How One Library’s Location Change Impacted Health Information Requests: Comparing Zip Codes and Health Disparities to Shape Library Services

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Our Background

• Hybrid library—Health Information Center (HIC)/Preston Medical Library (PML)

• Until 2014, we were located in an academic office building on the hospital campus

• That year, we moved into our new space on the main floor of the hospital

• Interact daily with faculty, clinicians, residents, patients, and family members
UTMC Service Area

Serviced Counties
Study Purpose

• Researchers reviewed the Consumer & Patient Health Information Service (CAPHIS) database to see if patrons were requesting information from counties or zip codes with high rates of poverty

• Researchers also reviewed what zip codes and counties that were now being reached that were not previously served in a 2012 study
  • 2012 study was useful, but data reflected old location

• Discovering what areas have not yet been reached
  • Opportunities for future outreach
Methods

• CAPHIS database is stored on the hospital’s server
  • Data exists from 1997-current
  • Each record gives topic(s) requested and patron county/zip code
  • This project discusses requests from counties/zip codes, but each request
    might have more than one search topic

• Split data into two sets
  • Pre-move (1997-Sept 2014)
  • Post-move (Sept 2014-current)

• This project was primarily concerned with the post-move data
Methods

• Removed 383 results due to being anonymous walk-ins or requests from patient rooms
  • Originally used hospital zip code as place holder
• All requests were sorted by county and zip code, comparing results before and after the move
• Used Tableau to visually map what counties and zip codes we had reached since the move
Poverty Rate by ZIP code
Results by ZIP Code, 2014-2019
Assessing Our Impact

• Raw numbers have greatly increased since moving locations
  • 3,801 requests from 1997-Sept 2014 (date of move)
  • 3,141 requests from Sept 2014-May 2019

• We reached six more counties in our region compared to the 2012 study
  • Five of these counties have poverty levels >20%

• Knox, Blount, and Sevier counties are the most frequent users

• We reached 20 counties in the hospital’s 21 county service area
Assessing Our Impact on Knox County

• Three Knox County zip codes were not reached in the 2012 study
  • Since moving locations, all three have been reached
    • 37932: 40 requests
    • 37754: 8 requests
    • 37806: 4 requests

• Other local zip codes had very few requests in the 2012 study, but now are higher:
  • 37931: 30 requests
  • 37909: 28 requests

• Zip code: 37915 – 53.8% below poverty line
  • 34 requests
Challenges

• Data can be incomplete
• Issue with local hospital zip code being used as a placeholder
• Translating a mountain of data into usable information
  • Dealing with the problem of too much information
  • Setting a focus
Conclusions

• Aligning with hospital’s mission of serving the 21 county area
• Proving we are an east TN regional resource for health information
• Providing people with health information that reside in zip codes with high rates of poverty
• Knowledge about what zip codes to target for outreach
  • RAM project grant
References


