

COFA Islanders: An illusion of benefits

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TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: public health professionals

ABSTRACT: Background: During our work in the community, we noticed a general lack of knowledge and negative reputation surrounding COFA Islanders amongst health care workers and agencies. The goal of this presentation is to fill in knowledge gaps amongst healthcare professionals regarding COFA Islanders in hopes that we as a healthcare culture can view COFA Islanders within the context of their cultural history and better meet their healthcare needs.

Methods: Noting the negative impacts that these misconceptions have on COFA Islanders, we set about to educate others on the important facts we learned during our experiences with our clients. We handed out a questionnaire to gauge where the knowledge gaps were amongst healthcare professionals.

Results: We noted that many professionals were unaware of the disparities faced by COFA Islanders. We used this knowledge to create educational materials (poster and brochure) to inform others. Our education was met with interest and engagement.

Implications: Oregon is ranked number five in COFA Islander populations in the U.S. We believe that education will create a workforce that is aware of the disparities that exist so that positive action can happen. Our goal is that this education will reach and inspire many to stand for the rights of COFA Islanders.

OBJECTIVE(S):

- Define the term COFA Islanders.
- Identify the health disparities that COFA Islanders face in the U.S.
- List the steps Oregon has taken to improve healthcare access for COFA Islanders.
- Formulate a plan to share this information with others.

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