Help Desk: A Student-Led Initiative to Address Social Determinants of Health in Durham, N.C.

Duke University | BASS CONNECTIONS
LINCOLN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER "Your link to quality health care"
help desk

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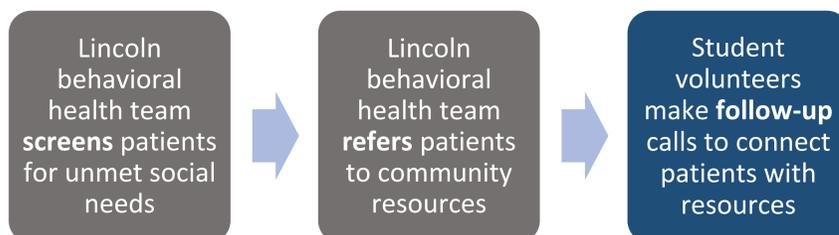GLOBAL ALLIANCE ON DISABILITY AND HEALTHCARE INNOVATION

Overview

Social and environmental factors like food insecurity and unstable housing account for 70% of health outcomes. Most health systems, however, are not fully integrated with community and social services to manage patients' social needs. Student volunteers, eager for meaningful clinical experiences, are an untapped resource that health systems can better leverage to improve integrated patient care. Our team is partnering with Lincoln Community Health Center to launch a student "Help Desk." As a federally qualified health center, Lincoln cares for a vulnerable population--patients who are uninsured, low-income, and medically underserved.

Why Students?

Effective Intervention
80% 3 Years
14% 17 Years
Effective Use of Implementation Science & Practice
Letting it Happen Helping it Happen

Blasé & Fixen, 2007
Balas & Boren, 2000
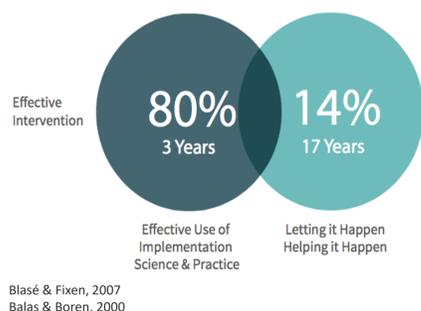
Evidence-based interventions can take up to 17 years to be adopted as standard practice. Students can form implementation teams to accelerate the uptake of innovations--like the Help Desk model.
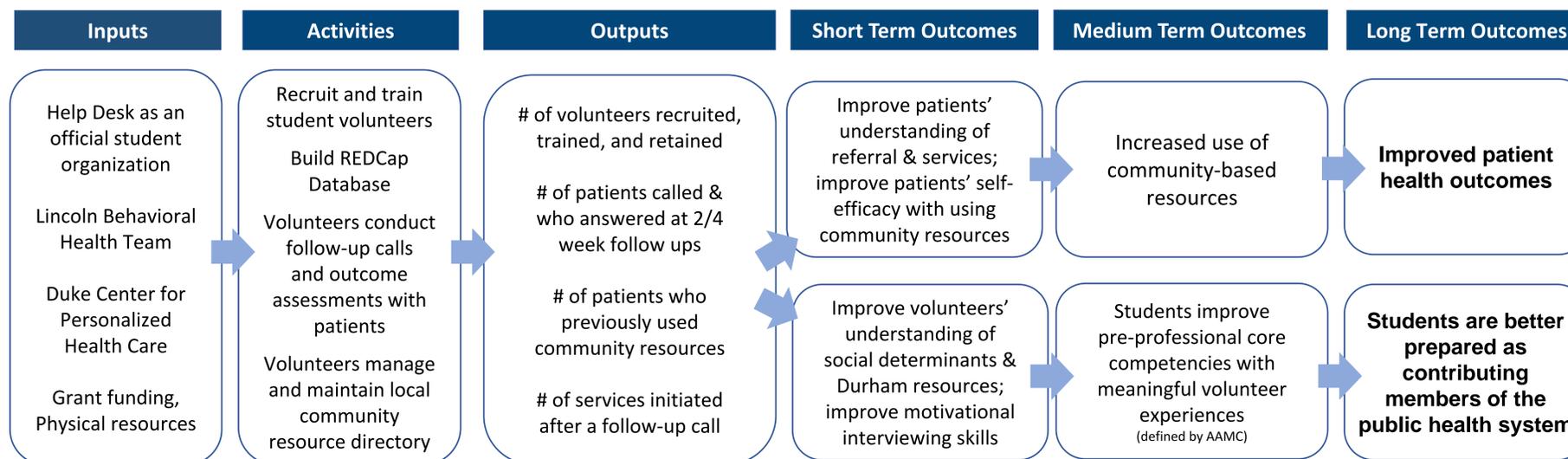
The Innovation: Help Desk Model

