

Health Fair Report

Penrose Library, Colorado Springs, CO

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Background

Discover Health/Descubre La Salud (DH) is a partnership between Colorado Area Health Education Centers (COAHEC) at the Anschutz Medical Campus in Denver, and the STAR Library Network (STAR Net) that is managed by the Space Science Institute’s National Center for Interactive Learning. Information about COAHEC and STAR Net are at the end of this report. Discover Health is funded by the Science Education Partnership Award program at the National Institutes of Health. It is a traveling exhibition program hosted by ten Colorado public libraries. It addresses the nation’s most serious public health issues, especially among underserved and rural populations (diabetes, obesity, and cardiovascular health). It also encourages youth, especially those from at-risk communities to pursue careers in health care professions.




DISCOVER HEALTH FAIR

SAT., NOV 16 • 10 A.M. - 1 P.M.
PENROSE LIBRARY

Celebrate the Discover Health Exhibit with a Health Fair at the Penrose Library!

- ✓ Local health service organizations
- ✓ Blood pressure, glucose, and vision screenings
- ✓ Activities for all ages
- ✓ Chair yoga 10:15 and 11:15 a.m., and 12:15 p.m.
- ✓ Chair massages



Penrose Library in Colorado Springs, Colorado, was the last

tour site for this phase of the project. The Discover Health team held a workshop on August 30, 2019 to introduce library staff to the key themes of the exhibit and provide hands-on training. The workshop helped staff manage the exhibit components and implement a robust health learning program aligned with the exhibit goals and themes. The exhibition period was September-November 2019. Library staff were excited to expand their community outreach to include a health science event by holding a health fair near the end of the exhibit tour. This report describes the event and its impact on patrons.

Patrons explore brain slices in the Discover Health exhibit. Credit: STAR Net

Health Fair Event

Penrose Library held the culminating Health Fair event on November 16, 2019 from 10am - 1pm. Cleared by Anschutz Medical Campus (AMC), COAHEC Executive Director, Josina Romero O’Connell, MD, arrived with medical student Ms. Riannon Atwater and non-clinical assistant, Mr. Peter O’Connell at 8:30am on that day for the set up. Penrose Library provided COAHEC a generous space and COAHEC was able to set up a check-in table, 2 patient/screener tables, and a departing table with free gifts for patrons that included lip balm, scarves, bottles of anti-bacterial hand gel, and nail files, as well as informative health handouts.

All three individuals were an experienced team and have conducted screenings for COAHEC at the annual National Western Stock Show (NWSS) in Denver and at the Colorado State Fair in Pueblo, Colorado. COAHEC set up each screening table with a blood pressure cuff, pulse oximeter, vision screening tool, glucometer (that included glucose test strips and lancets), and plenty of bandages, alcohol wipes, cotton balls, hand sanitizer, and informative handouts. If a person screened positive for smoking, for example, COAHEC then provided informative brochures (in Spanish or English) on that topic. COAHEC personnel then reviewed these handouts with the patrons about the Quitline, the importance of quitting, and outreach information a person can access to get help in receiving medications for quitting (nicotine patches, for example), free of charge.

In another example, if COAHEC serviced a patron with pre-existing hypertension or suspected hypertension on screening, then, COAHEC personnel reviewed and provided educational handouts about hypertension, importance of control, and lifestyle change measures. Additionally, handouts at the checkout table included resources for HIV testing and where a person might obtain a primary care physician (PCP) in their area who services uninsured, Medicaid/Medicare, and other patients who have difficulty establishing a PCP. Additionally, COAHEC located a portion of the set up as a waiting area with chairs and a small “coffee table” piled with periodicals on diabetes, COAHEC, and other information.

At the workshop event for the Discover Health exhibit in August 2019, which Dr. Josina O’Connell and one COAHEC staff member attended, they noted the high preponderance of homeless patrons in the library that day. This was also the majority of the clientele at Penrose Library on November 16th. The library is in the center of downtown Colorado Springs. Just across the street, connected to the Basilica Cathedral of St Mary’s, is the Marian House shelter and soup kitchen. Patrons described to Dr. Romero O’Connell that once they eat breakfast at the Marian house, they are required to leave the shelter for the day, so many of these individuals pass their day at Penrose Library.

