Training for Diversity in Public Health Practice

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The objectives

1. To understand the need for a diverse public health workforce.
2. To explore approaches for enhancing diversity.
Why diversity in PH practice matters

• What is diversity?
  – the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact
  – In the US, mainly refers to under represented minority groups but also may involve
    • LGBT populations, geographic regions, other subgroups
    • Under reached and/or under represented

• Cancer incidence and mortality does not occur equally, in some cases large disparities

• In some cases, changes are dramatic
  – Hispanics in 2005 were 14% of the U.S. population, and could on their present course represent 32% of the nation's population by the year 2050
Primary and Secondary Dimensions of Diversity

- Gender
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Ethnic Heritage
- Sexual Orientation
- Military Experience
- Work Experience
- Socio-economic status
- Religion
- First Language
- Organizational Role and Level
- Communication Style
- Family Status
- Work/thinking Style
- Education
- Geographic Location
Benefits of Workforce Diversity & Inclusion

- Improved understanding of those you work for, with, and around
  - Particularly the public health communities we serve
- Creates a work environment that allows everyone to reach her/his full potential
- Provides multiple perspectives on problem solving
- Better performance outcomes
- Increases employee productivity
- Increased retention rates
- Boosts morale of partners and employees

- What are the role and benefits of training?
Training approaches/examples

• Eliminating Health Disparities Training Fellowships for public health practice
  – Trained 33 Fellows over a decade

• Contained five main components
  1. Worked toward a public health degree,
  2. New coursework in understanding and eliminating health disparities
  3. Experiential learning
  4. Mentored research
  5. Professional network building with African American role models

Structured Mentoring

• Apply principles of evidence-informed mentoring
  – Includes domains
    • Skill building
    • Performance feedback
    • Professional networking
    • Addressing diversity
  – And the process
    • Establish expectations
    • Maintain communication
    • Evaluate progress

• Look for established programs for practitioners
  – NCI Research to Reality Mentorship pilot program
    (https://researchtoreality.cancer.gov/mentorship)

Brownson RC. Practice-research partnerships and mentoring to foster evidence-based decision making. Prev Chronic Dis. 2014;11:E92
A few lessons/reflections

• Think carefully about what diversity means for your cancer programs and data
• For training of new practitioners, start young
• In organized training programs, build a community of trainees not just individual recruits
• Be sure trainers have backgrounds/experience similar to trainees
• Find out what your partners need/want
  – Both those we serve and those who train
  – Make strategic use of advisors
• Evaluate your training approaches
Thanks!!

Comments & questions