

# Improving Health Literacy and Cancer Screening in Franklin County, Ohio



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## Background

For my practicum, I worked with Cancer Support Community Central Ohio, located on 1200 Old Henderson Road, Columbus, OH 43220. The mission of Cancer Support Community (CSC) is to address the emotional impact of cancer and to empower people through education, support, and community to manage their cancer journey and achieve better health outcomes and improved quality of life. The focus of my work with CSC Central Ohio was the improvement of health literacy and cancer screening uptake in Franklin County, Ohio.

## Population

Since Cancer Support Community Central Ohio serves the population of Franklin County, Ohio, my work was geared toward the same population and mainly its adults. Demographical information of Franklin County's population is provided below.

- Population:** 1,321,414 people
- White, only: 66.8%
- Black or African American, only: 23.8%
- Hispanic or Latino: 5.8%
- Asian, only: 5.7%
- Median Age:** 34.1 years
- Median Household Income:** \$62,352
- Person's in Poverty:** 15.4%

## Learning Objectives

Using Bloom's Taxonomy, the three learning objectives for my practicum experience are as follows:

- To CREATE new and original work in the forms of an infographic and a community engagement plan.
- To EVALUATE the necessity and benefit of my work and explain its uses for CSC Central Ohio and its target population.
- To ANALYZE population health information to identify areas of improvement.

## Activities

During my practicum, my day-to-day activities and responsibilities were as follows:

- Research and literature review on the impacts of health literacy and cancer screening on cancer outcomes
- Research and literature review on health literacy and cancer screening uptake in Franklin County, OH
- Creating an infographic to improve health literacy in Franklin County and creating a community engagement plan to promote cancer screening in the county

## Infographic

**HEALTH LITERACY**  
**CAN IMPROVE YOUR CANCER OUTCOMES**

**WHAT IS HEALTH LITERACY?**  
Using and understanding healthcare information to make the best health decisions for yourself.

**THE BEST CANCER RESULTS**  
**ARE ASSOCIATED WITH HIGHER LEVELS OF HEALTH LITERACY**

**THOSE WITH HIGH HEALTH LITERACY HAVE:**

- Fewer hospital stays
- Decreased cancer diagnoses
- Improved care and outcomes

**WHAT CAN I DO?**

- Ask your doctor questions!** If you are having trouble understanding what the doctor is telling you, ask them to explain again. Don't be embarrassed!
- Repeat what the doctor tells you** in your own words. This gives your doctor a chance to clarify anything you may have misheard or do not understand.
- Work with a patient navigator** if possible. A patient navigator is someone trained to help you navigate your healthcare, assess your treatment options, get a referral, apply for financial assistance, and much more!
- Bring a friend or loved one** with you to your appointment. Ask them to take notes for you that you can refer to later. If they cannot come to the appointment in person, ask your doctor if they can join virtually.

**CANCER SUPPORT COMMUNITY CENTRAL OHIO**  
www.CancerSupportCommunity.org

Figure 1: Health Literacy Infographic with emphasis on the association between higher health literacy and improved cancer results.



Use QR code or click here to view presentation

## Community Engagement Plan

### Overview

- Purpose is to **increase awareness** of cancer screenings among the Franklin County population, **convey** how cancer screenings significantly improve cancer outcomes, and **connect** residents to cancer screening resources and organizations
- Will be done by holding a **cancer screening health fair**
- Emphasis on **helping underserved and at-risk populations** that struggle to acquire the resources they need to get proper cancer screenings at the appropriate times and frequencies

### Relevance to Franklin County

- Top 5 cancers in Franklin County: **Breast, Lung and Bronchus, Prostate, Colon and Rectum, Melanoma of the Skin**
- Screening can detect most of these cancers early
- Due to this, advocating for cancer screening and connecting residents of the county to screening resources can have a significant impact on the Franklin County population
- Also, since Franklin County **skews so young** (median age 34.1 years), it is an **ideal setting** in which to promote cancer screening education that will impact a young population before cancer screening becomes even more crucial for their health and well-being

### Health Fair Activities

- Raffle-** Offering prizes can boost participation, retention, and excitement.
- Screening Passport-** In order to encourage more participants to get free cancer screenings offered at the event, participants can be given a "passport" at registration which can be stamped after receiving a screening. If a participant receives a predetermined number of stamps, they will be eligible to receive a free gift or another set of raffle tickets.
- At-Home Cancer Screening Test Demonstrations-** For those interested in taking cancer screening tests at home, there can be stations set up to demonstrate how to use various at-home kits so participants feel more comfortable purchasing and using these tests.
- Booths for Partner Organizations-** Booths can be placed at the health fair for partner organizations to set up so participants can network and learn more about each organization's mission, products, and services.

