

Farm to Exam Table: Promoting Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Access to Quality Healthcare

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DEFINING THE POPULATION



What is a migrant?

► A person who moves or travels from one State or Country to another.

What is an immigrant?

► A foreigner who entered a Country with the intention of staying long term.

GREAT LAKES BAY HEALTH CENTERS

- **THEN:** Great Lakes Bay Health Centers began as a MIGRANT health clinic in 1968 with a Saginaw County Health Department grant to provide health care to migrant farm workers in the Tri-city area.



Great Lakes Bay Health Centers

- **NOW:** We are the largest of 42 FQHC's in Michigan. We provide a wide array of services including primary care, dental, behavioral health, optical, radiology, women's care, pharmacy, and physical therapy.





DEFINING OF TERM AGRICULTURE

NCFH Agricultural worker identification: Farming in all its branches, including

- Cultivation and tillage of soil.
- Production, growing, and harvesting of any commodity grown on, in, or as an adjunct to or part of a commodity grown in or on, the land.
- Any practice performed by a farmer or on a farm incident to or in conjunction with an activity described in clause.
- Dairy, poultry, livestock, and aquaculture.

(Heath Center Tool Box - NATIONAL CENTER FOR FARMWORKER HEALTH (ncfh.org))

Classification of Agricultural

Difference between migrant & seasonal farmworker?

► Migratory farmworker –

Principal employment is agriculture.

Employed within the last twenty-four months.

Establish a temporary home for the purposes of working in agriculture.

► Seasonal farmworker -

Principal employment is agriculture on a seasonal basis.

Employed within the last twenty-four months.

Has NOT established a temporary home to work in agriculture.

► Aged/Disabled -

Former migratory agricultural workers unable to work in agriculture due to age or disability.



DEFINING THE POPULATION

➤ **The most recent National Agricultural Workers Survey (2019-2020) report:**

(<https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/migrant-health>)

- 66% of agricultural farmworkers are male.
- The average age of a farmworker is 41 years old.
- 36% of farmworkers are U.S. citizens.
- 44% of all farmworkers in the U.S. are unauthorized workers.

➤ **Limited education and literacy**

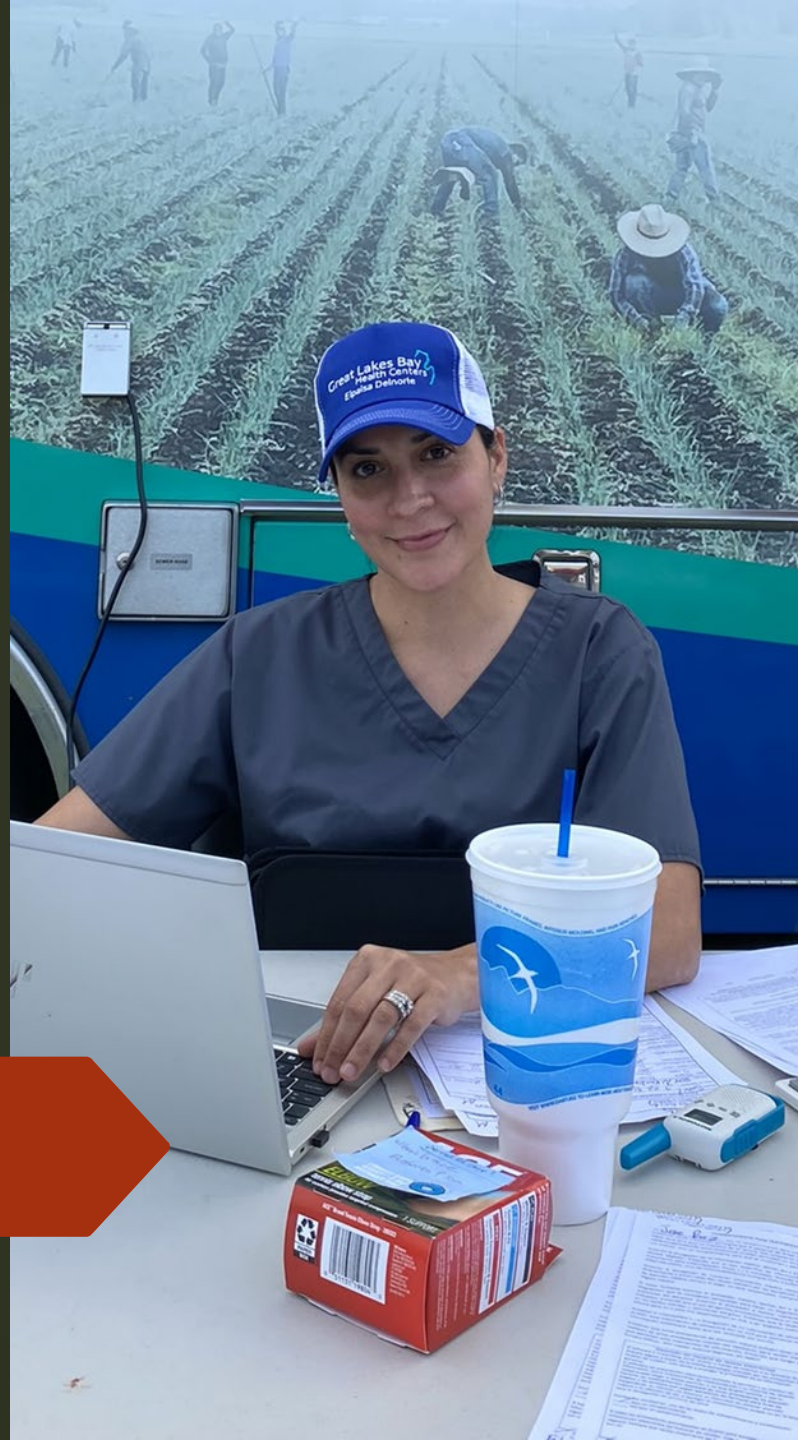
- Average 8th grade (<https://nfwm.org/farm-workers/farm-worker-issues/education/>)
- 10% finish high school

