

Research Summary: Evaluating the Success of Community Engagement in the Implementation Science Center for Cancer Control Equity

- **Working with community health centers strengthens research**, but it's rare to ask how these partnerships are going.
- This study asked health center staff about their experience partnering with the Implementation Science Center for Cancer Control Equity (ISCCCE).
- ISCCCE followed nine community-engagement principles to guide these partnerships, including setting goals and building long-term relationships.
- The findings show that staff generally felt that ISCCCE adhered to these principles.
- **Collecting staff feedback** allowed ISCCCE to **adapt projects to suit community health centers' needs**.



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WHO PARTICIPATED

- 38 community health center staff including clinicians, navigators, medical assistants, and leaders who participated in ISCCCE-supported pilot projects



WHAT WE DID

- From 2020 to 2024, community health center staff and researchers worked together on eight cancer prevention research projects.
- Health center staff helped design, implement, and adapt projects as well as co-authored papers.
- Each year, health center staff involved in the research projects completed a survey to assess what worked, what didn't, and how to improve future collaboration.

WHAT WE FOUND

- **Health center staff valued the partnership:** Most felt respected, said the work benefited their patients, and want to stay involved.
- **Time and tools presented challenges:** Limited staff and competing demands were barriers. Live meetings were more useful than virtual communication platforms, which were later simplified to reduce burden.
- **Flexibility made a difference:** Staff appreciated projects that adapted to health center needs and included regular communication.



WHAT'S NEXT

- **Support health center leadership and professional growth:** Provide time, resources, and opportunities for staff to lead projects, co-author papers, and build research skills.
- **Use feedback to strengthen partnerships:** Regular feedback from health centers should continue to guide and improve how research partnerships are managed.
- **Grow peer learning and collaboration:** Support shared learning and connection across health centers through ongoing meetings and networks.