Minority Engagement in Opioid Overdose Efforts:
Lessons Learned from Maryland's Communities

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Outline

• Project Introduction & Overview
• Methods
• Findings
• Discussion
• Take-home message
• Acknowledgements
Introduction – the opioid epidemic in Maryland

Figure 2. Number of Opioid-Related Deaths Occurring in Maryland from January through September of Each Year.*

Figure 6. Total Number of Opioid* and Non-Opioid-Related Deaths Occurring in Maryland, 2007-2016.
Introduction – racial disparities in the opioid epidemic

- Primarily affecting non-Hispanic whites: racism and opioid prescription
- Differences in health outcome: treatment and prevention program access
Project Introduction & Overview

• Aim: identify gaps and opportunities in engaging minority communities and individuals in Maryland's response to opioid overdoses.
Methods

• Background literature review: PubMed and the database from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health (OMH)

• Information of state agency's overdose prevention programs:
  Behavioral Health Administration (BHA), Maryland Department of Health
  Opioid Operational Command Center (OOCC)
  Websites, e-mail communication, phone interviews
Methods

Questions we asked:

• How does the overdose prevention program work?
• How do you support the local health departments? Funding? Technical support?
• Do you provide the course in other languages or have adequate translation/interpreting service?
• Does target audience specify any minority groups?
• Where do they deliver the course? Do they also deliver the course at church, neighborhood, community center, or other places that are closely related to some group's lives?
• How can we obtain the training materials and how were they designed?
• If you would like to assist local health departments to develop more culturally appropriate materials or program?
• Are there any personnel in the office that is in charge of cultural competency? What does he/she do?
Findings – Behavioral Health Administration (BHA)

• Overdose Response Program, ORP
• Overdose Data and Reports
• Authorize private or public entities to conduct educational training programs in overdose response and certify individuals
Findings

• Training calendar

• Authorized private or public entities: local health departments, community organizations, public safety organizations, substance use disorder treatment programs and other health care providers
Findings

- Core curriculum and instructions
Findings – Opioid Operational Command Center (OOCC)

• OOCC established on Jan. 2017
• Facilitates collaboration between state and local public health, human services, education, and public safety entities in Maryland (including Maryland Department of Health)
• Assist and provide resources to local agencies in the creation of opioid intervention programs
• Before it’s too late
Findings

- Differentiate target population
Findings

- Training event calendar
- Public service announcements (PSAs)
Discussion - Major challenges & Future suggestions

- **Internet-based information**
  - More PSA distribution to advertise the training programs (hospitals, schools, post-offices, churches, stations,)

- **Limited of supervision from the state agency to the local health departments**

- **No extra human resources to specialize in cultural competency**
  - Encourage local health departments to receive cultural competency training
  - MHHD website:
    - [https://health.maryland.gov/mhhd/Pages/Cultural-And-Linguistic-Competency.aspx](https://health.maryland.gov/mhhd/Pages/Cultural-And-Linguistic-Competency.aspx)
  - Collaborate with MHHD for consultation

- **Gap of previous literature and data**
  - Community need assessment, involve community members
Take-home message

- Limited data on health disparities in opioid overdose prevention and treatment
- Well-developed websites from BHA and OOCC
- Authorized local public health agencies deliver overdose prevention programs
- Future: encouraging local health departments to receive cultural competency trainings, incorporating a cultural competency component into core materials, collaboration with MHHD, conduct community need assessment
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