➤ **A growing minority do not speak Spanish or English** (<https://www.farmworkerjustice.org/blog-post/indigenous-farmworkers-face-unique-barriers-to-healthcare/>)

GLBHC Migrant Program

- ▶ Mobile migrant program/team
 - ▶ May through October (Michigan agricultural season) and adjusting to mother nature
 - ▶ Service 20 counties
 - ▶ Travel over 20,000 miles serving ag-workers
- ▶ Staff is primarily bilingual and seasonal
- ▶ Program Home base office and storage facility is in Bay City, MI.
- ▶ GLBHC corporate is Saginaw, MI.

Registration Intake



Mobile Unit (Intake Area and Bathroom)



Mobile Unit (Provider Office)



Day of Service

- ▶ Arrive 4:30pm (unless weather or schedule permits earlier)
- ▶ Patient registration for desired services
- ▶ Incentives for registering
- ▶ Services
 - ▶ Medical screenings
 - ▶ Vital signs, weight
 - ▶ Select point of care tests such as glucose and total cholesterol checks.
 - ▶ Doctor visit
 - ▶ Cost \$10
 - ▶ Include acute and chronic care concerns and are required for any prescriptions
 - ▶ Commonly prescribed medications are available for \$4 per script or ordered through desired pharmacy
 - ▶ Dental services cost \$40 and include cleanings (referral to dentist if needed)
- ▶ Service operations continue until the last patient is seen which is often 11pm-midnight

Migrant Outreach Best Practice to a Successful Program

➤ Building Relationships

- Crew leaders, farmers, growers
- Informing them of services and program operation
- Staying informed of workers arrival in service area
- Post anticipated service dates on social media



Create a Communication Structure

Communication is key

- Communicating with workers via Social media (Messenger, WhatsApp), patient assistance line or texting

Meeting workers work schedule

- Wednesdays/Thursdays
- Evening hours
- Occasional weekends (events)



Elpaisa Delnorte

2.2K friends



+ Add to

Why our care is unique?

