WHAT'S IN A HEALTH FAIR?

HOW DO I PLAN FOR ONE?

KEYS TO SUCCESS

FREE HEALTH SCREENINGS

BRINGING WELLNESS TO THE COMMUNITY
The purpose of a health fair is many-fold. A health fair serves to bring members of a community together to provide health care information and screening with the objective of encouraging a healthier lifestyle among individuals and communities. The way an organization goes about accomplishing this goal varies from group to group. Thus, this document is by no means the absolute blueprint to executing a successful health fair. Rather, it is a starting point that hopefully allows organizations to inject their own creative ideas to better meet the specific needs and goals of their community and health fair, respectively.
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F O R  T H E  C O M M U N I T Y
HEALTH FAIR OBJECTIVES

It should come of no surprise to you, being an SNMA member, that we have a great commitment to meet the needs of underrepresented/underserved communities across the world. In the United States alone, minorities, namely Blacks and Latinos, continue to be disproportionately affected by preventable and/or treatable medical conditions such as obesity, diabetes, hypertension, HIV/AIDS, and preventable infections. Many of this can be attributed to minorities’ decreased access to care and to the persistent racial/ethnic biases that plague many of America’s health care providers. According to SNMA’s mission, the health fair conducted by your chapter should strive to meet the following goals as a minimum:

1) Provide health screenings, counseling, education, and RESOURCES for those with limited access to care

2) Promote healthy living in our communities

3) Facilitate the connection between the residents and resources of our communities.

In summary, in accordance with the overarching mission of SNMA, our health fairs should strive to “address the needs of underserved communities

HEALTHY PEOPLE HEALTH FAIR: APRIL PROTOCOL
WHAT'S IN A HEALTH FAIR?

HEALTHY PEOPLE = HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Think of a health fair as a central resource for the promotion of healthy living – where it all comes together. Below is a list of some of the functions that a health fair should have.

• **Screening:** There should be screening for basic physiological diseases that can be diagnosed in a primary care setting. In addition, free immunizations for children and adults may be offered.
  - Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Bone Density, Glucose, Glaucoma, Immunizations

• **Preventative Health Counseling:** In the same vein as basic screening, the organization putting on the health fair should be very conscious about providing EDUCATION. That is education in terms of knowledgeable educators and informative sessions, pamphlets, etc. Remember, someone can be screened for diseases and provided immunizations - however, if there is no lasting education, you have to question the utility and validity of your health fair. For example, ...
  - Have local preventative cardiologists educate about the metabolic syndrome and its relation to heart disease.
  - Provide trained smoking cessation specialists to provide education and counseling.
  - AIDS awareness/prevention
  - Nutritional Eating Alternatives in the midst of communities where healthy eating options are minimal
  - Prenatal care and Teen pregnancy prevention

• **Social Work Counseling:** The psychosocial/behavioral aspect of an individual/family is intricately intertwined with their health and influences how they manage their health. For example, if one is depressed, one is less likely to monitor their blood sugars and control their diabetes. Thus, a health fair is in perfect position to provide social services such as....
  - Signing up the uninsured to Medicaid or other local low-cost health plans
  - Providing information on domestic violence and substance abuse
  - Mental Health Education: Information on depression, stress management, schizophrenia, alcoholism, bipolar disorder

• **Much more:** There are many other things that you can add to your health fair. Your health fair should include things that meet the needs of the community you are serving at the time. For example,
  - Healthy Eating/Exercise – Is obesity a huge problem in your community? If you’re in America, it probably is? Provide a menu detailing healthier ways to cook some of the favorite/common foods in that specific community. Provide creative ideas on how people can use their communities to their advantage for exercise
  - Needle/Gun Exchange Programs – Are drugs a big problem? Set up a drive to have people turn in their needles. If guns are a problem, maybe set up a gun exchange program with the help of a qualified law-enforcement agency
  - CPR demos and class-sign ups
  - Asthma program information
  - Provide a free risk factor checklist, information on health-related services available in the community and how to obtain follow-up care
  - Don’t forget the KIDS: face painting, water games, clowns
  - And of course, you’ll need food and refreshments
THE TIMELINE AND THE PLANNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW?

HEALTHY PEOPLE = HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

This part of the health fair is the most critical. As the saying goes, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The planning and timing should follow the following guideline in general:

1. Getting Started: Start planning as early as possible. In general, 3-5 months prior is more than enough time. Definitely, NO LATER than 2 months before the event. For the purposes of this document, we will use a 3-month timeline.
   - Set a date! Find out if any other health fairs are being put on around that time.
   - Secure SNMA Protocol Kit
   - Brainstorm and Decide on a theme that provides some focus and uniqueness to your fair
   - Create potential Committees: Peoples roles/ responsibilities should be clearly defined and articulated. Committees should include
     - Site logistics – set-up/clean-up, volunteer management, equipment/materials, floor plan, check-in, information with materials on follow-up care/clinics, etc.
     - Publicity/Promotion – Press releases, media, website, emails. Building community attendance through grassroots outreach at churches, schools, grocery stores, etc.
     - Participation recruitment and management – Soliciting organizations and speakers to provide services and information
     - Finance/Budgeting Committee
     - Directors/Chairpersons
       - Most importantly, begin drafting proposals/budgets necessary for funding
       - Identify advisor(s) (preferably a physician and/or public health official) and community organizations/hospitals/clinics to be your sponsors. You will probably need some sort of invitation letter for this step (most likely similar to the proposals written for funding)