Lincoln behavioral health team **screens** patients for unmet social needs → Lincoln behavioral health team **refers** patients to community resources → Student volunteers make **follow-up** calls to connect patients with resources

Similar Help Desk models have been implemented successfully across the country. This summer, we visited Help Desk sites in California to identify volunteer best practices.

ZSFG Health Advocates
SANTA CLARA VALLEY MEDICAL CENTER Hospital & Clinics
SHARED Stanford Health Advocacy & Research in the Emergency Department
Health Leads

Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Medium Term Outcomes	Long Term Outcomes
Help Desk as an official student organization	Recruit and train student volunteers	# of volunteers recruited, trained, and retained	Improve patients' understanding of referral & services; improve patients' self-efficacy with using community resources	Increased use of community-based resources	**Improved patient health outcomes**
Lincoln Behavioral Health Team	Build REDCap Database	# of patients called & who answered at 2/4 week follow ups			
Duke Center for Personalized Health Care	Volunteers conduct follow-up calls and outcome assessments with patients	# of patients who previously used community resources	Improve volunteers' understanding of social determinants & Durham resources; improve motivational interviewing skills	Students improve pre-professional core competencies with meaningful volunteer experiences (defined by AAMC)	**Students are better prepared as contributing members of the public health system**
Grant funding, Physical resources	Volunteers manage and maintain local community resource directory	# of services initiated after a follow-up call			

Implementation Framework

We developed a detailed and dynamic action plan of the resources, activities, and timeline that our team will follow to increase our ability to implement this program in a sustainable manner. Specifically, we adapted the "Ten Essential Public Health Services" framework to systematically think through planning and implementation of the Help Desk as a public health service.

10 Essential Public Health Services Framework
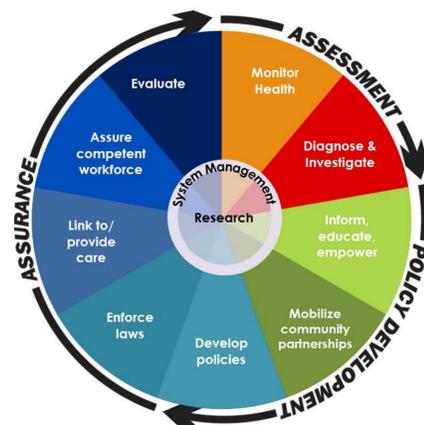
	Adapted Framework	Example Activities
# 1-2	**Monitor** Lincoln patient health and social needs & **diagnose** areas for service delivery improvement	Collect/analyze baseline data on Lincoln patients
# 3	**Build partnerships** with community stakeholders	Attend Partnership for a Healthy Durham meetings
# 4-7	Develop **policies and infrastructure** to implement Help Desk	Draft volunteer workflows; recruit & train volunteers; build REDCap platform for follow-up documentation; host kickoff meeting with Lincoln
# 8	Assure **competent workforce**	Host weekly meetings with volunteer base; identify next cohort of student leaders
# 9-10	**Evaluate** program effectiveness & **research** for new insights	Administer feedback surveys to volunteers/Lincoln team; review of Help Desk model best practices