- **Conexión** (Connection)
- **Comunicación** (communication)
- **Confianza** (Trust)
- **Colaboración** (Collaboration)





Understanding Barriers to Healthcare Unique to Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers

Understanding Unique Healthcare Barriers

- Owning OUR barriers to providing quality care
 - ❑ Language
 - ❑ Hours of operation
 - ❑ Affordability
 - ❑ Overemphasis on Quantity and Efficiency
 - ❑ Requiring extensive intake information
 - ❑ Quantity of questions
 - ❑ Quality of questions (complicated and personal - even asking home address can be complicated)

Understanding Unique Healthcare Barriers

- Owning OUR barriers to providing quality care
 - Biases, Beliefs, and Attitudes
 - Lack of Knowledge/Unawareness
 - Types of care needed
 - Alternative health practices (sobador, use of topical alcohol)
 - Cultural medical problems (e.g., se entra aire, empacho, diabetes de susto, corage)
 - Assumptions
 - Uneducated and unintelligent
 - No access to resources or quality medical care in country of origin

Understanding Healthcare Barriers Unique to MSFW Population

- ▶ Barriers related to culture/national differences
 - Language
 - Feeling unwelcome
 - Not wanting to be a nuisance
 - Fear of hostility
 - Physical or psychological aggression
 - Cultural avoidance of hostility or conflict

Understanding Healthcare Barriers Unique to MSFW Population

- Barriers related to culture/national differences
- Completely different healthcare system
 - Insurance
 - What different kinds of care are available/appropriate?
 - Urgent care vs Emergent care
 - Primary care vs Specialist care
 - Where to find services
 - How to access services (walk-in vs scheduling appts)
 - How to get medications (OTC vs Rx)

Understanding Healthcare Barriers Unique to MSFW Population

► Barriers related to rural and farming communities

- Extended work hours (limited time to cook/exercise/relax)
- Transportation
- Cell phone/internet service (isolation, poor access to information)
- Inability to take time off (for appointment or recovery)
 - Related to nature of farm work
 - Related to visa status
- Access to food (diet related), OTC medications, OTC braces/splints at pharmacies or stores



Providing Healthcare to MSFW in a Traditional Primary Care Office

Front Desk & Call Centers

- ▶ Initial encounter
- ▶ Barriers
 - ▶ Language
 - ▶ Attitude
 - ▶ Helpfulness

“You never get a second chance to make a first impression”

Office Culture

- ▶ Schedule flexibility
- ▶ Walk ins
- ▶ Facilitate care for benefit of patient
- ▶ Filling out registration and financial paperwork
- ▶ Attitude

Clinical Staff

- Explaining measurements
 - Lbs vs kg
 - Celsius vs Fahrenheit
- Explain workflow
 - Ex. Step on scale and face wall
- Wording medical history
 - May come out as a story and not a list
- Chronic diagnosis are sometimes considered acute (ex. HTN, DM)
- Medication list is current, not what they are supposed to be taking

Providers

- HPI as a story with irrelevant details
- Respect what patient thinks is wrong even if you think it is unusual
- Sensitivity to wording
 - May react to being labeled “depressed” - use anxious, tired
- Recognize differences in measurement parameters
 - PHQ9 may not work as well - rephrase questions and ask about sleep
- Give the patient something to take home
 - Ex. Vitamins, Tylenol, ibuprofen, omeprazole
- Take complaints seriously
- Get familiar with agriculture/farming diagnosis
 - Ex. Parsley rash, lettuce rash, chemical rash
- Be aware of health beliefs/practices from other countries
 - Parasite cleanse

GLBHC

- ▶ Transportation
- ▶ Extended clinic hours
- ▶ Having resources for uninsured
 - ▶ Lab
 - ▶ Vision
 - ▶ Dental
 - ▶ X-rays
 - ▶ Slide Fee Scale
 - ▶ Medications



How to take the first steps

- Address bias and attitudes
 - Systemically (? Staff meetings, company meetings, board meetings)
 - Individually (Confront concerns for prejudice)
- Have a policy in place for MSFW
 - Interpretation
 - Sliding fee scale
 - Consider walk in appointments
 - Transportation
- Consider hours of operation (? Seasonal changes)
- Find a couple of champions – including in admin



How to take the first steps

- ▶ Find the farms and connect with the farmers
- ▶ Visit the workers (leave contact information)
- ▶ Consider grant funding



Questions?