Recruitment involves our community partners, along with the following targeted recruitment plan:

• Developing an educational intervention targeted toward direct service professionals working with women with disabilities;
• Implementing Healthy Women Alaska to promote cancer screening awareness, knowledge and action among direct service professionals; and
• Engaging direct service professionals to collaborate in increasing awareness and participation in health promotion/prevention activities among the women they serve.

Healthy Women Alaska is designed to meet the needs of women with disabilities in Alaska by adapting an existing curriculum* to promote cancer screening awareness, knowledge, and action among direct service professionals. Healthy Women Alaska employs a “train-the-trainer” strategy with hands-on experiences including a BSE demonstration using model kits, followed by a one-on-one instructor-guided experience with the models and a return demonstration. In addition to expanding recruitment, we anticipate direct service professionals will apply their knowledge gained from the intervention to promote participation in health promotion/prevention services among women with disabilities.


Methods

Study Design
• Mixed methods approach
• Structural barriers framework (e.g., economic, social, policy, organizational)
• Criterion-based purposive sampling
• Data collection via in-person interviews

Study Population
• Women who have a disability and are living independently in the community
• Ages 18 – 65 years
• Annual Income < $20,000
• Able to respond to questions in English
• Reside in the Anchorage area

Recruitment

The goal of our study is to identify and understand barriers to cancer screening in order to increase access to these services for women with disabilities. Using a community-based approach, the specific aims of the study are to:

1) Explore how socioeconomic status, ethnicity, living situation, location of health care providers, insurance status, type of disability, and severity of disability affect access to and participation in pelvic examinations and mammograms among low-income women with disabilities;
2) Assess how external barriers (e.g., informational, attitudinal, and environmental) affect access to and participation in cancer screening services among low-income women with disabilities; and
3) Understand the personal reasons why low-income women with disabilities participate, or do not participate, in cancer screening.

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Findings

Traditional and Non-Traditional Approaches to Recruitment (N=40)

Next Steps

The challenges of studies targeting hard-to-reach groups have been noted by multiple investigators. Low-income women who experience disabilities living in the community may be hidden from traditional recruitment activities. Creative, flexible strategies are needed to recruit participants from this important group of women. Future plans include expanding outreach to community organizations working with women with disabilities using the Healthy Women Alaska curriculum.

Healthy Women Alaska: Health communication regarding breast and cervical cancer screening for Alaskan women who experience developmental disabilities

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