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

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Background
Community Advisory Boards are prevalent and are a requirement of Federally Qualified Health Centers, with most staying true to “advising” levels of engagement. DAWN is a 501(c)(3), interprofessional Student-Run Free Clinic (SRFC) that provides primary care to uninsured patients in Aurora, CO. There is no literature describing feasibility or models of community board formation at a SRFC. In Fall 2017, DAWN decided to establish a community board to improve its responsiveness to community needs, and develop a sustainable partnership. Best practices for community board formation were established using literature and expert interviews. A resultant core value was to facilitate an environment of group self-determination and a high level of engagement between DAWN and the board, aiming for “shared decision making and work” (grounded in Hart’s Ladder of Participation). The Community Leaders of DAWN (CLD) group was created in October 2018 with a mission statement of “Community leaders partnering with DAWN to promote healthy communities in Aurora.”

Objective
To evaluate the process and outcomes of the initial launch of the Community Leaders of DAWN

Methods
Community Leaders of DAWN Design
- Kick-off with an eight-hour training day: group norms and project objectives established, leadership skills training, team building exercises
- Monthly two-hour meetings to run between December 2018-October 2019: identification of community needs, discussion of project ideas, identification of first CLD project in March 2019
- Expert facilitation with translations in English and Spanish

Continuous Evaluation
- Pre-post surveys
- Focus groups with CLD members and CLD Planning Committee
- Analysis conducted after first four monthly meetings
- CLD Member key-informant interviews (future)
- Student-leader post-participation survey (future)

Results
Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age (years)</td>
<td>26 – 53 (Mean: 42.8 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Described Race/Ethnicity</td>
<td>4 – Mexican, 1 – Sudaneese, 1 – Black, 1 – Caucasian, 1 – Hispanic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
<td>5 – Mexico, 1 – Saudi Arabia, 1 – Nigeria, 1 – USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years Lived in USA</td>
<td>Range: 3 – 53 years (Mean: 22.0 years)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred Spoken Language</td>
<td>3 – Spanish, 2 – English &amp; Spanish, 2 – English, 1 – Ibo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Languages Spoken</td>
<td>2 – English, 1 – Arabic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Process and Outcomes Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROCESS MEASURES</th>
<th>Baseline (mean)</th>
<th>Post Training (mean)</th>
<th>Post 3 Month (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Able to share opinions*</td>
<td>4.6 (Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>4.1 (Agree)</td>
<td>4.1 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD is making its own decisions**</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.6 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.6 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand my role in the group**</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My time is respected**</td>
<td>3.6 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unique backgrounds valued***</td>
<td>3.8 (Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>3.9 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.9 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Different languages valued***</td>
<td>3.8 (Strongly Agree)</td>
<td>4.0 (Agree)</td>
<td>4.0 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OUTCOMES MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Baseline (mean)</th>
<th>Post Training (mean)</th>
<th>Post 3 Month (mean)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am a leader in my community**</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.3 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.3 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable talking with others about community needs**</td>
<td>3.6 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident I have the skills to create a project addressing a community need**</td>
<td>3.1 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.4 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident I can identify the community’s most important health needs**</td>
<td>3.1 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.1 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.1 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLD is improving the health of Aurora**</td>
<td>3.5 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.0 (Agree)</td>
<td>3.0 (Agree)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Themes
Feedback for Improvement
Create central method of communication and utilize it regularly (WhatsApp)
“Create group chat about timing, location...or other happenings within the group.” (CLD Member)

Increased accountability would be helpful to group progress
“For those that are not as engaged, we [will] talk to them one-to-one about if they are interested in participating. If the answer is yes, then we need to talk about the set meetings/calling in if they can’t come.” (CLD Planning Committee Member)

What is Working Well
Intentional attention to language (English/Spanish) with interpretation
“It really liked the thoughtful split of English/Spanish and think that was appreciated by Spanish speaking only members.” (CLD Planning Committee member)

Group has a sense of connection
The connection we have as a group is the most valuable part of the work, even though everyone hasn’t come, we are all connected...you’re like the base foundation and we are like the stairs.” (CLD Member)

Using technology to bring the group together
“Even though only 2 people showed up, we accomplished a lot! Using the media, email, texting.” (CLD Member)

What We Are Getting Out of Project
Learning and acknowledging what it looks like to work with the community and not to expect “perfection”
“I think in community organizing, it’s pretty normal to not get everyone attending every single meeting. More than 50% [attendance] is good...I think quality over quantity is a good idea to be had and we shouldn’t be discouraged.” (CLD Planning Committee Member)

Themes Continued
Family feel
“We are a family and we are a great team. And even though people are not here, I feel like people are still engaged and participating.” (CLD Member)

Satisfaction from being able to help the community
“That it is going to affect people one day in a positive way, I hope.” (CLD Member)

Appreciate productive and exciting feel of the work
“(I) loved getting to the idea phase, getting encouraged and excited by that” (CLD Planning Committee Member)

Discussion
- Decrease in some quantitative measures on survey
- Observed disconnect between some survey and qualitative findings
- May be due to:
  - Initial excitement of kickoff day and subsequent shorter meetings
  - Variable in the timeline of project launch
- Completion of some baseline surveys after initial training session
- CLD focus group not conducted after 12/8 meeting due to time constraints
- Variable in-person attendance at CLD meetings – not all CLD members were represented in end of meeting focus groups

Limitations
- Small sample size (n = 8)
- Completion of some baseline surveys after initial training session
- CLD focus group not conducted after 12/8 meeting due to time constraints
- Variable in-person attendance at CLD meetings – not all CLD members were represented in end of meeting focus groups

Next Steps
- Utilize standing focus groups to reflect back results thus far, and glean insight into disconnect between survey and thematic findings
- Continue evaluation of year-long launch of CLD, conduct key-informant interviews with members, and anonymous student exit surveys
- Evaluate sustainability of CLD