



An Innovative Approach to Addressing Neighborhood Safety: How One Simple Idea Led to a “Brighter” Future for Detroit

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Introduction

Safety is a basic human need; one that is often taken for granted. As Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) prepared nurses, it is important to recognize all of the components that contribute to the health of a population. **If people do not feel safe leaving their homes, it is unlikely they will present to the health care provider’s office for care.** This project highlights an innovative way to improve safety and positively impact health outcomes in an underserved community.

Problem

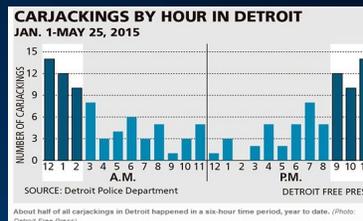
- There were 485 carjacking incidents in Detroit, MI between January 1 and November 17, 2014; half occurred in streets or alleys (Detroit Free Press, 2014).
- **Residents voiced concerns regarding inadequate alley lighting at a district meeting in November 2014. The electric company agreed to replace the lighting for free, but the community would be responsible for ongoing utility costs.**
- In a district where 36% of the residents live in poverty (Data Driven Detroit, 2013), the \$180 annual cost would be difficult to sustain.
- Between January 1 - May 24th 2015 there were 153 carjackings; with over half occurring between 9pm and 2:59 am (Detroit Free Press, 2015).

Review of the Literature

- **Poor lighting can lead to population health concerns as the cumulative exposure to violence can impact long term health and safety of children.** For example, youths with >5 types of violence exposure are 4.63 times as likely to experience poor health as those without the exposure (Boyn-ton-Jarrett, Ryan, Berkman & Wright, 2008).
- The presence of any reported incivility, such as poor lighting, is a strong predictor of residents’ concerns for neighborhood safety (Pitner, Yu & Brown, 2012)
- **Dark alleys provide an opportunity for crimes that otherwise might not have been planned** (Black & Park, 2012)

Recommendation

In order to address the community’s safety concerns, an initiative was designed that would allow for the adoption of alley lights by businesses or individuals.



Incorporating DNP-Essentials

- **Essentials I and III:** Both nursing and public health research was analyzed to determine the nature and significance of the health problem. Then, an innovation was designed that was mindful of the ethical principles of justice and fidelity.
- **Essential II:** Effective leadership was used to convince the City Councilwoman and the electric company of the merit of the recommendation.
- **Essential IV:** With a background in informatics, the DNP student was able to articulate how the electric company could effectively execute the project.
- **Essential V:** Since nearly all policy directly or indirectly impacts health, it was clear that a policy change was needed that would address the community’s safety and overall well-being.
- **Essentials VI and VII:** Safety and security are basic human needs. Using interprofessional collaboration to address these needs can help improve the health of the population; allowing residents to feel safe leaving their homes to exercise as well as seek health care.
- **Essential VIII:** Advanced nursing skills were used to assess the needs of the community, develop a plan to address the identified needs, and guide individuals and groups through the transition.

Implementation

- The goal is to have the first lights lit in 2015. Once the district is fully lit, the program can be implemented in other city districts.



Future Directions

The district will track carjacking incidents to evaluate whether the Adopt an Alley Light program was effective in improving safety.

References

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