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Decreasing Inappropriate Usage of the Emergency Department (Creating alliances to deliver population health to seasonal workforce)

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Decreasing Inappropriate Usage of the Emergency Department



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Background

- There are over 45 million people working in the fish production industry worldwide, 60,000 of those workers are here in Alaska. A study by Garcia & de Castro, 2017 found that seasonal fish processing workers were at an increased risk for musculoskeletal injuries, sleep disruption, isolation and boredom while Jopata & Jeebhay, 2013 found that seasonal fish processors are at an increased risk for occupational induced allergies & asthma. While Kehoe, Marsche & Vandergeest, 2017 revealed that the seasonal fish processing workforce is vulnerable to exploitation and abuse; lack clear pathways to permanent residency; and are often manipulated in the recruitment process. Gaps in literature identified a lack of interventions to protect and prevent these different disease conditions and identify interventions that address and anticipate this populations vulnerabilities & needs.

Purpose

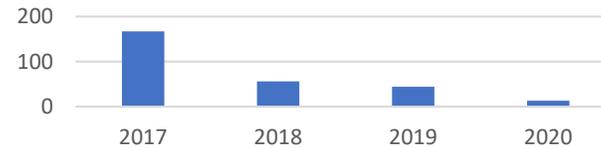
- Study was initiated to prevent inappropriate emergency department visits and subsequent surges that have dire impacts on rural healthcare infrastructure.

Methods

- Longitudinal Study
- Seasonal Workforce/Fish Processing Population
- On-site health resource orientation, sexually transmitted infection clinics w/ treatment. Electronic health record, surveys, health questionnaires and in person interviews were also used to collect data.
- Engaging workforce in healthy behaviors (i.e. rollergang, crochet club, adult learning opportunities).



Emergency Department Visits, per year, by Seasonal Workforce...



Results

- Seasonal fish processing alliance was formed in 2017, including members of public health, mental health. Since then the alliance has grown to include; local college, pharmacy, dentist, physicians, a spiritual leader, physical therapist & nutritionist.
- 69% decrease in emergency department utilization by seasonal fish processing population (2017-2019, 2020 operations still underway).
- Seasonal fish processing workforce more informed of local health resources and points in which to access these resources.
- Seasonal orientation provided including basic techniques to care for yourself while here in Valdez.

Discussion/ Implications

- Interventions were basic and engaging.
- Knowledge and language barriers identified and addressed through multi-lingual surveys and questionnaires.
- To best anticipate the needs of the seasonal workforce it is imperative to survey each member upon arrival. This creates an opportunity to build relationships and address needs before they become emergent.
- To best serve this population local health resources must forge strong relationships with local fish processing plants.
- Due to uncontrollable variability from season to season, (i.e. pounds of fish, domestic vs. international recruitment it is difficult to pinpoint what variables are driving these decreases in emergency department visits.

References

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