

Engaging Minority Communities through an Evaluation of an Atlanta Community Health Event

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Introduction

Community engagement events can be influential in developing relationships with local community members and fostering connections with other community organizations. The purpose of Morehouse School of Medicine's (MSM) Community Engagement Day is to highlight some of the crucial partnerships and collaborations with Georgia residents and external organizations in service, research, and education. In past years, MSM's Community Engagement Day has helped the community members gain an understanding of health disparities and resources that are present in the community through interactive stations and activities. Despite Community Engagement Day being an annual event, there is a lack of data to show how effective this event is in reaching the community.

Objective

The purpose of this study was to conduct a quantitative evaluation of the 2022 Community Engagement Day and analyze the efficacy of the event.

Methodology

A 13-item survey was created that attendees completed after visiting multiple vendors at the event to evaluate their experience. The survey assessed the attendees' zip code, age, vendors that they visited, and three Likert scale questions asking: How helpful was the content presented at the event?, How would you rate the quality of entertainment/interactive activities at the event?, and How likely are you to attend this event again? Lastly, an open-ended question was asked to obtain qualitative suggestions to improve the event. The survey was conducted using Microsoft Forms to ensure anonymity.

References

1. Morehouse School of Medicine, Prevention Guidance. <https://www.msm.edu/news-center/coronavirusadvisory/prevention-guidance.php> (accessed Nov 2022)
2. Pointer Pro, What's the Average Survey Response Rate? <https://pointerpro.com/blog/average-survey-response-rate/> (accessed Nov 2022)

Figure 1. Health education vendors patronized.

MSM Partners, 11	Non-profit Organizations, 7	Health Business, 5	Insurance, 3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia CEAL (3) • Clinical Research Center (11) • HealthWorks (0) • Johnson & Johnson (4) • MHC – Pediatric Lifestyle Medicine (3) • Morehouse Healthcare (12) • MSM Cancer Health Education (5) • MSM Office of Digital Learning (9) • MSM Parkinson Disease Foundation (3) • MSM Vaccine Trials Unit (10) • Project PEACH/RadX (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Academy of Dermatology (9) • CAPN/Our House (4) • Diabetes You Can Win Foundation, Inc. (4) • Pro Sisters (3) • Sister Love (HIV/AIDS & Women's Health) (2) • The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society (2) • Veterans Helping Veterans (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2LIVEwell LLC (0) • CINQCARE (5) • Fulton Board of Health (8) • Gray Global Advisors (0) • Horizon Therapeutics (1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aetna (3) • Humana (7) • United Healthcare (4)

Results/Findings

- **Demographics**
 - Approximately 100 attendees patronized the event. Nineteen participants completed the survey via email after attending (11.5% response rate). The participants' ages ranged from 18-77 years old. The participants were from seven different counties in Georgia and one in Chicago, Illinois.
- **Vendors Patronized**
 - Forty vendors were present at the event. Twenty-three of the 26 of the health education vendors were visited by respondents. For results reporting, health education vendors were further organized by the following four categories, as shown in Figure 1.
 - Of the seven personal development vendors present, the only one not visited was Essentials Insurance Group. Five reported not remembering visiting any of the vendors in this category.
 - There was only one mental health vendor, Serene Integrative Care. One person reported visiting them. The remaining 18 respondents selected "I don't remember."
 - Of the two nutrition organizations, six respondents visited Dr. FlavaSpices only, five visited Healthy Delight Cooking only, three visited both, and five did not remember.
 - Lastly, for childcare and education vendors, 9 visited STEM Education Experience, four visited Premier Academy, Inc., one visited KUTE, and eight did not remember.
- **Likert Scale Feedback**
 - Figure 2 displays the responses to the three questions with Likert scale outcomes. All 19 respondents answered each question.
- **Open Ended Responses**
 - Eleven individuals left qualitative feedback. Half of those responses were associated with the vendor type, one person commented on the vendors that were present, three commented on event timing, and three commented on policy and logistics, three commented on marketing, and one provided general positive feedback. Illustrative quotes in response to this question are in Figure 3.

Figure 2. Results of items with Likert scale responses, N=19



Figure 3. Select qualitative responses

"More advertising is needed. I would recommend having all of the vendors drop an invite on their social media on the same days and times for a waterfall effect of advertising. Have the organizations like MG Holistic Society the stage to educate people on rare disease. Put the diabetes organization on stage since our community has high levels of diabetes." -54-year-old respondent

"There were many competing events with this date that I think limited participation. I think more giveaways are needed, increased marketing platforms to get the word out, and partnering with a YMCA would be better. I also think the majority should be inside minus maybe the kid activities outside." -28-year-old respondent

"The vaccination and negative test requirement may have been a deterrent for some of the community members. In the future, it is possible to ask these individuals just to remain masked except for when consuming food or drink. Then encourage the individuals if interested to participate in the HEAL clinic teams' vaccination drive." -35-year-old respondent

Discussion

Strict policies on COVID 19 vaccination and testing were in place which may have accounted for the low attendance, also resulting in low survey participation. The survey was sent out by email to attendees who pre-registered for the event. Issues with registration on the day of the event prevented accurate attendance information from being collected. Additionally, because there was no way to confirm pre-registrant's attendance, some participants who did not attend the event may have received the survey. In the future, data should be collected upon individuals' arrival to identify whether they pre-registered for the event or not (i.e., confirming their pre-registration with a ticket or verification email). At the event, survey participation was also difficult due to the technological gap that exists with many of the community members in attendance. In the future, the survey should be available at the event or within 24 hours of the end of the event and it would also be beneficial to have a team in charge of guiding people through the survey on devices that are provided and offer paper surveys as well.

The demographic results showed that most participants lived outside of the zip code where the event was held, and some had attended in past years as well. It would be interesting to understand what brought repeat attendees back to the event. For example, an item understanding the attendees' relationship or investment to the community (i.e., West End Atlanta or MSM) to support targeted marketing for future events.

There was no social media promotion and other advertisements were not disseminated until two weeks before the event. A detailed marketing and communication timeline should be developed accounting for the 90 days leading up to the event. Additionally, working with local businesses to communicate about the event would likely garner interest, especially given the high density of businesses in the area.

Lastly, the event was scheduled on the same day as at least two other large community events. This created roadblocks and time conflicts that ultimately prevented community members from attending.

Despite limited attendance and survey responses, the results from the Likert scale items demonstrate that the event was successful in terms of attendees receiving health information, enjoying the entertainment, and believing they will attend again in the future.

Conclusion

Community engagement is essential in educating minority communities about health disparities and Morehouse School of Medicine has dedicated an annual Community Engagement Day to doing just that. With this study, MSM's Office of Community Engagement and other community programs can better understand how to best evaluate events and tailor them to their community needs. The survey allowed the team to recognize the vendors that attracted the most attendees as well as which ones did not get enough attention.