

30th Annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum

The North Carolina Community Health Center Association (NCCHCA) hosted the 30th annual East Coast Migrant Stream Forum in Atlanta, Georgia October 12-14, 2017. Every year since its inception in 1988, the East Coast Migrant Stream Forum has convened a broad spectrum of agricultural worker health professionals, from outreach workers and Promotores(as) de Salud to clinicians and administrators, representing Migrant/Community Health Centers, community and faith-based organizations, and government entities across the nation. The East Coast Migrant Stream Forum provides opportunities for attendees to connect with colleagues and acquire new skills and knowledge for improving services to migrant and seasonal agricultural workers and other vulnerable populations.

Content

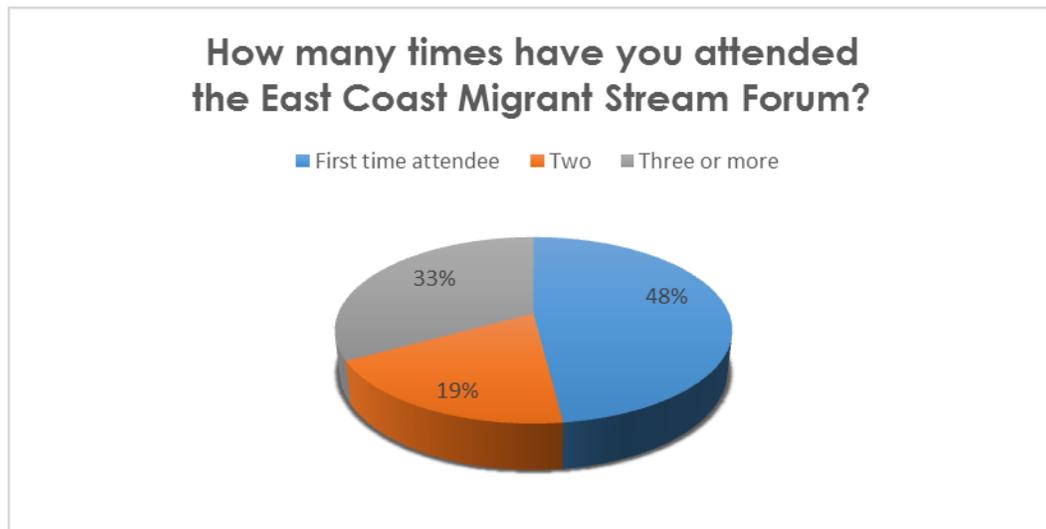
The conference program was organized into five tracks: programmatic/administrative, outreach/lay health/community health workers, policy, clinical, and research. Sessions addressed the Bureau of Primary Health Care's 2017 priorities for the Migrant Stream Forums, including a variety of intensive and educational sessions on addressing substance use (opioid crisis), integration of behavioral health into primary care, improving health outcomes (management and prevention of diabetes, Zika prevention), utilizing Community Health Workers and outreach workers to address pressing needs, addressing social determinants of health, integration/expansion of medical-legal partnerships, and implementing culturally and linguistically appropriate services. The forum included four 3-hour intensive trainings and 17 concurrent 90-minute educational sessions for a total of 41.5 hours of educational opportunities over the course of the three-days.

Participants

The 2017 East Coast Migrant Stream Forum brought together 174 participants representing 17 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. This year, 48% were first time attendees, while 19% of participants had attended twice, and 33% had attended the conference three times or more.