2. More than 2 months before the fair
   - Secure Location: Examples include churches with large congregations, high schools, shopping center parking lot, housing development, etc.
     - Attempt to locate space free of charge, since it may be available in most communities. You should also consider your target group when deciding on location, since some places are not easily accessible for people of all ages and helpful to find those with physical disabilities. The location needs to be large enough to accommodate all the displays. Tables must be available for the displays, as well as appropriate lighting and enough electrical outlets at the site. Ensure that there is enough parking at the location, and it is out if there is anyone like a custodian who will be available at the site. Be sure the location has enough power sources for possible booth participants
   - Have budget and proposals finished
   - Order materials and supplies
   - Apply for Community Service Grant from National Community Service Committee
   - Set schedule for regular (e.g., weekly or biweekly) meetings or conference calls. Make a contact sheet for all those involved in the planning and execution of the fair.
   - Brainstorm on prominent national and local representatives to attend your health fair and thus provide it with some status and legitimacy (not to say that it isn’t legitimate without them)
   - Have a general idea on the resources/services/providers you want to invite to the fair
THE TIMELINE AND THE PLANNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW?

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3. Two Months before Fair
- Contact providers (e.g. HIV mobile truck, local insurance agencies, immunization services). Begin to identify possible organizations and health care providers to host booths at the health fair, especially in the context of your theme.
- Contact other allied health field students (e.g. dental, nursing, public health) to provide perception and help with your fair
- Begin advertising strategy
- Confirm location and any compliance obligations.

4. Six to Seven Weeks months before Fair
- Confirm providers coming to the fair.
  - Finalize the list of participants. Review the list to ensure that a range of basic services and health care information is provided.
  - Determine follow-up services for uninsured participants in case any medical problems are uncovered during the screenings.
- Begin organization of pamphlets, resources, and goods to be handed out at Fair
- Ensure that committees are on task

5. Four to Six Weeks before Fair
- Advertise, Advertise, Advertise on the front lines! Have fliers printed
  - Churches, schools, libraries, grocery stores, community centers, shelters, YMCA, soup kitchens, public housing, barbershops/salons, record stores, etc.
  - Do not forget to reach out to media such as local news and radio and newspaper
- Re-confirm materials and providers: Finalize contracts with any possible vendors, such as event venue, equipment rental company, printers, transportation, etc.
- Design floor plan and logistics and review this with representatives from that event venue
- Identify food and drink providers

6. Three to Four Weeks before Fair
- Confirm everything again (providers, supplies, food, advertising)
  - Schedule a date for representatives from each participating organization to walk through the site.
  - Send confirmation letters to all participants/providers with details of your event including suggested arrival time, contact info, site limitations, parking, etc.
- Print out floor plan and design and send it out to all participants and volunteers. Make sure you’ve included things like bathrooms, food stations, power sources, play stations, parking, etc.
- Order food and drink (have plenty of water and snacks for volunteers)
- Organize set-up and clean-up crews

7. One to Three Weeks before the Fair
- Make sure everyone is on task and up to date with their responsibilities
- Finalize all information with participants/sponsors/resource providers, etc.
- Create a checklist for the day of the event
- Keep the foot on the pedal with advertising. Revisit schools, after-day programs, Hospital ERs, grocery stores, etc.
THE TIMELINE AND THE PLANNING: WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, HOW?

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8. ONE week before the Fair
   - Walk through the event venue with the venue representative to confirm any specific participant requests such as power, a certain booth location or extra equipment.
   - Confirm arrangements and details with all vendors.
   - Buy film or disposable cameras to document the event. Consider assigning a planning committee member with few event-day responsibilities to photograph the health fair. You may want to use the photos in a newsletter, as a thank you for speakers or to show a potential funder your organizing success.
   - Assign planning committee members specific duties for the day of the event. Assignments may include information booth, check-in registration, setup/clean-up
   - Create a full-day timeline for the day of the health fair with committee member and volunteer assignments, times, responsibilities and contact information.

9. WEEK of the Health Fair
   - Make sure advertising/publicity push is in full swing
   - Make sure pamphlets and all printed resources are secured
   - Re-confirm attendance of key attendees, booths, and media/publicity outlets
   - Schedule planning meeting to make sure all last-minute details are taken care of

10. Day of the Health Fair: It’s Game Time
    - Arrive early! Do a quick run-through and refer to “day of event” checklist
    - Set-up and make sure everyone knows their tasks
    - Stay CALM!
    - Have FUN!

