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TITLE

Diapers at the Doctor: Parent perceptions of a clinic-based approach to mitigating diaper need and financial hardship through a diaper distribution program

ABSTRACT

Background An inadequate supply of clean diapers can negatively impact the well-being of both children and caregivers. As a trusted source for care and resources, pediatric clinics are well-positioned to address diaper insecurity. A 2016 needs assessment at a suburban, federally qualified health center (FQHC) determined that 50% of patients experienced diaper insecurity.

Community partner Diapers at the Doctor

<https://med.stanford.edu/childhealthequity/engagement/diapers.html>

Methods Patients of diaper-wearing age were eligible for Diapers at the Doctor. Caregivers completed a survey (English/Spanish) at enrollment of financial, food, and diaper insecurity using validated questions. Descriptive statistics and Chi-square tests were performed in STATA 15.1. A stratified subsample of caregivers was asked to voluntarily participate in a confidential interview by phone or in-person to further explore perceptions of need.

Results Survey participants (n=132) were Hispanic (86%), White (10%), Native Hawaiian (2%), Black (1%), Asian (1%). Financial insecurity (68.5% always/sometimes), food insecurity (43.4% often/sometimes), and diaper insecurity (64.3%) were very common amongst participants at enrollment. Forty-five interviews were completed (n=24 English; n=21 Spanish). Through qualitative interviews with participants, six themes emerged across two domains highlighting that receiving free diapers at the clinic improved financial and diaper security, and alleviated stress amongst caregivers.

Conclusion Families attending an FQHC face considerable financial barriers to providing essential care for their young children. This study provides early evidence of the benefit of programs that directly impact families' finances through cost savings that can be redirected to other material needs.

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CATEGORY

Improving Health Equity, Healthcare Access, Service and Quality