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HWP 459: Senior Seminar

Dr. Amy Lanou

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Term Project Final Write-Up

Project Title:

The Primary Care Project Marketing Packet

Objective:

To create a better marketing packet to explain in full-detail Three Stream's Primary Care Project in hopes of supporting the expansion of this employee assistance program.

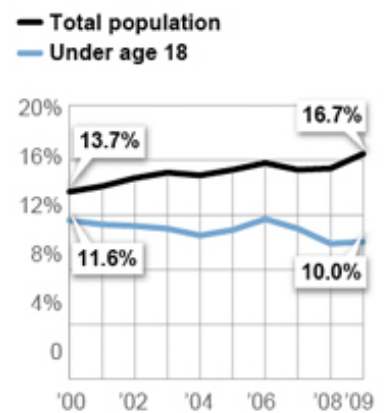
Rationale:

According to an article in the September 2010 issue of USA today, the percent of uninsured people in the United States has risen to 16.7% (around 50.7 million people) due to the rising costs of health care and the high unemployment rate. This percentage accounts for "almost one in six U.S. residents."¹ In addition, the percentage of employers with fewer than 200 employees that offer health benefits dropped from 68% in 2000 to 59% in 2007.² Therefore, there is a tremendous need for affordable health care in the United States.

According to the 2010 Buncombe County Health Assessment, over 17% of Buncombe County residents are without health insurance, with a majority citing high cost as the main reason for not having insurance.³ Another 12.8% of uninsured individuals

Percentage of uninsured rises

The percentage of people in the USA and those under age 18 who weren't covered by health insurance, by year:



Source: U.S. Census Bureau
By Veronica Salazar, USA TODAY

stated that the reason they were without insurance was due to their employers' not providing health insurance benefits. This percent is much higher among minorities, young people and less educated persons. There is evidence that uninsured individuals have a 25% higher mortality rate than the insured and have a lower self-reported health status and productivity.³ Similarly, over 16.5% of the people surveyed reported that they did not have a primary care provider.

Benefits currently comprise over 30 percent of an employee's compensation package.⁴ Health insurance benefits comprise the majority of these employee benefits, and it is a benefit that is highly valued by employees. And yet fewer and fewer employers can afford to provide health insurance benefits, and many employers don't provide health insurance for the unskilled, low paying, and part-time jobs.³ So, how do employers satisfy the demand for health care for all employees, both full-time and part-time, without going bankrupt? Three Streams Family Health Center seems to have figured out a viable solution, but needs help expanding their programs to have a profound impact in the community.

In responding to a widespread and growing need for employee medical care at reasonable costs, the Primary Care Project offers unique coverage at prices well below the current market prices. Created in a partnership with the WP Hickman Company, Three Streams Family Health Center, Eblen Charities, Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care, and Western Carolina Industries, the Primary Care Project provides low cost and free primary health care to employees in our community without health insurance. Delivered through Three Streams Family Health Center, the Primary Care Project consists of three programs – the Employee Health Connection, the Housecall Program, and Urgent Care Services.

The Employee Health Connection offers low cost primary healthcare services at Three Streams Family Health Center to employees of participating companies. The Housecall program, a preventative care program, provides a licensed health care practitioner at the corporate site for private, individual medical consultation. The Urgent Care Services allows for use of all the services of the Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care to member companies for minimal co-pay. The Employee Health Connection and the Housecall Program can be used independently of each other allowing great flexibility and personalization of these programs.

Below are two testimonials from participating companies:

“It serves to give our staff the sincere belief that we are acting in their best interest and giving them an option where one hasn’t existed. And it gives us an option that is accessible.”

-- Dan Rattigan, Owner of French Broad Chocolate Lounge

“The Primary Care Project is a great example of doing well by doing good. Our employees receive enhanced and more timely medical attention, which increases employee satisfaction and improves our overall health. Our company benefits from reduced absenteeism and lower medical costs.”

-- Scott Hickman, CEO of W.P. Hickman Company

Three Streams’ Office Administrator, Geri Spangler, stated that ideally they would like to expand the Employee Health Connection program to another ten companies and to expand the Housecall program to an additional five companies. Because Three Streams is a non-profit

health care facility offering inexpensive health care options to primarily uninsured individuals in Buncombe County, they need the Primary Care Project to expand in order to help protect the company's bottom line.

Product:

See attached document for the newly created Marketing Packet. This packet was printed (in color) and spiral bound by Three Stream's printer. These packets were then placed into executive folders with business cards and two additional informational flyers for Three Streams to distribute to potential new clients.

This Marketing Packet will be used in the future to help support the expansion of Three Stream's Primary Care Project. Three Streams' office administrator, Geri Spangler, and executive director, Chris Newcomb, both have a copy of the file on hand for future printing of the information packet.

Outcomes/Next Steps: Expansion of the Primary Care Project

The companies that are currently enrolled in one or more of the Primary Care Project programs have all heard about these programs through word of mouth. Therefore, the best means of expanding the Primary Care Project is to contact companies currently enrolled in these programs and ask them to "spread the word." Viral marketing, instead of cold calls and traditional means of advertising (i.e. commercials, newspaper ads, etc.), by member companies, project stakeholders and partners, and Three Streams would be the best strategy for expanding the Primary Care Project programs. Why? Just as networking has proven itself a useful tool for job searchers, Three Streams ought to use networking as a means of expanding the Primary Care Project. Networking is very cost effective, something that is very important to Three

Streams due to its non-profit status. Similarly, developing and maintaining relationships between companies is a great strategic move that could help Three Streams in the long-run, especially when they are applying for grants and asking for donations.

After speaking with W.P. Hickman's Scott Hickman and Eblen Charities' Bill Murdock, these two men agreed to compile a list of companies as well as enlist the help of current participants for potential sites for Primary Care Project programs. These companies will be selected based on one major factor: there is an already established relationship between one of the founding partners, a current Primary Care Project user, and/or Three Streams. Therefore, Three Streams' marketing strategy should be to focus on leveraging these relationships.

Reflections:

Three Stream's Primary Care Project is a great resource for employers who can't afford to provide health insurance benefits to all of their employees. These programs provide essential primary care and preventative care. Thus, expansion of these programs will not only benefit Three Streams, but it will benefit the employees who receive the care and the employers whose workforce will (hopefully) exhibit less absenteeism and higher productivity.

If I had enough time to help compile the list of companies and contact some of them in order to set up "in-service" meetings, then I would feel much more accomplished. However, this leaves an opportunity open for future interns to help Three Streams expand these programs. Therefore, my project offers the tool with which Three Streams can use to expand their Primary Care Project. Now they must utilize their resources, i.e. interns, staff, partners, to go out into the business community and expand the use of these programs.

Bibliography:

- 1) USA Today. (2010, September 9). *Number of uninsured Americans rises to 50.7million*. Retrieved from http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2010-09-17-uninsured17_ST_N.htm.
- 2) MacDonald, John A., "Future of employment-based **health benefits**: will employers reach a tipping point?" *EBRI Notes* . Feb 2008, 29 (2). 2-8. (7)
- 3) Buncombe County Department of Health, (2010). *2010 community health assessment report*. Retrieved from <http://www.buncombecounty.org/common/health/CHA/CHA2010.pdf>
- 4) Do employees recognize the value of the benefits you provide? (2011, March 31). *PRNewswire*, Retrieved from <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/do-employees-recognize-the-value-of-the-benefits-you-provide-119014599.html>