

Family Voices of Minnesota's Parent-to-Parent Program Study Executive Summary

In the United States one in five children have a chronic or complex healthcare need and/or disability. Weaknesses in the healthcare system frequently result in children and families experiencing uncoordinated often inaccessible care without social support.

The Family Voices of Minnesota Parent to Parent program involves providing support so parents do not feel alone in their journey; informing families about community resources and how to use them; empowering and preparing families to partner with their child's providers and promoting patient and family-centered care.

In 2011 Family Voices of Minnesota received a grant from the Maternal Child Health Bureau to study the outcomes and benefits of parent to parent peer support for families whose children have special health care needs. Peer support is a topic of interest in research on disability, and medical and mental health. It represents an adjunct to traditional professional services, (Ainbinder, et al, 1998).

Study Methodology

The design for this evaluation project is a mixed-methods, multiple perspective study via a concurrent triangulation design.

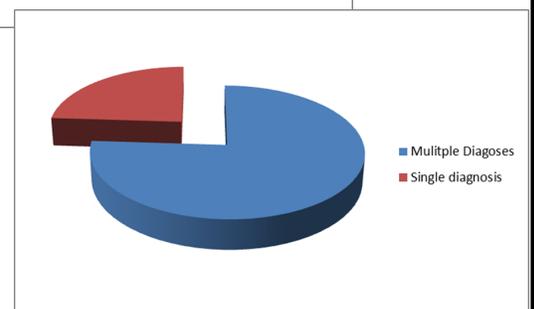
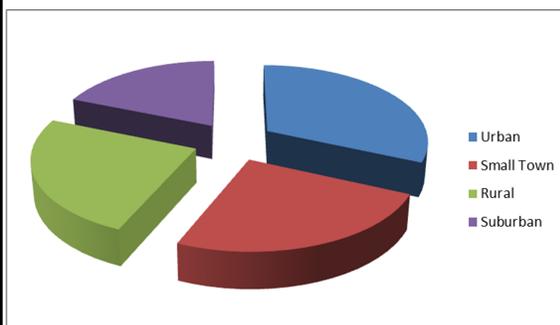
This evaluation presents data from qualitative interviews with key stakeholders and quantitative responses to standardized questions to provide a multiple methods and multiple-perspectives view. The use of both quantitative and qualitative measures in this concurrent triangulation design was chosen for this study as an attempt to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within a single study.

The qualitative portion of this evaluation presents data from interviews with key stakeholders in the program. The quantitative portion presents pre- and post-intervention survey data from family members and healthcare providers. The surveys were used to capture data throughout the entire four years.

Study Results

Demographics of the parents served by Family Voices of MN Parent to Parent Program:

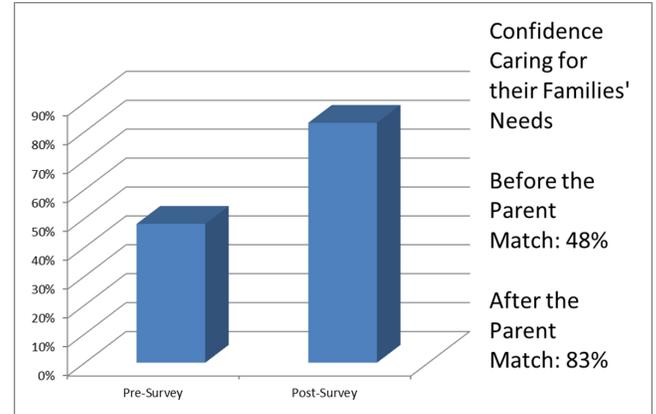
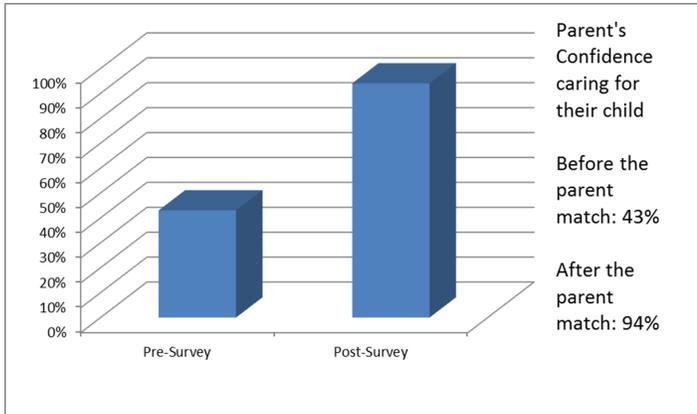
- 60% of parents in our study are considered low income
- 76% of children had multiple diagnoses
- Almost equal distribution of families from urban, small town, rural and suburban families were served.



Study Results

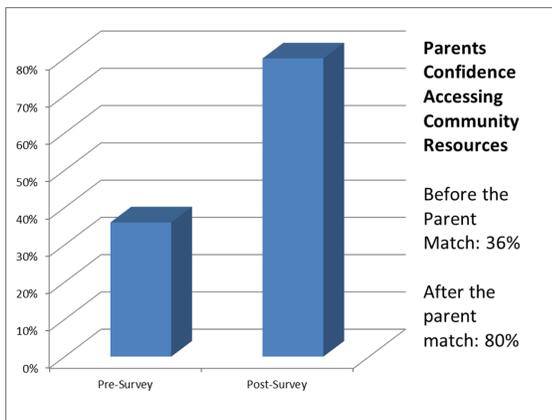
Pre and Post surveys revealed outcomes similar to other national studies on the outcomes of Parent to Parent peer support, these include:

- Increased confidence in caring for their child and family



Study Results

- Increased confidence accessing needed community resources and navigating systems of care



Study Results

- Parents also reported a 56% decrease in emergency department visits

Decreased ED Visits after P2P Peer Support



- A decrease in missed school days in the last 3 months

Analysis of parent interviews in multiple rounds resulted in six major themes that families identified as important components of parent to parent support in the Family Voices Parent to Parent program:

- Trust and Empathy
- Resources and Accessibility
- Awareness and Understanding
- Cultural Competence
- Mutual Respect and Partnerships
- Empowerment and advocacy

The findings suggest that *Parent-to-Parent Support Programs* can yield culturally competent family-centered support for children and families with special needs across diverse populations as an adjunct to traditional health services.