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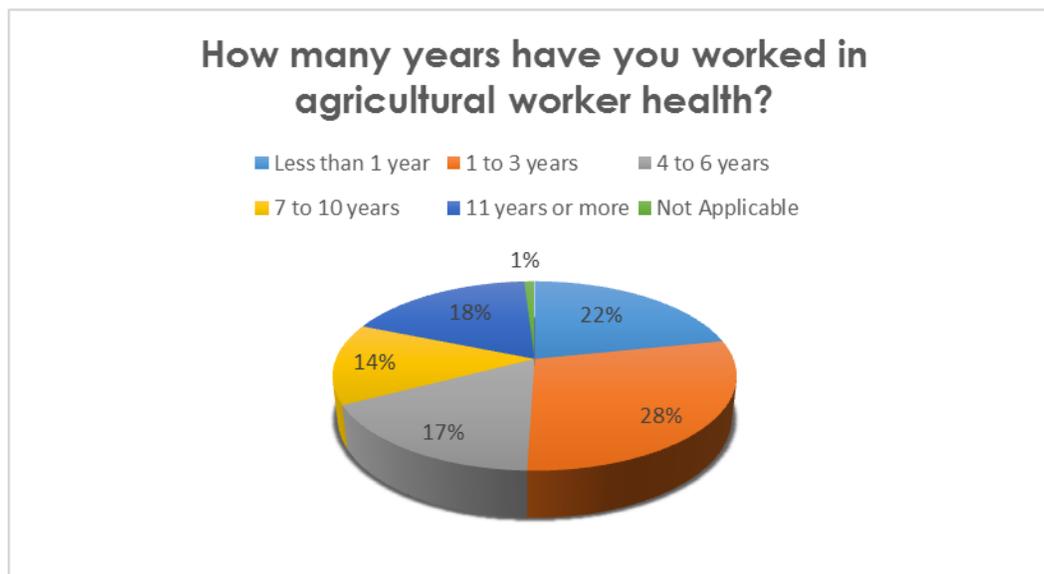
Chart 1: Attendance



An important training ground for staff new to the field, 50% of Forum attendees had worked less than one year or one to three years in agricultural worker health. Seasoned veterans were also well represented with 49% of attendees having worked four to six years (17%), seven to ten years (14%), or 11 or more years (18%) in agricultural worker health.

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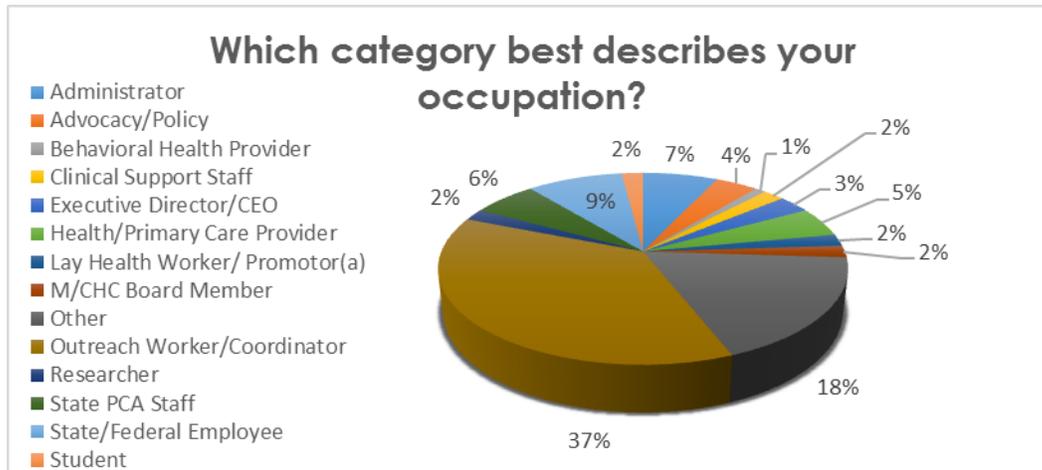
Chart 2: Participant Experience



The conference continued to receive strong participation from outreach staff, as the most common occupation of among attendees was “Outreach Worker/Coordinator” (37%). The next highest attendee occupation categories were “Administrator” (7%), “State/Federal Employee” (9%), and “Other” (18%). Common responses occupations associated with “Other” included attorney, interpreter, medical assistant, and National Cooperative Agreement staff (Chart 3). Regardless of attendee classification, sessions were geared toward training and developing all levels of the workforce through the integration of skills-based techniques.

