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Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences – Public Health Experience **Public Health Spotlight: Family Planning**

Greene County Family Planning is one of only 207 sites funded by the New York State Department of Health to provide accessible reproductive health care services to both men and women. These services are focused particularly towards low-income individuals and those who are underinsured or have no health insurance. The program offers contraceptive education, counseling and testing for HIV, testing and treatment for STDs, routine breast and cervical cancer screening, as well as many more services geared towards helping the general public stay healthy and aware.

The New York state average for women using long-acting reversible contraception is 11%, while in 2013 alone, the clinic introduced this method into 36% of their clients. The clinic is doing their best to meet the growing needs of clientele by improving efficiency through electronic records, fully booked clinics, Man-Up Mondays, and walk-in teen clinics. The clinic is also doing everything in their power to collaborate and contract with more insurance companies to grant as many patients as possible the opportunity to have full access to the clinic with little to no cost out-of-pocket. The way that this clinic is operating should allow for sustainability in Greene County. This clinic has all the resources any person would need to be sexually active while being completely safe, healthy, and aware of what they are doing. The clinic is also involved with supporting the prevention and awareness of controlled substance abuse as it correlates to risky sexual behavior, as well as minimizing the risks for those who do choose to continue their abusive habits.

Of the “10 Essential Public Health Services” listed by the CDC, the Greene County Family Planning Clinic provides each one of those services to their patients. The clinic monitors patients and the community as a whole, diagnosis the sexually related issues in the community, offers vast amounts of material to inform and educate the community about the many sexually related health issues. Aside from that, the clinic also tries to communicate and establish partnerships with other agencies of the community to handle the issues better. They develop policies and plans to support a sexually healthy and overall wellness while upholding the strictest laws and regulations ensuring each person’s safety. The clinic deals with personal issues providing health care when it is otherwise unavailable or undesired, and upholds a very courteous and professional workforce. GCFP constantly researches new and insightful ways mitigate the health issues of the community, all while being as effective and accessible as possible.

This Public Health rotation has taught me the importance of public health and providing the public with a clinic that can give them all the information and services they need to stay healthy. I can say that aside from the knowledge I am able to take away from this, I have also learned to have a less judgmental view of patients and to show more empathy for those struggling with issues. I feel this is especially important for teens due to the sensitivity of their situations and is just as important to those less financially fortunate who struggle to afford health services. I personally got to see the importance of testing for lead in 1 and 2 year old infants because of how common and dangerous it is and to create the needed awareness towards this issue. More clinics such as this can be the solution to creating a much healthier tomorrow for the entire world in every aspect of the word “Healthy.”

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