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Interim Report 2

Specific Activities of Involvement

Much of these past 5 weeks have been quite similar to my first several weeks outlined in the interim report 1. I have attended many Alliance to HEAL meetings and I am finally starting to feel like I understand our community resources and practices. I have started to work on the resource guide again after linking up with Great Rivers 211 and getting feedback on my original work. After this preceptorship is over, I believe the guide will be one of my biggest achievements as I have put a lot of work into it. I have also created an infographic for the Alliance's 2019 updates and included all the data and work the coalition has done in the past year. We began working with the CAST assessment in one of the work groups that requires us to locate our county's population demographics and input them into a tool to see what community resources we should have to help mitigate risk and use of illicit substances. Working with that assessment was challenging but overall a good experience to see how information like that can be utilized in the community.

I was able to attend 2 big events in these past 5 weeks. The first one is being able to witness Governor Evers sign the HOPE (Heroin, Opiate, Prevention, and Education) legislation into law on March 3rd, which included 4 separate bills pertaining to substance use in Wisconsin. They will help expand access to safe recovery housing, extend Wisconsin's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, expand access to MAT in our correctional facilities, and help remove barriers to Recovery Coaches. This event was special for me for a few reasons. The first one

being that I got to meet our governor, along with Representative Jill Billings and Senator Jennifer Shilling, who were all champions for this legislation. Second, substance use disorder and recovery hits home for me as I have this happening within my family right now. Living in a state that is actively trying to help the situation gives me hope for my relative and everyone else dealing with it in their own life. The second event I was able to attend was Viterbo's VOICE Summit on March 13th. This event lasted from 8am to 4pm on Viterbo's campus where I got to listen to many professionals working in the opioid and illicit drug use field. Though it was a long day I was able to learn so much from everyone who presented about best practices in our area.

Some smaller activities I have also been involved in while at the health department is attending the Safe Routes to School Liaison meeting and starting to complete ICS 100 and 200. The liaison meeting was beneficial for me to understand what goes into Safe Routes and how it is run at each school. ICS 100 and 200 are the beginning courses through FEMA for Incident Command System resources and how it is run in times of disaster. This turned out to be in good timing as the health department ended up mobilizing their incident command response team for the COVID-19 epidemic, so I had a more foundational understanding of what was going on.

Changes that have occurred

Due to COVID-19, a lot has changed in the past 2 weeks for me at the health department. I was on vacation March 18-22, which resulted in me being self-isolated for the following 2 weeks (week 1 completed today) due to some potential contact with a COVID case. Because of this, I am currently working from home for these 2 weeks, and it has been an adjustment. Everyone has been very flexible with the work and it's becoming easier as the days go on. Once my 2nd week of isolation is over, I will be able to return to the health department

and help in the COVID call response center, taking calls from community members and assisting in any way possible there. I am very excited to be able to be a part of La Crosse County's work to resolve this outbreak.

Areas of Responsibility

I think I have been working in most of the Areas of Responsibilities throughout this experience. I have definitely been doing the most work in Area VI: Serve as a Health Education/Promotion Resource Person with all my work in the resource guide and community events. I think I could do more work in Area IV, as I haven't done a lot of evaluation and research regarding Health Education. But I do know of an upcoming project that will hopefully get me more involved in that Area of Responsibility.

Positive Aspects

Some positive aspects of my experience so far is getting recognition for the work I have been doing. Al is always good at telling the workgroups or even the VOICE Summit attendees on my work and that I am valued here. Becky has also been good at that, and it makes me feel important though I am just an intern.

Problems or Issues

I currently have no issues.

Recommendations

I don't have many recommendations yet, but I do have a couple of minor ones. The first one would be to ensure the new intern is given a proper tour of the building or even just the Health Department. My first couple of days were interesting and included me getting very lost just trying to find the bathrooms or anyone's office. My second recommendation would be that if

the intern is working with a supervisor that has a ton of off-site meetings, that they be set up with a laptop station and not desktop. I have managed so far, but at first it was very frustrating seeing the other interns with laptops who never really left their desk, while I was going all over the place for meetings but did not have a laptop to use. I've been told that this can be changed, but I am so far into my preceptorship that it didn't seem necessary anymore. But making sure that is figured out right away would be beneficial.

Conclusion

Overall, I think the COVID-19 outbreak has really shaken things up for me at the health department. I am grateful they want to keep me on and working throughout my isolation and will welcome me back right away after the 2 weeks to help out. This obviously wasn't planned, and it has changed many things for my last semester at UWL, but I am happy to be experiencing it with the La Crosse County Health Department.