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Chart 3: Attendee Occupation



Proceedings

The conference kicked off on Thursday morning with a half-day site visit to two organizations serving special and vulnerable populations in the Atlanta area. First, attendees stopped at Bamboo Creek Farm, host to ten beginning farmers and the base of operations for Global Growers, the only organization in Georgia that connects the agricultural talent of the local refugee community to opportunities in sustainable agriculture (see photo #1). Next, attendees visited Mercy Care Atlanta's Decatur Street Clinic and street medicine bus (see photo #2). In 1986, Mercy Care was designated as a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), specifically focusing on the needs of the homeless population in Atlanta. Today, Mercy Care continues to be Atlanta's only Health Care for the Homeless FQHC.

The general conference program started on Thursday afternoon with four 3-hour Concurrent Intensive Training Sessions – "Immigration Policy Today: What Migrant Health Providers Need to Know," "Serving H-2A Workers and Agricultural Workers: Innovative Models for Community Outreach," "Applying Transportation Solutions to Address Missed Appointments & Improve Access to Care: Findings from the Rides to Wellness Community Scan Project," and "Keeping it CLASy: Implementation of the Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services Standard (CLAS) in Health Centers." Following the afternoon's intensive training sessions, participants were invited to network and enjoy live music at the welcome reception.

The conference continued Friday morning with an opening plenary session, which began with welcome remarks from Benjamin Money, President and Chief Executive Officer of NCCCHA, and a local greeting from Representative Tom McCall, Chair of the Agriculture & Consumer Affairs Committee in the

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Next, the program transitioned to the presentation of the Steve Shore Community Catalyst Award. This award is given annually to an individual, program, or agency whose work has incited positive change in the health and wellness of agricultural workers. This year's award recipient was Elizabeth Freeman Lambar, Director of the NC Farmworker Health Program, in recognition of her more than two decades of service to agricultural worker health communities along the Eastern Stream (see photo #4).

Immediately following the plenary, participants were offered a variety of Concurrent Educational Sessions: "Fusing Innovative Health Education & Clinical Measures to Improve Agricultural Worker Health: A Focus on Colorectal Cancer Screenings," "Protecting Workers and their Families from Pesticide Exposure," "Agricultural Worker Health 101: An Introduction to Agricultural Worker Health," "Haitian Farmworkers in Florida: HRI, BMI, Chronic Diseases and Mental Health," and "All Hands on Deck! An Integrated Care Clinical Model to Address the Substance Abuse Crisis in Our Communities" (see photo #5).

Dr. Ramón Resa was the keynote speaker during Friday's lunch program. Dr. Resa shared about his life as a child working in the fields in Central Valley, California, and his struggles as a young person in navigating an environment of extreme poverty, abuse, and racism. Dr. Resa reflected on the impact mentorship in educational environments had on shaping his path to attending medical school and, eventually, becoming a pediatrician in the same area of California where he was a child farmworker. Dr. Resa has treated children of farm working families for over 30 years and continues to do so today through his private practice.

After lunch, attendees participated in an additional round of Concurrent Educational Sessions on Friday afternoon: "Community Health Workers Preventing CKDu in Farmworkers," "Health Insurance among Agricultural Workers: Increasing Access & Utilization," "Using GIS Mapping Software to Facilitate Farmworker Outreach," "Medical/Legal Collaboration for Farmworker Rights on Work Related Injuries," and "A Bilingual Train the Trainer for CHWs on Zika." After educational sessions concluded, a small group of young professionals convened to participate in the inaugural "Young Professionals Roundtable Discussion" at the conference.

On Saturday morning, the final day of the conference opened with a National Policy and Program Update plenary session presented by Jana Eubank, Associate Vice President, Public Policy & Research Division, National Association of Community Health Centers. Ms. Eubank's update focused on the impacts of the health center funding cliff and how frontline staff are important advocates in the community health center movement.

