



Chances for Life's Cultural Mediation Strategy: An Effective Tool for Reaching and Mobilizing Latino Sex Workers in Suriname for Health Services in 2018

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Background

Latino Sex Workers (SWs) are among the subgroups Chances for Life (CFL) reaches in Suriname. Programs are designed to increase knowledge, services uptake and to establish support mechanisms for risk reduction. However, this group has unique needs beyond language barrier; hence, CFL facilitates strategies that increase their feeling of connectivity, self-efficacy and general acceptance of the program. Prior to implementation, uptake of health services was low among Latinos although they were reach through outreach.

Program design

The ingredients of CMS were customized to address specific needs of Latino SWs in Suriname focusing on self-identification, mobilization, creating enabling environments at health facilities and establishing support mechanisms that are culturally sensitive. CFL conducts periodic outreaches at convenient locations, including homes where family members can also be reached. Weekly knowledge cafés that focus on the group's culture, beliefs, attitudes, values, cuisines, social networks and existing support mechanisms are hosted to facilitate self-identification. The CMS employs liaison support at health care facilities to increase services uptake and focuses on sharing strategic information regarding health and other relevant issues. Lastly, CFL provides social support to the Latino SWs through food packages, day care and remedial teaching for children, education and counseling for families.



Results

Currently 56% of CFL's reach are Latinos. The group accounts for 56.8% HIV and 86.70 Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) services provided by CFL in 2018. The CMS highlighted the critical need for self-identification in order to increase service uptake among subgroups. The CMS goes beyond speaking the language but focuses on a total peer engagement model. Through CMS, new, incoming Latinos have better access to health services.

Conclusions

Tailoring health programs and interventions to foster cultural identity among members of key populations can significantly increase impact in a short period. Implementers should consider utilizing the CMS to increase uptake of health services.

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