

Increasing Education on Advance Directive Use for End of Life Care Planning in Thermopolis, Wyoming

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Purpose

- This project aims to increase public knowledge of Advance Directives (AD) and the importance of planning for end of life care.



Background

- Thermopolis, WY is a rural town in Hot Springs County which serves a population of less than 5,000.
- Thermopolis is a large retirement community due to the mineral springs in Hot Springs State Park.
- Hot Springs County has a very large elder population.
 - HSC: 23% of residents are age 65 or older.
 - Wyoming: 13.5% of the population are age 65 or older.
- Due to the high elder population and the coinciding increase in chronic illness, end of life care planning is an enormously important topic to address.
- From interactions with community members it became apparent that there was a lack of knowledge about AD and reasons why they should be completed.

Methods

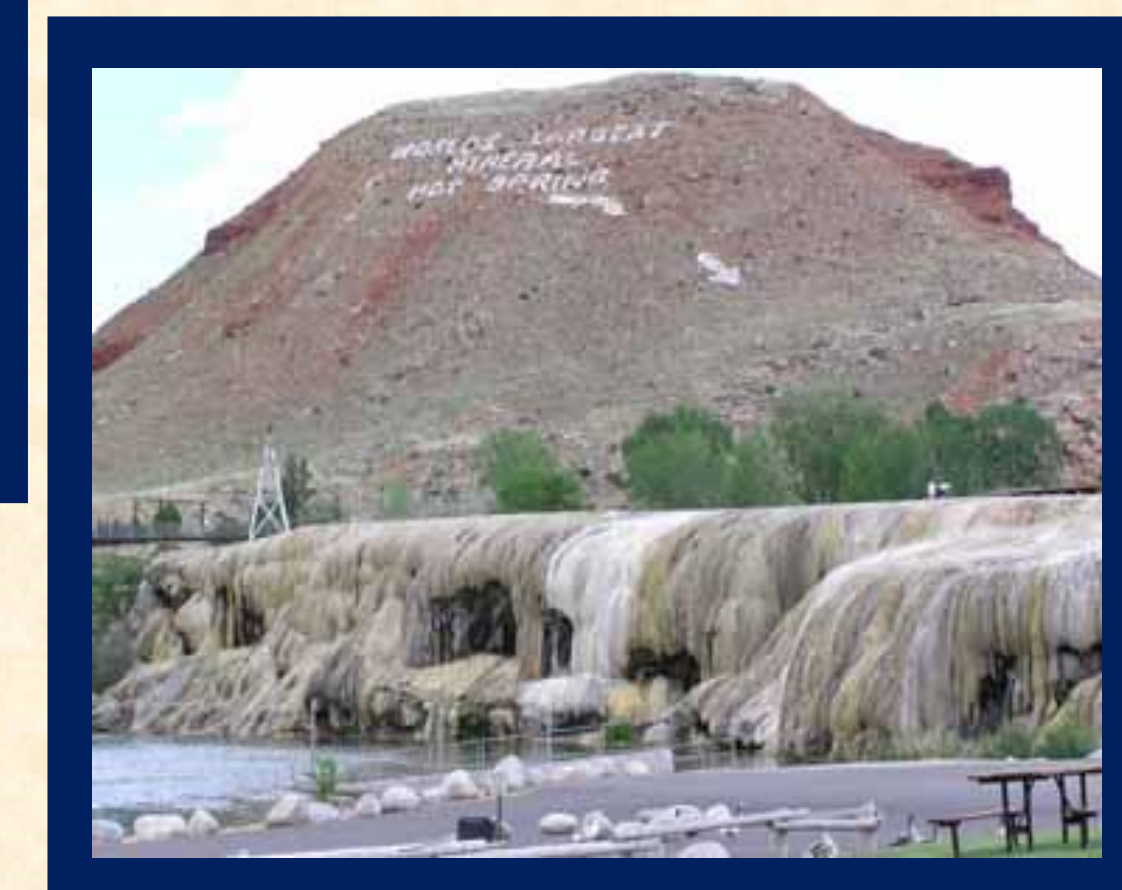
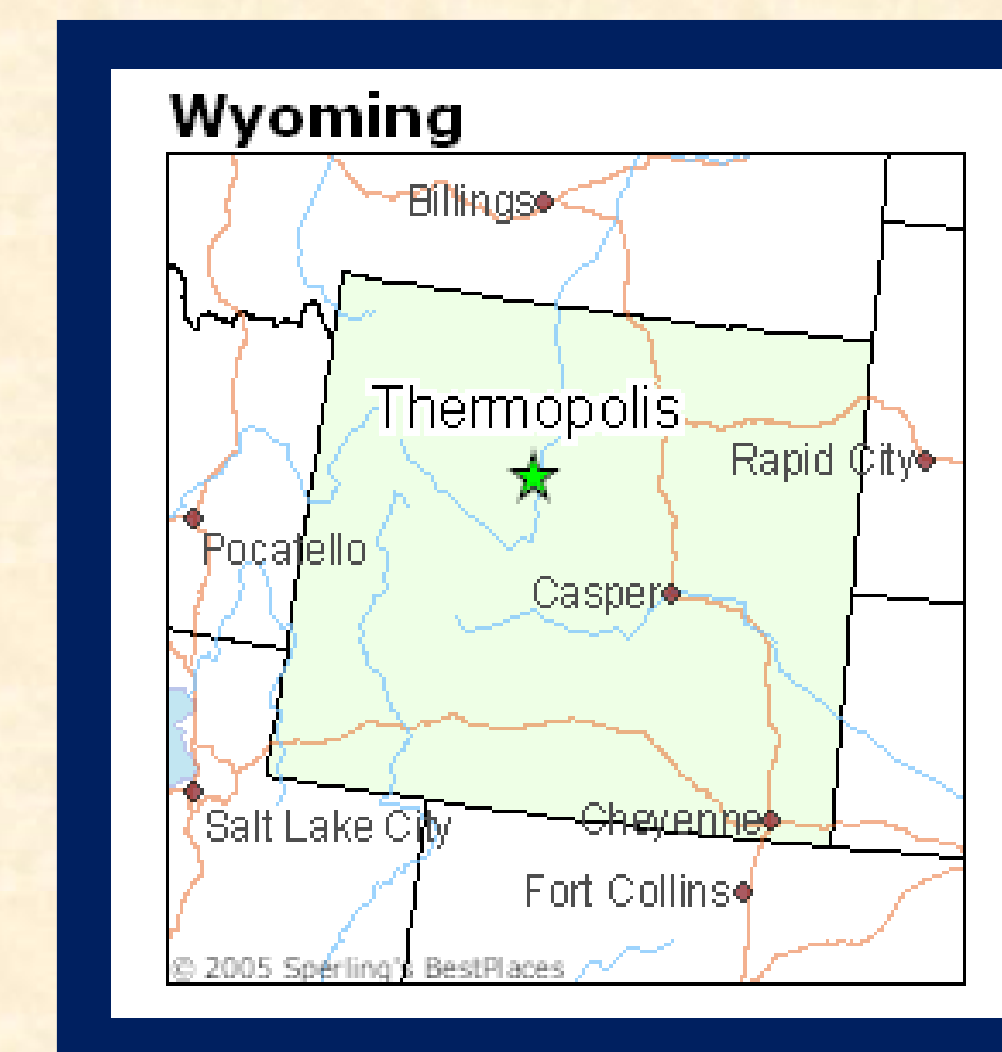
- A literature review was used to identify evidence based methods to increase AD education.
 - A multidimensional approach that included an interactive session in addition to educational handouts was shown to increase AD knowledge.
 - Having counseling services available to answer questions increased AD completion.
- Community partners with established AD training and active participation with the elderly population were identified.
 - Hot Springs County Senior Citizen Center (HSCSCC)
 - The Wyoming Pioneer Home for Assisted Living (WPH)
- A community health project was proposed to the partners that would include an interactive oral presentation, educational handouts, AD forms and to establish a counseling service.

Results

- A presentation with a question and answer session was given at HSCSCC.
 - Approximately 55 adults attended the presentation including Senior Center Staff and elder community members.
- An educational brochure and packet on AD were given to attendees and instructed to remain available at HSCSCC and the Red Rock Family Clinic.
 - The handouts contained information on:
 - Wyoming specific AD.
 - Reasons why AD are important.
 - How to complete AD.
 - Who to contact with questions.
- HSCSCC and WPH provided AD packets containing further information and forms.
- The associate care coordinator at HSCSCC agreed to become the established counseling provider.

Discussion

- The project successfully increased public education on AD use for end of life care planning. Attendees of the presentation appeared to be very enthusiastic about learning more.
- The established counseling service is this projects greatest strength. This service is expected to increase AD completion.
- The most difficult aspect of the project is to increase education for all adults in Thermopolis.
- Hopefully through elder education, discussions will occur with family members to increase interest in AD and end of life care.
- End of life care planning is incredibly important and promoting the use of AD is a great way to improve public knowledge.



Acknowledgments

- Thank you Hot Springs County Senior Citizens Center, Wyoming Pioneer Home and Red Rock Family Clinic.