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The conference then transitioned into two back to back rounds of educational sessions. The first sessions were “Championing Your Community: Developing the Advocacy Skills You Need to Promote Healthier Communities,” “Worksite Health Fairs Provide Healthcare Access to Farmworkers in SE Georgia,” and “Collaborating with Local CHW Networks to Expand Health Center Resources & Develop Community Health Work Leadership,” The final group of sessions offered were “Common Skin Diseases of the Agricultural Worker,” “How You Can: Increase Access to Care for Agricultural Workers through Practical Tactical Planning,” “Enhancing the Delivery of Care: The Promotor(a) de Salud/CHW Role on Clinical Care Teams,” and “HIV, Zika, and Type 2 diabetes: potential health threats to migrant and seasonal farmworkers, state of prevention/treatment, and new developments.”

Participants reconvened for the closing lunch program, featuring Daisy Hernández, MA, MFA, journalist and Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Miami University. Ms. Hernández shared stories from her memoir, *A Cup of Water Under My Bed*, about growing up in a Cuban-Colombian family, how migration and colonization shaped her experiences as a female growing up in an immigrant home, and what it was like to come out to her family as bisexual. Ms. Hernández informed attendees about her research on Chagas, also known as the “kissing bug,” an infectious disease that disproportionately impacts Latinos. Lastly, Ms. Hernández challenged attendees to engage in self-care by staying connected to one another.

Finally of note, there were two additional meetings which took place alongside the conference – a voucher program meeting on the morning of October 12th and a focus group in the evening on October 13th, both led by the National Center for Farmworker Health.

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Tracking to Success

The North Carolina Community Health Center Association uses a system called “Tracking to Success” (TTS) to evaluate the impact of workshops and plenary sessions at the East Coast Migrant Stream Forum. This year, NCCHCA offered attendees an electronic app in lieu of a paper program, also transitioning TTS surveys to an electronic format available through the app as well as a link distributed via email after the conference. The results of TTS for the 2017 East Coast Migrant Stream Forum are as follows:

Overall Conference Tracking to Success

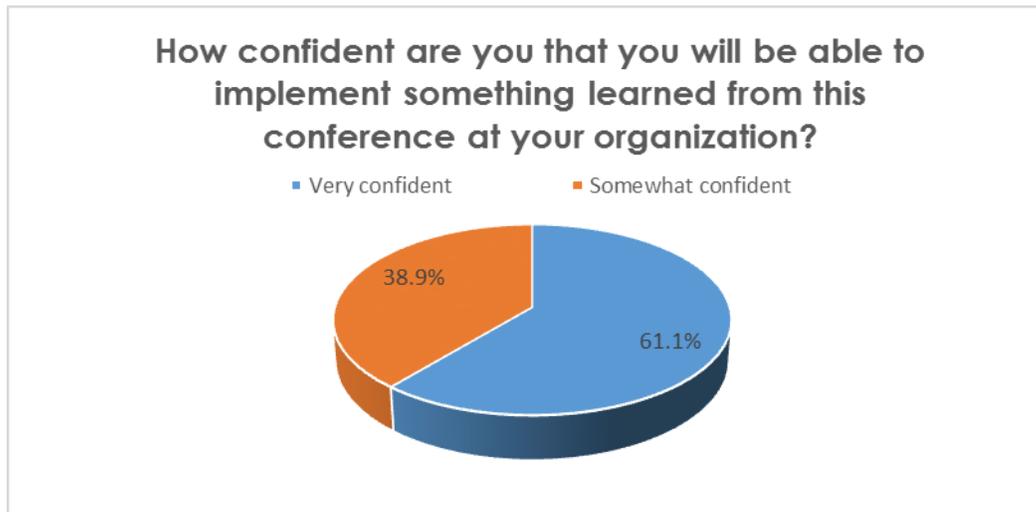
Participants were asked to share two key concepts they will most likely remember from the conference. The top five responses were: immigration policy, collaboration with internal and external partners, the importance of advocacy, skin cancer among agricultural workers, and collaboration between Community Health Workers and clinicians.

The top three sessions ranked as most engaging were: “Immigration Policy Today: What Migrant Health Providers Need to Know,” lunch program and keynote address with Dr. Ramón Resa, and “Common Skin Diseases of the Agricultural Worker.” These sessions represented two out of the five conference tracks – policy and clinical.