Indeed, on both days that COAHEC was there, upon arriving prior to the library being opened for the day, they noted that homeless patrons were clustered around the front and back entrances to the library awaiting its opening. In the back lot, the library has provided a large section of the parking lot for the patrons to park shopping carts or to leave their belongings. They can park their cart by a large trash receptacle, then put their belongings into the

receptacle and lock it with a lock and key provided to them by the library as well. The Penrose Public Library has made great efforts to support this population.

After the setup, prior to the 10am start, a line of patrons were waiting at the COAHEC check-in area. Precisely at 10am, Peter O’Connell began checking in patrons and escorting them to one of the 2 screening tables. The entire screening experience was identical to other COAHEC Health Screenings at the NWSS and Colorado State Fair. The non-clinical worker (in this case Mr. O’Connell) first checks in the patron by asking their first name. He writes this on a sticky note. He then takes the patron to the scale, weighs the patient, measures height and records this on the same sticky note. He guides them to one of the screeners who must have a clinical background.

COAHEC utilizes students from the AMC health profession schools as screeners as well as certified or licensed providers. On site, at any screening event, there must be a board-certified clinician. Riannon Atwater was the medical student and Dr. Romero O’Connell was the clinician who was also able to do screenings. A clinician is required to advise and take care of situations such as elevated blood pressures or elevated glucose readings. The clinician is also present to answer patrons’ questions that the student cannot or should not, given the student’s level of training.

The Screening Process



The screening area at the Penrose Library. Credit: Penrose Library

COAHEC uses an iPad program as the screening tool for each patient. It was developed by COAHEC in collaboration with HealthSmartKids. COAHEC is supported by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Screening activities require collection of demographic data, so these were the first questions that patrons were asked at the screening

tables. Screeners entered these answers on the iPad program.

Thereafter, the health screen included questions on personal history, social history, family history, behavioral health and medical history. The screener calculated body mass index (BMI) and then provided education behind its value in a healthy lifestyle. The screener checked blood pressure and provided education about cardiovascular disease. They checked blood glucose and discussed the topics of pre-diabetes, diabetes, lifestyle, and diet. The screener did a vision

screen, then a balance screen and a dental screen. All the while, the screener called upon the clinician to address abnormal values and answer specific questions patrons asked at any time during any of the screenings. The screener entered all of these data into the iPad program as well. In the end, the program generated a summary screen, at which time the screener reviewed the overall health assessment, made final recommendations in shared decision-making with the patron, and emailed this report to the patron for their records and potentially to show a Primary Care Provider (PCP). If a patron does not have a PCP, then COAHEC provided an up to date list of resources for patrons to facilitate their ability to contact one and establish care. The program also generated data that COAHEC used to provide a report to HRSA.

When a screener was available, the non-clinician, who checked in the patron, guided them to the screening table. If one was not available, he guided them to a chair for waiting until the next available screener was ready. Minutes after the health fair opened, COAHEC had both screeners full, all the waiting chairs full, people waiting behind the waiting chairs, and people in line waiting for check in. In COAHEC's experience, they had never seen this number of patrons waiting for a screen. At other screenings, however, they have about 8 screeners working at the same time. COAHEC and Penrose Library staffers were not sure how many to expect that day, though COAHEC brought enough materials to support 500. Unfortunately, for this event, COAHEC was able to staff only 2 screeners, being that this was a new venture and being off work hours (on a Saturday). As a result, many patrons waited for an hour or more, while many needed to leave before the screeners could get to them.

COAHEC regrets they did not bring more screeners, as it was difficult for them to see people waiting, people leaving, and the many they had to turn away at the 1pm close. COAHEC was willing to screen beyond the 1pm close, but understood the need to adhere to this time frame as instructed by library staff. In total, COAHEC serviced approximately 25 individuals, as the screenings took longer than usual, with many of the homeless patrons having either many complex medical issues or having gone many years since seeing a medical professional.