### Potential Partner Organizations

- Columbus Cancer Clinic**
- Ohio Breast and Cervical Cancer Project (BCCP)**
- The James at The Ohio State University**
- OhioHealth**
- LetsGetChecked**
- American Cancer Society**

## Regions With High Social Need in Franklin County

Both the infographic and community engagement plan are meant to reach as many residents of Franklin County as possible. However, both have the most potential impact on areas in the county with high social need and, therefore, higher risk of developing cancer. These regions are colored brown in the map of Franklin County provided below in Figure 2.

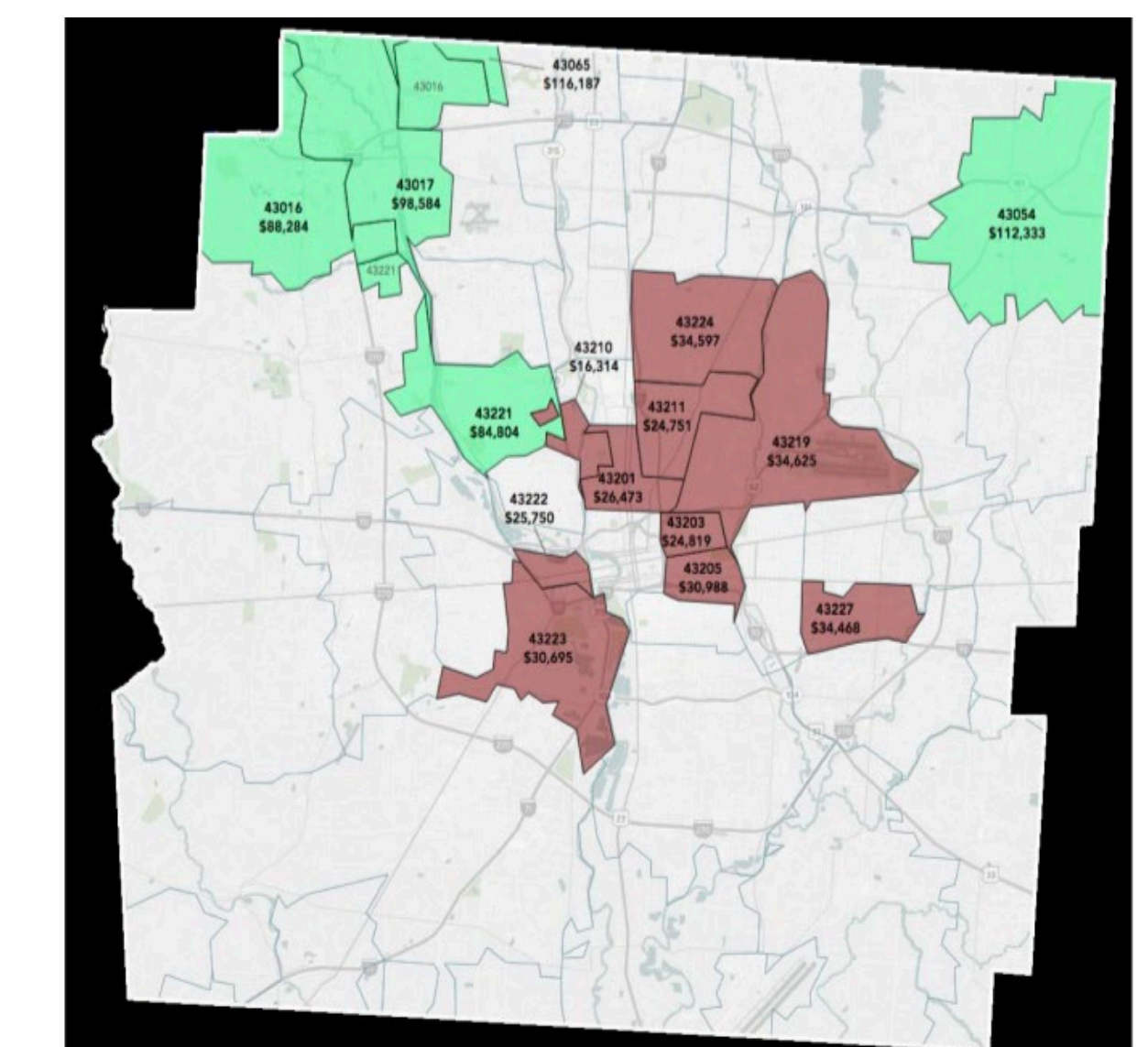


Figure 2: Communities, by zip code, in Franklin County with high levels of social need (shown in brown).

## Lessons Learned

- How to determine areas of improvement in regard to population health
- How to brainstorm potential courses of action, analyze each option, and choose the most efficient and beneficial option
- How to use community health assessments to understand factors and behaviors that contribute to a population's overall health
- How to make health information and suggestions more understandable and retainable for general audiences
- How to create an infographic and community engagement plan
- How to plan a health fair

## Public Health Implications

- Increased health literacy among Franklin County residents
- Improved cancer screening uptake as well as cancer results and outcomes in the county, especially in underserved communities
- Improved understanding of cancer screening, its benefits, and where to obtain such tests
- Improved access to cancer prevention and screening resources

## Acknowledgments

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