Among all respondents, 100% reported feeling very confident or somewhat confident that they will be able to implement something learned from the conference at their organization.

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Chart 4: How confident are you that you will be able to implement something learned from this conference at your organization?



Future Recommendations

Feedback from conference participants was positive overall. Recommendations for implementation at the 2018 East Coast Migrant Stream Forum include:

Offering a welcome session before the start of the first concurrent sessions on Thursday to introduce conference organizers and kick off the conference as a group with a motivational keynote speaker,

Expanding language access for attendees by making the entire conference bilingual (English and Spanish) through simultaneous interpretation and by being more inclusive of agricultural worker populations that do not speak Spanish,

Sharing gender pronouns in every conference session during welcome/introductions to ensure inclusivity at the conference, and

Selecting a conference venue that is closer to the downtown area of a city.

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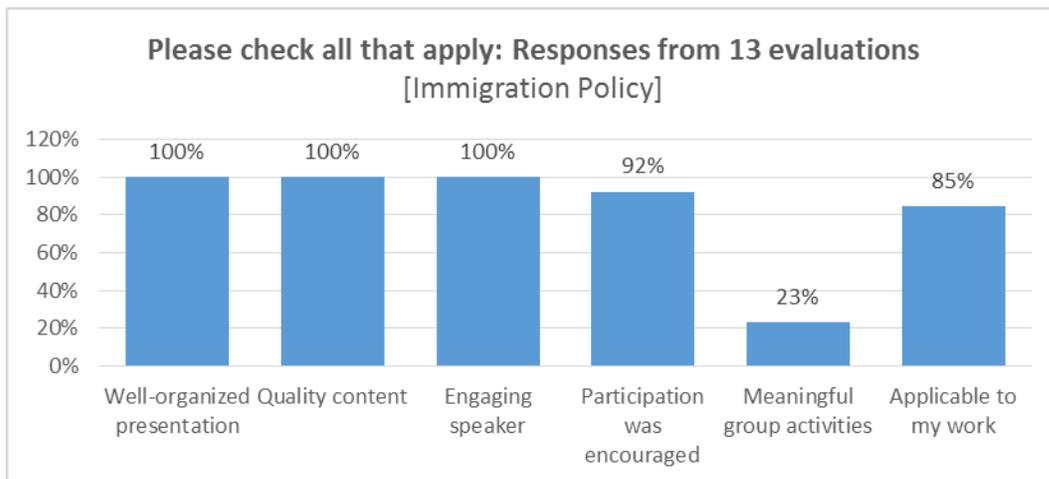
Survey respondents provided suggestions for potential future session topics, including: health topics related to colon cancer, obesity, nutrition for farmworker families with limited time to prepare meals, green tobacco sickness, and administering first aid for workplace injuries; outreach strategies utilized by Community Health Workers; additional sessions sharing perspectives of LGBTQA individuals and DACA recipients; and more sessions on access, quality, and social determinants of health.

With the continued support of our funders, the innovative thinking of our planning committee, and the visionary leadership of NCCHCA staff members, the East Coast Migrant Stream Forum will continue to provide a venue for outreach workers, health educators, and migrant/seasonal agricultural worker advocates to learn from experts in the field and peer-to-peer interactions.

