

This initiative demonstrated the importance of tailoring education and outreach to meet the unique needs of diverse populations. Community feedback was invaluable in refining messaging and delivery methods, underscoring the value of local involvement. Moving forward, SJCCC plans to expand

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engagement through further collaboration with affiliate locations. Future efforts will also focus on longitudinal data collection to assess the long-term impact of the program and adapt strategies based on evolving community needs. By building on this foundation, SJCCC aims to continue reducing health disparities and improving cancer prevention across its catchment area.