

Community Stroke Education for the Hispanic and Latino Community

Casa ALBA Melanie Hispanic Resource Center of the Greater Green Bay Area (CAM) became a Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program (Coverdell) Community Partner in January of 2023. In their time as a partner, they've gone above and beyond in their participation and efforts to improve stroke awareness and access to care for the Spanish-speaking community. They were honored for their excellence in community-based efforts for stroke awareness by Coverdell at the Wisconsin Stroke Coalition Annual Performance Improvements Awards in March of 2024.

CAM's mission is to support the wellbeing of the Brown County community (and now surrounding counties), specifically those who identify as Hispanic and/or Latino. Their vision is Hispanic and Latino communities having all they need to thrive. As CAM develops and implements their new strategic plan, their vision and mission may change with it. Amanda Garcia, executive director states, "the heart of what we do stays the same, which is to be a trusted resource center where people can come and ask questions and seek services and, ultimately, uplifting the most vulnerable in our community, because we're only as strong as those on the margins."

CAM is one of the area's largest and longest standing agencies of its kind, having been established for over a decade now. As time goes on, the organization continues to evolve. They've grown in resources and services provided. This has been accomplished through increasing and creating resource referrals, client intake programs, the Spanish Health Navigator Program, and other professional services, as well as extensive partnerships to support their and others' missions alike. All efforts are driven by the desire to help others, fostered by providing folks the tools they need to succeed.

Community Based Interventions

CAM bolstered efforts surrounding prevention, treatment, and management of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other chronic conditions were bolstered in 2021 after the pandemic's disproportionate affect on People of Color. Many folks within the Hispanic and Latino community of the Greater Green Bay Area were not getting the information needed to protect themselves. To combat this, CAM received a grant during this time to begin the Spanish Health Navigation Program, initially focusing on those without insurance and helping them navigate where to go for care. A large component of this program's growth has been the implementation of health risk assessments (HRAs). HRAs measure height, weight, body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol panel, blood sugar, and vision while providing education and counseling in Spanish on all these topics. Patients are linked with primary care providers and any other necessary services and resources after the assessments are completed. These assessments are seen as one of the most beneficial services CAM provides to the community, as they've allowed CAM to see what the biggest health issues are in their community and how to best care for and educate people.

The Health Navigation Program has helped over 1,000 people with health questions and support, and over 300 have been connected to primary care. CAM acknowledges there is not a one-size-fits all solution to cardiovascular disease and stroke prevention but is navigating their role in this space. CAM is engaging the community in what they want to experience to best support healthy living, including how to make optimal personal decisions and receive information to uplift their health. CAM takes the time to understand what clients are experiencing and how its impacting their daily lives, then acts upon needs through a culturally responsive, person-first approach. This has led to utilizing different forms of communication, such as text messaging, which

The Players

Amanda Garcia, executive director

Deniz Valdez, Spanish health navigator

Ami Mendez, Spanish health navigation program coordinator

Colleen Messner, former Spanish health navigation program coordinator

Casa ALBA Melanie

What They Did

A Hispanic and Latino Resource center, Casa ALBA Melanie, deployed community-based strategies to address cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other chronic conditions within their community.



has been a preferred form by many clients. CAM also utilizes Spanish-translated educational materials, such as Coverdell's stroke education library.

CAM helps their clients address barriers to accessing clinical care by helping them navigate the system in their native language. This involves discussing insurance, providing a general understanding of how the health care system in the United States works, as it operates differently than those in Hispanic and Latin countries, and addressing folks' fears of health care in the United States due to historic and ongoing traumas these communities face. One client called CAM stating they hadn't been to a doctor in five years because they did not realize they could obtain health care without insurance, and the CAM team was able to assist this client in obtaining appropriate, affordable care. CAM is a strong advocate for Hispanic and Latino communities and believes in, "Listening because we want to know what they're [clients] experiencing and what we can do within our power and our capacity to improve the systems that are in place that might be exacerbating those health disparities." Effects of their advocacy can be seen locally in a partner eye clinic working to translate their intake forms into Spanish, as well as one of the receptionists learning basic Spanish to be able to greet clients.

Strong Partnerships

Aside from connections to health care such as to Northeast Wisconsin (NEW) Community Clinic—a federally qualified health center—and Bellin Health (Bellin), CAM provides services and partners with other organizations to address clients' social service and support needs. This includes housing resources, legal services, food access, translation, education, child care, and more. CAM provides a safe space for clients and educates and guides them in culturally-informed ways, basing all efforts off client needs.

