Meeting the Health Needs of the Medically Underserved at the Hartland Apartments

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Hartland Apartment Complex predominantly houses individuals with low incomes, including a significant number of immigrants and refugees. The University/Neighborhood Partners (UNP) determined that a number of residents expressed concern over issues such as employment, education and health care. UNP selected the Hartland as a finite community in which to improve resident capacity in terms of economics, health, environment and education. To determine the specific health needs with which the community required assistance, a team was formed and a needs assessment was undertaken. The health assessment is being conducted in collaboration with UNP, the Department of Family & Preventive Medicine (DFPM), the University of Utah Community Clinics (UUCC) and the Health Sciences LEAP Program. Residents were recruited to complete the assessment through distribution of flyers, door-to-door contacts, interaction with them at the annual Hartland festival, and interviews with the ESL class participants and with HEAT applicants. Health assessment results indicate that their health problems are due to not having regular checkups for medical and especially untreated dental conditions. Many residents work at low paying jobs which provide insufficient insurance or none at all. Residents also do not understand and are unable to access the United States health care system, usually due its complexity and language barriers. Due to limited knowledge about the health care system, even residents with insurance are not accessing primary medical care on a regular basis. Their best solution is going to the emergency room when they cannot control the situation any longer. We are in the process of developing interventions to assist Hartland residents with health access issues.