11. Week Following the Health Fair
    - Send thank you notes to all participants, volunteers and sponsors.
    - Process evaluations and follow-up on news coverage of the event
    - Have a celebration/party!
Health Fair Components: (* Denotes the minimum)

- Registration*
- Height and weight*
- Nutrition and fitness
- Immunizations*
- Oral health*
- Kids Corner or Children’s health*
- Women’s Health*
- Men’s Health*
- Blood pressure*
- Sexual Health and Awareness*
- Vision and Hearing
- Cholesterol screening and literature*
- Glucose Screening and literature*
- Physician review*
- Alcohol, drug, and tobacco awareness
- HIV/AIDS and STDs
- Breast Self-exam demonstration
- Poison control
- Bone marrow registry
- Social services
- Evaluation*
NUTS AND BOLTS: THE EXTRA!
HEALTHY PEOPLE = HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Suggested Materials/Equipment Checklist: Arrange for donations

- Literature
- Gloves, Sharps container
- Scale and Vision chart
- Sphygmomanometers and Stethoscopes
- Glucometers and Lancets and Test strips
- Band-Aids, Alcohol swabs, and Cotton balls
- Station identification signs
- Biohazard containers and bags
- Health fair programs
- Evaluations
- Coloring books or activities for children’s corner

Innovation and Creation:

Don’t be scared to do something different. Take a stance and follow-through. Set big goals. If you have statistics on the insured status of your community, make a goal to get x number of families or individuals insured. During the health fair, you can work to enroll uninsured children in Medicaid or the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). When parents or guardians inquire about children’s health care coverage, it is also a great opportunity to inquire about their insurance status and, if appropriate, explain the adult coverage available to them. Be creative with how you market and eventually document your event.
TIPS on having a successful FAIR

- Partner with another organization to increase attendance and participation
- Try to tie the fair to another event that targets the same population
- Make your fair stand out:
  - Invite fire department and ask them to bring a fire engine or smoke house to practice escaping from a fire.
  - Invite well-known radio host/personality or entertainment artist/celebrity if possible
  - Have prizes (e.g. restaurant certificates, record store certificates, heart healthy cookbooks, clothing from an apparel store, sports equipment etc.) such as a dance-competition, spelling-bee, jump-rope competition, poetry etc. Have a learning corner where kids can learn about their bodies and basic hygiene
  - Invite the police department and ask them to bring McGruff the Crime Dog or to provide child identification cards.
  - Invite health department to provide the immunizations
- Ensure that all participants complete health fair survey before leaving so that you can evaluate the success of the fair.
- Make sure that EVERY participant in the fair leaves with SOMETHING. Remember, education, education, education...it’s all about health promotion here!
- Solicit donations from local businesses to give away as door prizes.
Involving the Local Media in Your Health Fair (adapted from various online sources)

Local health fairs provide compelling visuals for stories and offer opportunities for effective feature stories. You will want to focus the media on the problems and issues your fair is addressing such as poor nutritional options, poor access to care, insurance status, overcrowded ERs, etc. Offer reporters opportunities to interview families with children enrolled in the programs along with local health care providers. If your health fair is at a school, you may want the school’s principal, superintendent or a school board leader to discuss the relevance of health and health care to learning. As always, you will want to select your spokespersons with care and provide media training. You may wish to have a media table at the fair with spokespersons available throughout the day. Remember to indicate that the fair is FREE to all.

Below are suggested tips for engaging the media in your health fair activities.

- Promote the event in advance through television, radio, newspaper, community calendars and school communications outlets.
- Ask reporters who cover health and metro news to attend.
- Alert photo editors to the photo opportunities available.
- Explain the range of coverage opportunities to local television producers. These include preview stories on early morning news shows; live reports during noontime newscasts; live reports during “Live at Five” newsmagazine programs; and summation stories during the nightly and evening news. Keep in mind that each of these shows, although broadcast by the same local network, may involve a different producer.
- Offer radio reporters opportunities to report live from the event or offer them sound bites recorded during the event.
- Offer to have an on-air television reporter take part in the health screenings offered at the fair in order to demonstrate the value of health care coverage.
HEALTH FAIR CHECKLIST

THE BASICS

1. Set a Date/Time/Place: 3 months
2. Organize a Committee: 3 months
3. Decide on a Theme: 3 months
4. Arrange for Providers/Resource People
5. Order Materials/Supplies: 2 months
6. Arrange for Donations/Budget Proposals
7. Arrange Displays/Floor Plan
8. Publicity/TV: 1 month
9. Follow-up Resource/People

HEALTHY PEOPLE HEALTH FAIR: APRIL PROTOCOL
THE FUTURE NEVER JUST HAPPENED.
IT WAS CREATED. - MAE JEMISON

LET'S CREATE THE FUTURE WE WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD