

COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE: FILLING THE GAPS OF RURAL HEALTHCARE FROM THE HOME

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Hypothesis:

Powell, WY and Park county communities have a high rate of chronic disease with limited physician access. Address this problem with the use of trained Community Paramedics or EMTs, already employed by Park County, to do home visits and monitoring for the population at risk for complications from chronic disease.



Community Paramedic assesses community member to help formulate a care plan.

Background:

- Powell, WY is a farming community located in Park County, population 6,407.
- Service area for Park County dips into Big Horn County with population of 41,867 spread out over approximately 9,000 sq miles.
- Increasing population over the age of 65, with high-uninsured population at 15% (higher than the state average). Chronic conditions like heart disease are the number one reason for deaths within the region.
- Limited physician access is a problem for the population, with the average wait time at Powell Valley Clinic ranging from 31 days to 34 days for follow-up appointments

Literature Review:

- Community Paramedicine programs have been implemented in many states with positive results.
- Pilot Programs include, but not limited to:
 - Post-Discharge Short-Term Follow-Up, Mental Health Alternative Destination,” Hospice-Directed, Directly Observed Therapy for Tuberculosis.”
- In one study, patients with hypertension were able to bring down their systolic BP by an average of 7.2 mmHg; diabetic patients decreased glucose levels by about 33.7 mmol/L, and ED visits were down by 58.7% and inpatient visits by 68.8%

Community Health Project:

- Discussed expanding Community EMS program in Cody, WY and extension to Powell, WY to provide services.
- Performed literature review on different types of Community Paramedicine programs- analyzing pitfalls and benefits.
- Collaboration with Andy Gienapp, EMS Administrator for the Office of Emergency Services of Wyoming, on state implementation plans and state-approval processing.
- Contacted North Central EMS Institute for curriculum layout.
- Contacted Northwest County Community College, University of Wyoming, and LCCC to develop interest in starting a Community Paramedicine training program.

Deliverables:

- Community Paramedicine implementation checklist created for use in Park County, as well as statewide.

Next Steps:

- Continue to monitor and analyze implementation of community paramedicine program in Cody, WY with proposed implementation into the Powell, WY community during WRITE experience.
- Continued analysis of Community Paramedicine course implementation at a state level for easier access, as well as faster approval through the state for pilot program implementation.



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