

Opening Doors into 2017:
Client Feedback for Improvement of Service Delivery

By Jeffrey Andres Guzman
ODFMC Family Medical Centers
Marketing & Community Relations Assistant

Summer 2016

About This Study

In its mission and value statements, ODFMC expressed a commitment to improving the health and quality of life of Westchester and Putnam County residents. ODFMC should regularly assess the various services they offer to ensure that they are consistent with the promise they've made to their clients, as well as the demands and needs of a growing clientele.

High quality healthcare lies in service that is client centered and is holistically aware of each individual's needs. ODFMC should be cognizant not only of community medical needs, but also cultural backgrounds, so that clients feel comfortable, respected, and understood every step of the way.

Understanding the backgrounds of client populations will yield a greater understanding of their medical needs: the core of ODFMC's mission. Health issues common within a demographic group can often be explained by a greater societal implication or gap affecting that group. By understanding those gaps, ODFMC can provide services to close the gap and through education, empowerment, and prevention can continue improving health outcomes in the community.

The goal of this study is to help ODFMC in its strive for excellence. A series of focus groups will be organized to ask patients for feedback on the services offered by ODFMC. This will highlight any gaps and will allow ODFMC to build upon existing services and see where there is a need for new ones.

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OPEN DOOR

FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER
AND FOUNDATION

Building Strong, Healthy Communities

Mission

ODFMC is the region's experts in all aspects of health, with a broad focus on building healthier communities. From prevention and wellness programs to the treatment of diseases, ODFMC sees our primary mission as keeping the people of Westchester and Putnam Counties healthy and strong, regardless of their ability to pay.

Vision

By 2020, ODFMC will serve more than 55,000 patients every year. We'll expand to new communities, enrich our service offerings, and continue to uphold the highest standards of high-quality, patient-centered, affordable health care. Through our growing wellness services, we will improve the overall health and quality of life for residents in Westchester and Putnam counties.

Values

1. Access
Quality health care is a right, not a privilege.
2. Affordability
People deserve care regardless of their ability to pay.
3. Community
Access to health care benefits everyone in the community.
4. Efficiency
Health care should be delivered timely and cost-effectively.
5. Empowerment
People can make good decisions when they are armed with the right information.
6. Patients
People should come first.
7. Respect
Diversity and respect for cultural and linguistic differences should be upheld.

Design and Planning

Focuses

- **Peekskill:** Nearly 2,000 ODFMC clients reside in Peekskill, despite a competitor being based there. This focus group will look at why and if a Peekskill location is viable.

A report of Peekskill-based clients who attended an appointment at Ossining ODFMC in the last year was compiled. Client account numbers were copied and pasted into a secure, random list generator, through random.org. Calls were made until a 12th client confirmed their attendance.

- **Black:** ODFMC has potential to increase its Black clientele. However, there are barriers in the way, and this focus group will uncover what they are and how to address them.

A report of Black clients who attended an appointment at Ossining ODFMC in the last year was compiled. Client account numbers were copied and pasted into a secure, random list generator, through random.org. Calls were made until a 12th client confirmed their attendance.

- **General Services:** ODFMC offers a variety of medical services. Two focus groups — one in Ossining and Port Chester each — will examine how well ODFMC is delivering those services.

Signs were posted in Ossining and Port Chester ODFMC informing clients that focus groups would be happening on the given day and that any interested client could call me to confirm their attendance.

Schedule

Date	Time	Location	Group
2016-07-15	1:00-3:00 PM	Ossining	Peekskill Focus Group
2016-07-21	1:00-3:00 PM	Ossining	Black Focus Group
2016-08-03	1:00-3:00 PM	Ossining	General Services Focus Group
2016-08-19	3:00-5:00 PM	Port Chester	General Services Focus Group

Budget

- \$20 gift cards per participant
- \$10 travel voucher per participant (Peekskill only)
- \$30 cheese and fruit platter per group

Questions

Peekskill Focus Group

1. How did you hear about Open Door?
2. What services do you most use at Open Door?
3. Do you use any other local health centers or resources besides Open Door? If so, why?
4. Have you ever used HRHCare?
5. Are there cultural or community events at Peekskill that you feel represent you?
6. Would you recommend Open Door to a friend?
7. Do you think Peekskill would benefit from having an Open Door there?