Concurrent Intensive Trainings

Session: Immigration Policy Today: What Migrant Health Providers Need to Know

Presenter(s): Roger Rosenthal

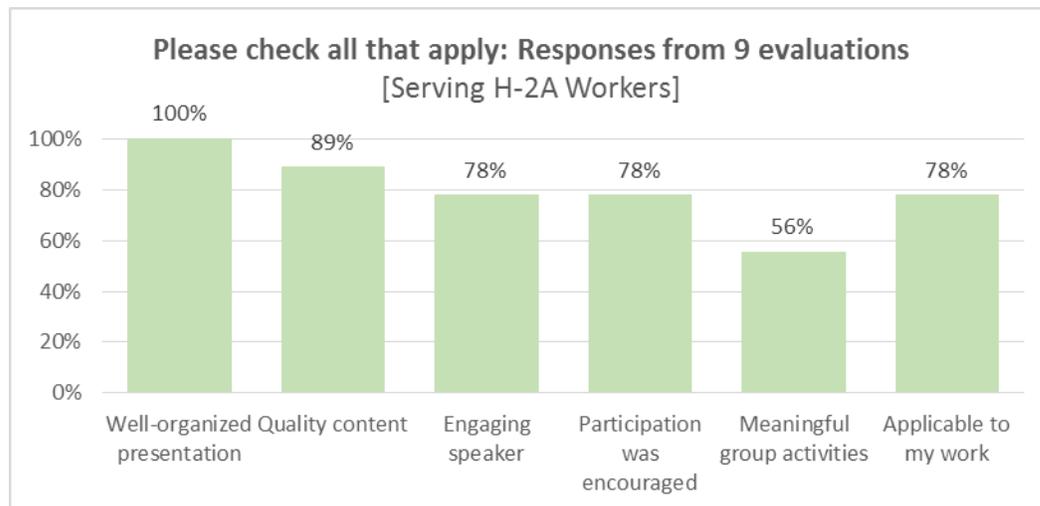


In this 3-hour intensive training, Roger Rosenthal, Executive Director of the Migrant Legal Action Program, provided attendees with information on the status of immigration policy and proposals as they affect agricultural worker families. The training also included recommendations about how to maximize immigrant access to care. 100% of participants reported that the presentation was well-organized, consisted of quality content, and was led by an engaging speaker. 92% indicated that participation was encouraged, 85% rated the presentation as applicable to their work, and 23% felt that the session offered meaningful group activities.

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Session: Serving H-2A Workers and Agricultural Workers: Innovative Models for Community Outreach

Presenter(s): Iris Figueroa, Solimar Mercado-Spencer

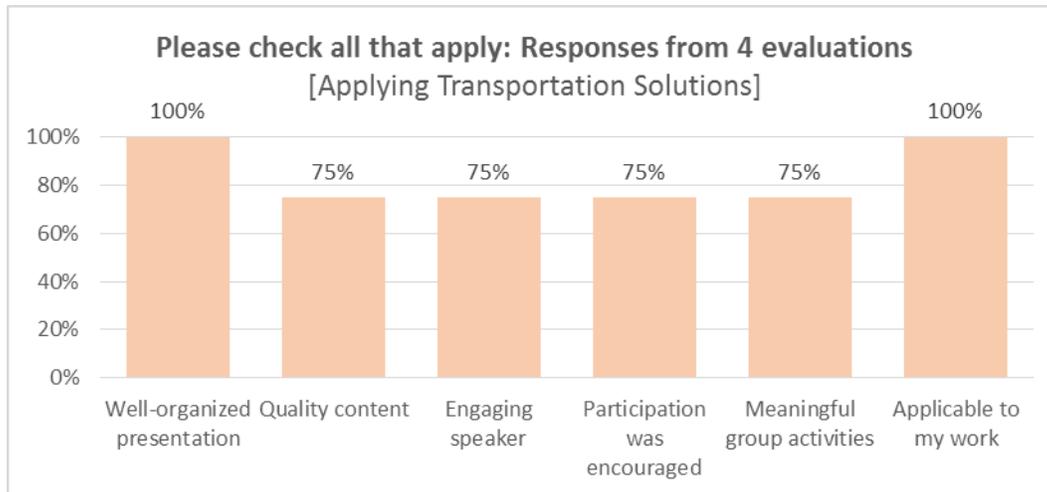


This 3-hour intensive training led by attorneys from Farmworker Justice and Georgia Legal Services provided basic information about the H-2A program, existing barriers and challenges for H-2A workers in accessing healthcare, and shared community-based strategies to promote healthcare access for H-2A and agricultural workers. 100% of attendees reported that the presentation was well-organized, 89% felt that the session consisted of quality content, and 78% rated the speakers as engaging. 78% indicated that participation was encouraged, 56% indicated that the workshop included meaningful group activities, and 78% found the content to be applicable to their work.

