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AHNS Cancer Prevention Service 2025 Community Service Award

Background

Miami-Dade County is the ninth largest metropolitan area in the United States and has a population of 2,686,867¹. It is unique among many American urban areas in that it has a minority-majority population, with the top three racial/ethnic groups being Hispanic (69.1%), non-Hispanic Black (16.9%), and non-Hispanic White (13.9%)¹. Most Miami-Dade County residents are foreign-born (54.3%), which is the highest proportion of foreign-born residents of any county in the United States¹.

Targeted Population

Many Miami-Dade County residents experience socioeconomic challenges, with 14.1% of the population living below the federal poverty line, compared to 11.1% of the national population¹. Additionally, 16.1% of the county population under 65 years lacks health insurance, compared to 9.5% of the national population under 65¹. These socioeconomic constraints may be exacerbated by above average housing costs combined with below average median household incomes compared to the rest of the country¹. Disparities in education level exist among different racial and ethnic groups in Miami-Dade County, with 39.75% of White residents compared to 20.04% of Black residents and 30.91% of Hispanic versus 56.03% of non-Hispanic residents holding a bachelor's degree or higher². Individuals with lower socioeconomic and education status tend to have higher mortality rates from head and neck cancer³. We seek to focus our screening and awareness efforts toward populations within Miami-Dade County who may be at increased risk of death from head and neck cancer to maximize our screening of higher risk individuals. Additionally, we will target head and neck cancer awareness events to local high schools in under-resourced communities, with the aim of cancer primary prevention.

Methods

We will conduct oral, head, and neck cancer screening events at multiple selected locations: Camillus House, a non-profit serving the downtown Miami homeless population, the Center for Haitian Studies clinic in Little Haiti, and the Miami Rescue Mission clinic that assists the underserved community in Overtown. Utilizing the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center's Gamechanger mobile clinic, we will also perform screening events at local Miami parks, targeting communities facing significant health disparities and cancer burdens. Lastly, we are also planning educational events on head and neck cancer and otolaryngology and medicine as careers at nearby high schools. We will be focusing these talks on non-HPV-related cancers as we have presented information on HPV and HPV-related cancers to these groups at prior events. Our team consists of

a head and neck surgeon (Dr. Zoukaa Sargi) and other otolaryngology faculty, University of Miami/Jackson Health System otolaryngology residents and fellows, University of Miami medical students, language interpreters, speech language pathologists, and nursing staff. Flyers will be sent to each screening site to advertise the screening event. At each screening site, medical students will conduct a comprehensive history to identify risk factors for head and neck cancer such as a history of tobacco use, alcohol use, family history of head and neck cancer, personal history of cancer, and dental care. Following the history, an otolaryngology resident, fellow, or faculty member will perform a physical exam. Medical student patient navigators will be on site to ensure appropriate follow-up care at the Jackson Memorial Hospital ENT clinic for participants who are identified as being at a higher risk for head and neck cancer or who need further evaluation. Nursing team members will help coordinate any necessary referrals. Our team will provide all participants of the screening events with information on obtaining a Jackson Card, which allows uninsured or low-income residents of Miami-Dade County to obtain free or reduced-cost health care services from the Jackson Memorial Health System. Screening event participants will also receive informational pamphlets with educational content from the American Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (<https://www.headandneck.org>).

Expected Outcomes/Impacts

After the screening events, our leadership team will analyze participant demographics collected at the events to evaluate the effectiveness of our advertising campaign toward higher risk populations. Our team will also assess whether the locations we chose for our screening events effectively targeted populations at higher risk for head and neck cancer mortality by measuring the frequency of detection of participants with early stages of disease. Higher risk participants will receive support from our patient navigators and nursing staff to ensure proper follow-up care. With these screening events, we hope to maximize the early detection and management of head and neck cancer in vulnerable populations and to gain a better understanding of the characteristics and needs of these communities. We also aim to provide education to the local community on the early warning signs and prevention of head and neck cancer and raise awareness of this disease within higher risk populations. Much of this information may benefit high school-aged children, aimed at reducing behavioral risk factors before they begin.

Estimated Cost/Funding

The estimated cost of this project is \$1,000. \$300 will be allocated towards medical supplies such as gloves, tongue blades, mirrors, gauze, and hand sanitizer. \$200 will be used to buy hygiene products like toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and sunscreen for event participants. We anticipate \$300 will be allotted for promotional and educational materials including flyers and printing of educational brochures and pamphlets. Approximately \$200 will be spent on translation services and in-person interpreters. This project will also use leftover funds from a \$1000 award grant from the Wawa Foundation to provide food and drinks to event participants, who are attending screening clinics and educational events in areas of Miami-Dade County where many residents struggle with food insecurity and housing instability.

References

1. United States Census Bureau QuickFacts. Accessed February 22, 2025.
<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/miamidadecountyflorida/POP060210>.
2. Florida Department of Health. FL Health Charts. Accessed February 22, 2025.
<https://www.flhealthcharts.gov/ChartsDashboards/rdPage.aspx?rdReport=NonVitalIndGrp.Dataviewer&cid=9774>.
3. Karanth SD, Akinyemiju T, Walker CJ, et al. The Intersectionality between Race, Ethnicity, and Residential-Level Socioeconomic Status in Disparities of Head and Neck Cancer Outcomes: A SEER Study. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev*. 2023 Apr 3;32(4):516-523. doi: 10.1158/1055-9965.EPI-22-1167.