

Cancer: Thriving & Surviving - Connecting South Dakotans Isolated by the Pandemic

Summary

The South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care (SDFMC) partnered with the SD Cancer Coalition to implement the Better Choices, Better Health SD Cancer: Thriving and Surviving (CTS) program in SD. The COVID-19 pandemic hit at the beginning of the project period and restricted access to in-person workshops but opened availability of providing remote delivery of the program. SDFMC was funded for an additional year to expand workshop delivery and health system partnerships. Efforts also supported tribal partnerships and delivery of a tribally focused workshop.

Challenges/ Barriers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the first Better Choices, Better Health South Dakota (BCBH-SD) Cancer: Thriving & Surviving (CTS) workshop scheduled to begin in April 2020 had to be canceled. This created an opportunity to create a virtual delivery model. Nine existing BCBH-SD leaders/trainers completed cross-training for the Cancer: Thriving & Surviving program. The process for BCBH-SD survey collection underwent a transformation with the emergence of virtual workshops. Instead of paper copy surveys, BCBH-SD initiated an online survey collection process utilizing QuestionPro, an IRB-approved platform. This transfer to online survey collection resulted in a decreased survey participant response when compared to paper copy surveys. To solve this problem, in partnership with the BCBH-SD platform developers, an online survey process was developed within the BCBH-SD platform Workshop Wizard, allowing for better tracking of survey completion and integration of survey data directly into the platform used to track participant information.

The program experienced low enrollment in BCBH-SD CTS workshops despite efforts to increase participation. The program partnered with Monument Health to integrate referrals into their electronic health record to support workflow integration. Enhancements to the workshop registration processes also occurred.

Solution

The program transitioned to virtual delivery when face-to-face programming was no longer an option. Virtual training from the Self-Management Resource Center was utilized to cross-train leaders in CTS, since the program could not offer in-person training due to the pandemic.

“I plan to continue working on a physical activity daily routine, continuing action plans that worked well for me, and improving my time management skills so my health becomes one of my top priorities for the day.”

~Participant Feedback from Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Post-Workshop Evaluations

“The leaders of the workshop were excellent. I couldn't have picked a better class to join! Everyone was very personable and intentional.”

~Participant Feedback from Cancer: Thriving & Surviving Post-Workshop Evaluations

Successes

In response to the pandemic and in partnership with SDSU Extension, SDFMC helped design and test a virtual delivery model for CTS workshops. Additionally, 11 BCBH-SD leaders completed cross-training in the Cancer: Thriving & Surviving curriculum, and three new BCBH-SD leaders who attended virtual Chronic Disease Self-Management Program (CDSMP) Leader training in 2021 who once fully certified as a CDSMP leader, intend to become cross-trained to lead CTS workshops. A collaboration with Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board's Breast & Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (BCCEDP) team was formed to offer the CTS workshop as the second virtual BCBH-SD tribal pilot in South Dakota. The target audience was the established virtual talking circles on the Pine Ridge, Cheyenne River and Rosebud Indian reservations. A SDFMC staff member served as the main point of contact representing BCBH-SD/CTS to execute a workshop that began in April 2021. This collaboration led to helping the BCCEDP team to facilitate interaction with IHS hospitals on SD reservations to implement two new employee cancer screening policies by the end of June 2021.

Results

The response to the project has been largely positive, with 100% of those who completed the post-workshop evaluation ranking the program quality and program leaders as satisfactory or very satisfactory, and 100% would recommend the workshop to friends/family. Our workshop participant completion rate was excellent, with 82% of participants attending four or more out of the six workshops sessions.

Evidence-Based Interventions

Better Choices, Better Health SD Cancer: Thriving & Surviving evidence-based program, licensed by SDSU Extension through Self-Management Resource Center.

Policy, System, and/or Environmental Change

BCBH-SD Referral Coordinator for all BCBH programs. The agreement was expanded and renewed for another year beginning August 1, 2021. This role is now cost-shared by SDSU Extension and Monument Health. SDFMC then executed a Business Associate Agreement with Monument Health, allowing for SDFMC to receive fax BCBH-SD referrals from Monument Health through Epic EMR, a process modeled after the SD Tobacco Quit Line referral process. Our strategy is to begin with educating case managers, patient navigators, diabetes educators and health coaches on BCBH-SD and the referral process.

We worked with nurse leadership to design and complete a BCBH-SD referral pathway in Monument Health's electronic medical record system, Epic. Any Monument Health staff member now can refer patients to BCBH-SD, including staff who care for patients with cancer.

Future Direction

Work closely with Great Plains Tribal Leader's Health Board staff to compile a digital Cultural Best Practices Guide, sharing our experiences, cultural relevancy, and tips for success delivering evidence-based self-management programs for tribal populations. We also plan to continue to meet regularly with Sanford, Avera and Monument Health Cancer staff representatives to explore innovative methods to integrate the BCBH-SD CTS program, with the goal of resuming face-to-face meetings and workshops when the time is appropriate.