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Session: Applying Transportation Solutions to Address Missed Appointments & Improve Access to Care: Findings from the Rides to Wellness Community Scan Project

Presenter(s): Diana Lieu, Liam Spurgeon

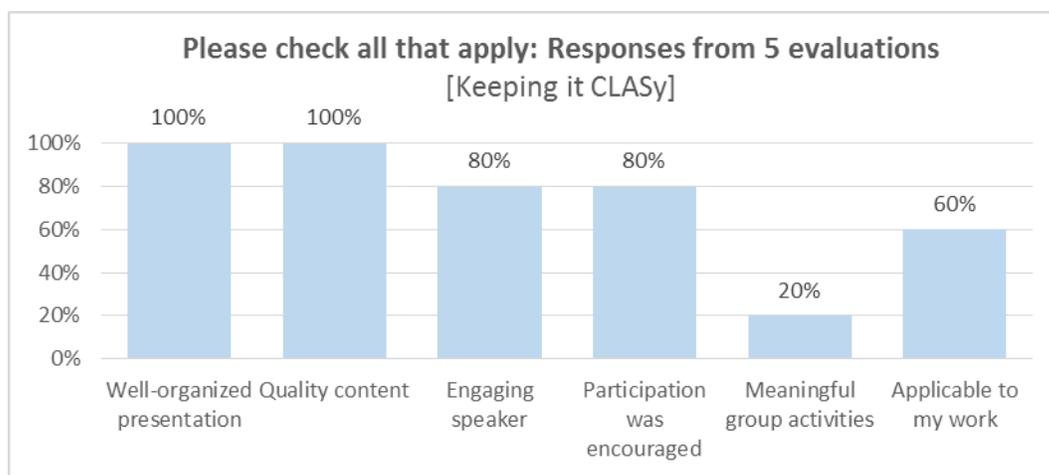


During this 3-hour training, participants learned about the relationship between transportation barriers and missed appointments, including the associated costs, and identified examples of transportation efforts that demonstrate financial benefits. Co-presenters Diana Lieu and Liam Spurgeon (Health Outreach Partners) shared a quality improvement process to find patient-centered solutions to transportation barriers.

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Session: Keeping it CLASy: Implementation of the Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services Standard (CLAS) in Health Centers

Presenter(s): Alicia Gonzales



This 3-hour intensive training session provided an in-depth look at the 15 Cultural and Linguistic Appropriate Services Standards (CLAS). Trainer Alicia Gonzales informed attendees about a variety of strategies that can be put in place to adhere to the standards and discussed how to develop a CLAS implementation plan for their organizations. 100% of participants felt that the presentation was well-organized and provided quality content. 80% reported that the speaker was engaging and participation was encouraged. 100% of participants indicated that the session offered meaningful group activities, and 60% of attendees rated the workshop content as applicable to their work.

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PHOTOS



Burmese refugees tend to their vegetables at Bamboo Creek Farm, one of five farms managed by Global Growers, the only organization in Georgia that connects the agricultural talent of the local refugee community to opportunities in sustainable agriculture.



Site visit attendees pose for a photo with Alan Bradford, Vice President of Operations of Mercy Care, Atlanta's only Health Care for the Homeless Federally Qualified Health Center. In the background is Mercy Care's street medicine bus.

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PHOTOS



Steve Shore, founder of the East Coast Migrant Stream Forum, speaks to a packed room during his opening keykeynote address, “Legacy, Leadership, and Compassion: A Chronicle of the Migrant Health Center Movement.”



Elizabeth Freeman Lambar (top row, second from right), Director of the NC Farmworker Health Program and 2017 Steve Shore Community Catalyst award recipient, poses for a photo with Steve Shore (top row, right) and the NC Farmworker Health Program team.

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PHOTOS



Participants in the “All Hands on Deck! An Integrated Care Clinical Model to Address the Substance Abuse Crisis in Our Communities” session presented by Dr. Jean Cobb, Behavioral Health Consultant, Cherokee Health Systems.

