

Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control Grant Evaluation

2001 Final Report: Executive Summary

Program Background

In 1994, the Centers for Disease Control's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control launched a formal effort to coordinate and integrate cancer prevention and control programs across categorical boundaries. Their consensus definition states comprehensive cancer control is "an integrated and coordinated approach to reduce cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality through prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation" (Abed, Reilley, Butler, Kean, Wong, and Hohman, 2000, p. 80). The goal of the national comprehensive cancer control program is to use a systematic approach, based upon data, to determine how to address the total continuum of cancer control. The Centers for Disease Control have funded various states to develop and/or implement a comprehensive cancer plan that would address the total cancer continuum. Eventually at least 40 states will be included in the national program with the goal to impact all 50 states and territories of the United States. Texas, which already had a state cancer plan, was funded in 1998 to implement its plan.

The Texas Comprehensive Cancer Control (TCCCP) grant is in its 3rd year of operation. In March 2001, the Texas Cancer Council (TCC) contracted an evaluation with The University of Texas at Austin School of Nursing on behalf of the TCCCP. An evaluation team was contracted in mid-2001 and asked to look at progress to date, particularly in building an effective comprehensive cancer control coalition in Texas. The evaluation is designed to collect

information that key program stakeholders can use to understand how well the program is working and how it might be improved.

In cooperation with the Battelle Corporation, the CDC developed a conceptual model to explicate their vision for the development of comprehensive cancer control. This model has informed the current evaluation by suggesting areas of inquiry.

This model includes the following elements:

- Enhance Infrastructure in the state
- Build Partnerships
- Utilize data and research
- Mobilize support
- Assess/Address Cancer Burden
- Conduct Evaluation

Methods

The evaluation used multiple methods, including:

- a review of materials developed over the course of the project
- observation of Coalition meetings
- interviews with both Coalition members and individuals not associated with the Coalition
- reviews of materials and discussions with others in the nation who are involved in comprehensive cancer control activities.

Major Findings

- Texas has taken the first steps to create a statewide comprehensive cancer control coalition; however, Coalition members have been unclear about the purpose and direction of the Coalition.
- Many members of the Coalition have worked together before in cancer control and appreciate each other's expertise. However, most thought the Coalition should be expanded and could identify groups that were not represented.
- While almost all those interviewed supported the Texas Cancer Plan, there is no indication that involvement in the Coalition has influenced priorities or activities of the members or their agencies.
- Coalition members point to the Cost of Cancer report as the Coalition's single most important accomplishment. Along with the data gaps report and the inventory of cancer resources, it represents an important data utilization activity, but much remains to be done to coordinate data resources in Texas.
- While Coalition members have a strong sense of ownership and investment in cancer control and the work of their various organizations, the same sense of "buy-in" for the Texas Comprehensive Cancer Coalition is not so apparent.
- Cancer control activities are evident throughout Texas, but not necessarily connected to TCCCP.
- To date, the TCCCP has not developed a campaign to increase public awareness of its existence. This lack of public awareness can make it difficult to mobilize support for comprehensive cancer control.

Recommendations

- There are a number of organizations throughout the state that are involved in cancer control. Ways must be found to involve them more directly in this comprehensive cancer control enterprise.
- The Coalition Web Site could provide a clearinghouse where local comprehensive cancer control efforts are highlighted (and become part of the Coalition effort). Other dissemination vehicles to consider might include a newsletter or conference presentations.
- Clarification of roles and responsibilities and a simplified system to fund Coalition activities would greatly enhance the Coalition's effectiveness and partner buy-in. The creation of an executive committee for the Coalition is a positive step in this direction.
- If the Texas Cancer Plan is to be the basis for the Coalition's priority setting activities, this relationship between the Coalition and the Texas Cancer Plan must be clarified.
- The Coalition must develop a campaign to increase public awareness of its existence. Part of the public relations efforts also need to encompass a coordinated strategy for seeking funds outside the grant.

Conclusions

The Coalition has a unique presence. It is one of the few organizations that can cut across agency lines, interact in political, social, and economic circles, and facilitate others doing their jobs effectively. What has been missing, according to our interviews, is clarity about its role and purpose, priorities, strategic planning, and action steps tied to data and specific timelines. The challenge is to direct the talents and resources of the partners into "ownership" of a new vision for comprehensive cancer control in Texas.