

Increasing colonoscopy rates in Caswell County



UNC
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Jarrold Suddreth, UNC SOM Class of 2021

Background

Caswell County is one of the northernmost counties in North Carolina and according to the latest census, it has a population of 22,646. It is the site of well-known agricultural establishments such as Baldwin's farm. The county seat, Yanceyville is home to Caswell Family Medical Center. This clinic has providers from different specialties: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Psychiatry, and Pediatrics. There are also specialists from academic medical centers who rent space periodically to provide care for patients in this rural setting. The patients presenting to the clinic consist of a mix of North Carolinians and individuals from nearby Danville, Virginia. Overall, the patient population grapples with similar health disparities that many other rural or underserved communities face such as hypertension and diabetes.

- Located in the northernmost part of NC,
- Multispecialty clinic for the entire county
- Population of 22,646 and a designated HPSA site



The Task



I had the distinct pleasure of spending the past summer in Caswell County, NC. My duties as a medical student were to observe, learn with a hands-on approach and to formulate a project that appertained to improving the health of the patient population. I had the to opportunity to work within each primary care specialty, with my preceptor being Dr. Denise Hunter, MD. I quickly Identified an area of need; educating older patients about the importance of their preventative colonoscopy screenings. This is a challenge that many clinics face. How do we encourage patients to undergo important preventive screenings?

Process

- What is an area of need for this population?
- Devise a plan to address this deficit
- Observe the benefit(s) of the plan

Implementation

Caswell Family Medical Center had already established a great way to communicate with patients, whether it be through educational materials or instruction from the doctor. The use of handouts also appeared to be a patient favorite in this clinic. During my final weeks an educational packet was put together, explaining in simple terms the "What, When, Why, and How" of colonoscopy screening. The goal is to target patients who are eligible for the screening at their regular check-up.



•Goals and Observation

The primary endpoint of this experience was to inform patients of the importance of their colonoscopy screening. Ultimately, it is the patient's choice and the details in the educational material allowed them to make an informed decision about the traditional procedure or new modalities such as Cologard®. Unfortunately, due to limited time It is not possible to see the resulting data. This project should be continued in the future to see the extent of its effect.

In Summary

- Project must be continued to see meaningful results
- Allows patient to make an informed decision and educates them about alternative modalities