

## **Patient Safety Education Increases Patient-Centered Care for Day Laborers of Nassau County**

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The PULSE of NY Patient Safety project, working with day laborers from Nassau County, for 18 months through June 2015, addressed the needs of immigrant day laborers, specifically the men that CoLoKi, Inc. serves, in critical issues of health literacy and patient safety. CoLoKi operates the Freeport Trailer, which provides an accessible and safe place for local day laborers while offering many programs and services to ease their daily struggles. This project was made possible with the support of the LIUU Fund. The Fund's mission is to build and energize a community of progressive social change activists, and to support prophetic voices in vulnerable communities who speak out against injustices —often in unsafe environments and at personal risk and sacrifice.

The chosen population for this project is extremely vulnerable for reasons that include poor language skills and for many, a lack of legal residence status. These issues often result in the day laborers not seeking medical care or putting off needed care. In developing a curriculum to include health literacy, patient safety, and navigation of the healthcare system, and providing educational workshops, PULSE educated and empowered the day laborers. Low health literacy is generally associated with health inequalities, poorer health, a greater risk of hospitalization and more costly care. The anticipated outcome for this project was reached and there was a change in the day laborers' behavior regarding healthcare and treatment.

Of the 55 project participants, 14 participated in the follow-up survey.

Q. "Did your participation in the patient safety training change how you view patient safety?"

A: 100% said it did.

Additional comments:

- Learned a lot about the importance of following instructions with any medication.
- Learned how to ask questions regarding medications.
- Learned about the importance of asking for an interpreter.
- Learned to ask the doctor about health conditions, and to ask questions if they did not understand what they have been told.
- Helped to be more assertive.

Seven of the participants had either visited a clinic or hospital themselves or had an immediate family member do so in the previous six months. Several men said that they were now better prepared to ask questions about their health conditions and medications, and one shared that he told the doctor he did not want to continue taking the medication because he was experiencing serious side effects. One gentleman described how he had advocated for his brother when who was hospitalized.

Participants also:

- Asked the doctor what should or should not be eaten to control cholesterol.
- Asked why a blood sample was needed.
- Asked what would happen if he stopped taking a prescription.
- One gentleman brought his medications with him to his appointment.

All the survey participants responded that since attending the patient safety training, they were taking better preventative care of themselves. These measures included eating healthier, following prescription directions better, being more assertive in their and/or their families' healthcare appointments, being more aware of patient safety and patients' rights.

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