Black Focus Group

1. How did you hear about Open Door?
2. What services do you most use at Open Door?
3. Do you use any other local health centers or resources besides Open Door? If so, why?
4. Do you feel that there is staff at Open Door whom you can relate to? If not, what would make staff more relatable?
5. Have you seen or stopped at Open Door's table at community events?
6. Are there cultural or community events at Ossining that you feel represent you?
7. What can Open Door do to make you feel more at ease?
8. Are there any initiatives or services you would like to see implemented at Open Door?
9. Would you recommend Open Door to a friend?

General Focus Group

1. How did you hear about Open Door?
2. What services do you most use at Open Door?
3. Are you able to get a hold of the call center easily?
4. Does Open Door's schedule work with your availability?
5. What is your time in reception/in the waiting area like?
6. Do you like your current providers?
7. Did your providers or anyone on staff refer you to our other services?
8. Have you seen or stopped at Open Door's table at community events?
9. Are there any initiatives or services you would like to see implemented at Open Door?
10. Would you recommend Open Door to a friend?

Peekskill Focus Group

Background

More than **1,800 Peekskill residents seek medical care at Ossining ODFMC**, according to a Bridge Data report. That number does not account for the hundreds of clients commuting from Peekskill's neighboring communities of Buchanan and Cortlandt, or communities as far north as Cold Spring and Garrison.

HRHCare already maintains a community health center in Peekskill. So, why do so many residents skip out on this conveniently located health center for one that's farther away? **Is there a need for an ODFMC center in Peekskill?**

Six ODFMC clients residing in Peekskill gathered for a focus group, while we surveyed another five clients over the phone. In addition to evaluating ODFMC's service delivery, research participants evaluated their experience, if any, at HRHCare. Participants also answered questions regarding what community resource gaps exist in Peekskill that ODFMC may be able to fill.

Findings

Generally, participants had one of two reasons for choosing ODFMC over HRHCare:

1. They were an ODFMC client before moving to Peekskill and remained with ODFMC to maintain a relationship with their provider.
2. They visited HRHCare and preferred ODFMC's service delivery.

Participants unsatisfied with HRHCare gave the following reasons:

- Staff was rude or uncourteous
- There's a large provider/staff turnover in the dental and women's health departments
- Available appointments are too far away in time
- Appointments are often rescheduled with short notice
- The wait to be seen is too long
- The facility is not clean
- The center sees too many people at once and overcrowds
- The front desk is behind a window and feels unwelcoming

While many participants felt ODFMC has similar problems with appointment availability and wait time, they generally agreed that ODFMC providers and staff are more attentive, friendly, and trustworthy. In particular, many preferred ODFMC's dental department to HRHCare's.

Asked if HRHCare offers events or special services similar to ODFMC's, participants said:

- No Wellness Program, but HRHCare has its own nutrition department
- No Santa Day, but the Peekskill Salvation Army organizes an annual toy drive
- No clothing giveaways, but the Salvation Army organizes these regularly as well

- No School-Based Health Center, but HRHCare collaborates with the Peekskill School District to organize dental cleanings at school
- No participation in cultural events or fairs, mostly because Peekskill doesn't have many

When asked if Peekskill needs an ODFMC, participants agreed that there should be one.