Patron Feedback

Many patrons expressed their gratitude over and over for COAHEC's presence on that November day. Dr. Romero O'Connell stated,

"We were uniquely privileged in each patient encounter to enter their lives, if only briefly. Patrons asked questions like why we had not been there before and how soon we would return. Many said it was the reason they came to the health fair, although they enjoyed the other presenters



Heart model in the Discover Health exhibit.
Credit: STAR Net

and the ‘freebies.’ Many shared their poignant histories. One was a gentleman who had just been released from inpatient, had a colectomy after a rupture and sepsis ensuing, and had a history of traumatic brain injury. One was a mother and daughter, both of whom were suffering from an upper respiratory tract infection and hoping we could provide medications, which we cannot. One gentleman, an 82 year-old, said he had been the principal chef at the Broadmoor hotel in the 80’s, was transferred to the Antler’s Hotel for a couple of years, and then went back to the Broadmoor. These institutions are well-known and very expensive and have excellent reputations in Colorado, as well as nationally. He said he eventually got ill and could not continue working and ended up homeless. He could not read a single character on the vision chart which was noted as being dangerous as this gentleman walked with bilateral canes. When I asked him to remove his glasses, I cleaned them, replaced them gently on his face, and the patron was able to see every character on the chart. He became very emotional and teary-eyed.”

There were many kindnesses and heartwarming connections COAHEC made that day. These health screens provide important service to many different types of individuals and are particularly important for community-based organizations, like libraries, who seek to provide outreach opportunities to their underserved and marginalized populations. Being able to offer health screenings in the Health Fair event that day in Colorado Springs at the Penrose Library was, in every way, a meshing of the missions of STAR Net and COAHEC to provide education, outreach, and connections to the underserved and have a maximal impact in a short period of time. Because of the success of this event, COAHEC may provide this type of outreach for libraries in other regions of Colorado and they have already begun to think of potential funders to make this possible.

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About COAHEC



The Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) were developed by Congress in 1971 to recruit, train and retain a health professions workforce committed to underserved populations. Nearly every state has an AHEC program. The Colorado AHEC system was established in 1977 by Dean Richard Krugman (<http://www.ucdenver.edu/life/services/ahec/Pages/index.aspx>). Today, the State of Colorado is divided into six regions (Centennial, Central, San Luis Valley, Southeastern Colorado, Southwestern Colorado and Western Colorado) with an AHEC office in each region. The six regional AHECs partner with the Schools of Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Physician Assistant, Physical Therapy, and College of Nursing. The Colorado AHEC Program Office works with the regional offices to build state-wide network capacity and strengthen academic-community linkages in four core mission areas: 1) Health Careers and Workforce Diversity, 2) Health Professions Student Education, 3) Health Professions Continuing Education and 4) Public Health and Community Education.

About the STAR Library Network



Science-Technology Activities & Resources For Libraries

STAR Net is a hands-on learning network for libraries and their communities across the country (www.starnetlibraries.org).

This community of practice focuses on helping library professionals build their

STEM skills by providing “science-technology activities and resources” (STAR) and training to use

those resources. Over 8,000 library and STEM professionals have joined STAR Net to access webinar trainings, monthly newsletters, professional blogs, STEM event promotion, partnership opportunities, facilitation guides, book recommendations, including STAR Net’s STEM Activity Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is a one-stop shop for free STEM activities designed specifically for the library setting, based on librarian demand and feedback. STAR Net is built upon a strong network of collaborators and partners, led by NCIL. Partners include the Afterschool Alliance, American Library Association’s Public Programs Office, American Society of Civil Engineers, Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, Cornerstones of Science, Education Development Center, and the Lunar and Planetary Institute. Major funding is provided by the National Science Foundation, NASA Science Mission Directorate, National Institutes of Health, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.