

NURSING STUDENT PEER TRAINING FOR SKIN CANCER EDUCATION

An untapped educational resource for identifying and preventing melanoma

Public Health Problem

- Skin cancer rates are increasing across the nation.
- Excess exposure to sunlight is a major risk factor for melanoma, the most deadly skin cancer.
- Increasing awareness that people with certain risk factors, such as atypical moles, are more likely than others to develop skin cancer is a clinical consideration from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.
- York County, Pennsylvania has a higher than expected number of cases of melanoma as well as a higher mortality rate from this condition.

Program

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health Pennsylvania Cancer Education Network provides evidenced-based public education about colorectal, ovarian, prostate, and skin cancers using state funding and funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Seeing common goals between the local York College nursing program and the Network, the Community Health nursing professor at York College invited the Department of Health Cancer Prevention Consultant to train senior nursing students on skin cancer prevention and equip them to carry the skin cancer prevention message to other student and community audiences using Network-approved tools.
- Nursing students conducted six programs in college and community settings for over a hundred people, conducting pre- and post-test surveys for evaluation.

Impact

- Participants indicated an increased intention to get cancer screening and felt less embarrassed or fearful about screening in post-tests after the educational sessions provide by nursing students to their peers and the public.
- Participants also increased their knowledge of skin cancer.
- This partnership identified a credible, untapped resource for cancer education to increase awareness and potentially change behaviors of residents related to risk factors, symptoms, and screening for skin cancer which may lead to more early detection screenings and reduced late stage disease.
- A planned six-month follow-up survey with participants demonstrates the program's commitment to monitoring program benefit over time.

Contact

Charlotte Greenawalt
Pennsylvania Department of Health
717-787-5251
cgreenawal@state.pa.us