Another effort that has helped educate clients and connect them to resources is the [Health Equity, Covid, and Stroke educational session](#) CAM hosted in partnership with De Pere Fire Rescue (DPFR) and Bellin. This collaboration came out of Colleen Messner, the past Spanish health navigation program coordinator's connections to Bellin and Bellin's connection to DPFR. These connections helped this collaboration flow easily. The Brown County group had a very clear intention from the beginning and worked cohesively toward the same goal—delivering accessible education to the community. This presentation was provided live in Spanish and English and went over stroke and COVID prevention and awareness, local resources, and how health equity intersects across the systems of care. This group met frequently to help one another. Each organization played different roles based on their unique structure, experience, and understanding of the topics. These unique roles helped build relationships between the organizations that will continue to flourish. Deniz Valdez, Spanish health navigator, played a huge role in the translation, ensuring the presentation was culturally appropriate, and connecting to the Hispanic radio station. This event was deemed very successful by participant feedback on the pre-and post-survey of the presentation. The questions gauging understanding of stroke went from 53% pre- to 93% post, and for COVID went from 73% to 93%. The one barrier seemed to be the location of the event. Due to Lambeau Field's size and lack of Spanish signage, it was not very accessible for the primary audience of this presentation. Collaborators took note of this and will look for different spaces for events in the future.

All event hosts noted it was a very original experience to be working in this orientation and had very positive experiences. They pioneered collaborations between the different Coverdell partnership types, which will offer many valuable lessons as learning collaboratives (LCs) are established in this new iteration. LCs will be required to have members across the stroke continuum of care, as this group did, and they will focus on specific topics and initiatives as part of quality improvement projects. LCs may be able to refer to the Brown County group's experience for insight on how to best implement projects and set up the organizational structure.

Successes and Sustainability

The CAM team has been instrumental in moving forward efforts for the prevention, treatment, and management of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and other chronic disease. Specifically, Amanda's leadership is a staple of the organization's growth, and Colleen served as a pioneer beginning the health navigation program. Ami Mendez, Spanish health navigation program coordinator, and Deniz are excellent in carrying out this program and working directly with the clients and families that enter the organization. In addition to the CAM team, collaborations with partners such as Bellin for virtual health care consultations at no charge for clients, health care referrals to Newcap and NEW Community Clinic, and working with Streu's Pharmacy Bay Natural (Streu's) on comprehensive medical reviews for medication management provide opportunities for comprehensive care. CAM has also worked with the local public health, Streu's, and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) on vaccination efforts.

CAM believes ensuring intentions are clear is crucial to building healthy partnerships. They are very deliberate about making sure anyone they may work with is also championing health equity. Another key to these partnerships is having resources to achieve collective goals. Having diverse partnerships is helpful in doing so by organizations having different resources and connections to make them available. Partnerships also grow capacity by more people having shared goals and the ability to better reach people where they are at. CAM believes partnerships must center community by advocating for and being accessible to them. This includes recognizing what impacts a community and how to move forward.

Coverdell intends to help by continuing to connect CAM to different partners in the stroke industry as opportunity arises. CAM advises Coverdell to continue being open to dialogue surrounding others' differences, learning opportunities, moments of discomfort, and centering health equity.

CAM intends to sustain organizational efforts by continuing to center their work on the community's needs, a main one being cardiovascular health. It's crucial to focus on specific priority areas to ensure burnout is avoided. They intend to continue



conducting HRAs and utilize the data for evidence-based approaches to addressing disparities, incorporating client feedback into their practices. CAM staff also stay abreast on current standings of systems and disparities the community is facing. They remain focused on community needs, engaging partners across the health care and social service continuum, and providing feedback to those partners when clients feel they are not heard, seen, or cared for properly and respectfully. CAM does a phenomenal job of meeting people where they're at. Deniz states, "It's one thing to offer a service, it's another to make it accessible."

CAM has played, and continues to play, a very valuable role of educating the Hispanic and Latino community on the prevention, awareness, and treatment of stroke and connecting people to appropriate resources.

Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program

The Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program works with hospitals, emergency medical services (EMS), and professional and community-based organizations (CBO) across the state to support a healthier Wisconsin by improving community awareness and the quality of stroke care. CBOs, EMS agencies, and hospitals of all types and sizes are invited to be part of the Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program. For more information, please visit the [Wisconsin Coverdell Stroke Program's website](https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/coverdell).

