

Cultural Competency and Health Literacy Train-the-Trainer

More than 30 Long Island community-facing employees received Master Trainer Certificates from a recent Cultural Competency/Health Literacy Train-The-Trainer workshop, hosted in partnership by Nassau Queens Performing Provider System, Suffolk Care Collaborative, and the Long Island Health Collaborative. This seven-hour course trains frontline staffers in Queens, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties to both address their communities' needs of health literacy and cultural competency, and to train new trainers, through courses they are now equipped to facilitate.

"When it comes to addressing health, it is important to recognize that cultural and social issues such as how people live, how people work, and their education level can affect health," said Dr. Martine Hackett, Assistant Professor, Public Health and Community Health Programs at Hofstra, who developed the curriculum and hosted the recent Master Trainer session in Hauppauge. "When patients don't understand what they are being told by their providers, their healing process could be messy and negatively affected."

A major goal of the DSRIP program is to develop a culturally competent workforce. Service providers can improve care by recognizing the role social determinants of health play in a patient's relationship to the healthcare system. As such, it is important that providers ensure patients have a comprehensive understanding of medical instructions, and take into account the way a patient's culture effects how they addresses their own care and their overall health.

Topics for the training session included an introduction to social determinants of health, health disparities, and local stories; unconscious bias and its effects; the National Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services (CLAS) Standards; cultural competency, sensitivity, and humility; what health literacy is, why it is important, and how it affects health; guidelines for health literate materials in social service organizations; and the Teach Back Technique.

"Regardless of one's profession, self-assessment is crucial when servicing all communities on Long Island," said Loida Santos, Associate Director, Long Island Association for AIDS Care, an attendee of the training session who has since facilitated two two-hour sessions within her organization as a result of the tools she acquired through the Master Trainer session. "Self-assessment, if done honestly and with an open-mind, will allow the individual to recognize that our unconscious biases play a significant role in the outcome of the people we serve. It allows for a better understanding of the disparities on Long Island."