



“Establishing trust within a diverse community.”

A Case Study of Lancaster General Hospital in Lancaster, PA.

Lancaster General Hospital

- ❖ Lancaster, PA
- ❖ 640 beds
- ❖ www.lancastergeneralhealth.org
- ❖ # of annual admissions: - 40,100 (Including Birth)
- ❖ # of annual emergency visits: - 103,700
- ❖ # of annual surgical procedures - 36,800

Lancaster General Health is a regional healthcare system with a reputation for excellence. The winner of numerous national and local awards, Lancaster General Health is committed to maintaining the health of all Lancaster County residents. Lancaster’s mission: “To advance the health and well-being of the communities we serve”. Lancaster’s vision: “To create an extraordinary experience...every time”.

Problem:

Though they look similar, the practices and customs among the Amish Community vary widely. It is projected that there are nearly 220,000 Amish in the United States, with more than half living in Ohio, Pennsylvania and Indiana. Lancaster County is home to approximately 27,000 Amish. It is the oldest and second largest Amish community in North America. The Amish community is organized into some 160 church districts. Guiding principles for Amish daily life also influence healthcare and safety practices. These principles include God’s will, separation from the world, mutual aid and self-sufficiency. Therefore, the Amish will attempt to maintain and restore good health, but may not naturally go to extra measures to ensure proper safety because of their religious beliefs.

Lancaster County is a unique mix of urban, suburban and rural demographics. There are approximately 5,305 farms in Lancaster County, many of which are farmed by the Amish. With farming, come accidents and other health-related issues. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Report to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, June 2008, in 2007 there were 29 farm related deaths in Pennsylvania, 16 of these deaths (55%), including 3 children occurred in Lancaster County.

Background:

The Diversity and Inclusion Department at Lancaster General Health was established by the current CEO, Thomas Beeman and the Board of Directors. This leadership understands the important impact diversity and cultural competency has on patients, employees, physicians and the community. Lancaster, Pennsylvania is rich in culture and history and known for its Amish Community, but in recent years has experienced much growth and change in demographics. Lancaster County has the fourth largest Hispanic population in Pennsylvania. With its Pennsylvania Dutch heritage, its role in the Underground Railroad and its increasingly growing Hispanic presence, makes it a unique place to live, work and play. Lancaster General’s organization is deeply rooted in the community and is committed to its well-being. In fact, Lancaster General’s mission is to advance the health and well-being of the communities served and have demonstrated that commitment by partnering with a local African American church in



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opening a clinic, sponsoring farm safety camps for the Amish community and partnering with the local school district in the implementation of Project SEARCH – a high school job development program for individuals with disabilities.

With diversity comes opportunity to better serve the diverse needs of the patient population. As an organization, Lancaster General has implemented a Diversity and Inclusion Department and Language Service Department. The Diversity and Inclusion Department is charged with developing and implementing Lancaster General Health’s diversity strategy which will prepare Lancaster General to address the needs of a growing diverse patient population.

Solution:

Relationships and trust with leaders in the Amish community are the key ingredients needed in order to effectively implement educational strategies. In collaboration with the Amish Safety Committee and the Lancaster County Safe Kids Coalition, Lancaster General Health implements Farm Safety Day Camps twice a year. Since the Amish community became part of the planning process, Lancaster General is able to create meaningful educational opportunities accepted throughout the Amish community. The Farm Safety Day Camp is an educational event designed to increase knowledge of simple, practical steps people who live and work on farms can implement to decrease death and injury. Amish and other farmers volunteer to provide experiential modules on how to identify safety hazards, and how to implement simple safety measures that families can apply at home and on the farm. Approximately 50 volunteers from the community donate their time and resources to help plan and educate families during these events.

Results:

Since 2005, over 800 participants have been educated at Farm Family Safety Day Events. Success is measured by the number of people in attendance, survey feedback, and behavior changes the families intend to implement.

Program evaluation results from 2009:

71 families attended: 85 adults, 174 children, 264 people total.

78% of those surveyed found the information useful

52% learned something new

22 % reported that they planned to implement information learned in one month

Changes participants plan to make within the first 3 months after the event include:

1. Conduct fire drills
2. Change battery in smoke detectors
3. Increase awareness of animal behavior
4. Ensure that shaft guards are correctly fastened and no one wears loose clothing when operating a piece of machinery with a power take-off (PTO)
5. Put the roll cage back on the skid loader.
6. Wear gloves for spray handling and goggles to weed, etc.



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Conclusion:

The years spent working with the Amish Safety Community has helped Lancaster General significantly build relationships and develop trust. This trust has opened doors to addressing other health issues that the Amish Community have not been willing to discuss in the past such as prevention, early detection and proper use of integrative medicine. Lancaster General is tracking early entry into care in hopes of seeing late stage disease in the Amish population decrease.

This year Lancaster General also facilitated health educational sessions in the home of an Amish woman with over 200 women in attendance. In addition to that, the program established 9 points of contact with Amish owned or frequented business throughout the community in which we provided health educational fact sheets tailored to the plain community. The community outreach RN frequents the sites on a quarterly basis to review fact sheet distribution and gain insight from the business owners as to the conversation regarding the fact sheets and recommendation for other health topics for the future.

Topics discussed at the Women’s Gathering include:

- “Journey to a Healthy Lifestyle”
- “Nutrition for a Health Lifestyle”
- “Exercise for a Healthy Lifestyle”
- “Stress Relief for a Healthy Lifestyle”

Lancaster General has also initiated an Amish Health Promoter Program to continue to build trust and cultural competence in our continued effort to reach this very unique population in our community.