Many know other Peekskill residents who would like to use ODFMC, but who don't because of time and/or transportation. Some participants who exclusively use ODFMC's dental services said they would be more likely to use ODFMC for primary care if there was a Peekskill center.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, here are recommendations for improving Peekskill clients' experience:

- **Open a Peekskill ODFMC. There are many factors in favor:**
 1. A sizeable client base in and around Peekskill (2,000+)
 2. A large number of Peekskill residents would use ODFMC were distance and transportation not barriers
 3. Clients using ODFMC for dental would start using ODFMC for primary care
 4. Peekskill residents would gain better access to ODFMC's other services
 5. Residents are unsatisfied with HRHCare, Peekskill's community health center
 6. Ossining ODFMC's appointment availability and wait time would likely improve
 7. ODFMC can better establish partnerships in Peekskill

If a Peekskill center were opened, some participants did note the following as reasons they still wouldn't go:

- ODFMC's insurance agreements can be limiting
- They wouldn't want to leave the provider they have at Ossining ODFMC
- They have a private doctor elsewhere
- **Build ODFMC's brand in Peekskill by hosting or sponsoring outreach events there**
- **Provide shuttle service between Ossining and centrally-located spot(s) in Peekskill**
- **Extend Ossining ODFMC's evening hours to give Peekskill commuters more time**

Black Focus Group

Background

ODFMC serves predominantly low-income clients. A majority of the clientele is Latinx, which makes sense as 19.4% of Westchester Latinx people live in poverty, according to the 2015 NY State Poverty Report. The Black community, at 18.3% of the population, is second to Latinx people in terms of percent living in poverty.

Despite these numbers being close, the Black community is a much smaller percentage of ODFMC's clientele. Why is that? **What is missing from ODFMC's brand to encourage more usage among Westchester's Black residents?**

Seven Black ODFMC clients gathered for a focus group, while we surveyed several more at Ossining's Sankofa Festival. **Ossining, at 4,000 people and 17%, according to the 2010 Census, has the largest Black community of all towns ODFMC is based in.** Research participants evaluated their ODFMC experience and answered questions regarding what community resource gaps exist in Westchester that ODFMC may be able to fill.

Findings

Participants said ODFMC has not adequately woven two cultural elements into its service:

1. Language
2. Race

Participants felt that with ODFMC's large Latinx clientele, Spanish is the primary language of use for ODFMC's literature and multimedia — something they feel leaves them in the dark. This was evident in their **lack of awareness of certain ODFMC events and services like:**

- The Wellness Program (incl. fitness classes, diabetes support groups, prenatal groups)
- The Behavioral Health department
- Patient Advocates
- Santa Days
- Youth giveaways

All participants know of and use medical, dental, women's health, and WIC services. But these are staple services promoted not only by ODFMC, but by insurance companies and government agencies. Many of ODFMC's services are not found at other community health centers, which makes ODFMC special. **Participants applauded the additional services and expressed interest in them, but wished they were better promoted.**

Participants attributed their lack of awareness to a number of variables:

1. Many ads and flyers most prominently displayed at ODFMC are in Spanish

2. Flyers are often ignored thinking they contain general medical information rather than information about an event or new service
3. Information about events and new services is often spread by word of mouth making it difficult to get information to Black residents, since not as many use ODFMC

Another problem — **many services are not even offered in English**. Fitness classes are bilingual, but none of the support groups are.

Race was also central to the conversation. **Many participants expressed dissatisfaction at the lack of Black culture in ODFMC services**. They cited the following concerns:

1. Few Black staff/providers
2. Few culturally relevant medical services
3. Few culturally relevant events and non-medical services

Participants all stated **they would feel better were more ODFMC providers and staff Black**. They feel a Black provider will better understand and treat their health concerns. Participants also said it's encouraging for their children to see other Black people in these positions of power.

Some participants said they don't feel understood by ODFMC staff and sense that there is preferential treatment given to Latinx clients. Participants noted this treatment manifests itself in staff chatting with Latinx clients, helping them with paperwork, and calling them first.

There was an understanding that much of the staff is Latinx, because Latinx people are more likely to speak both English and Spanish, but one participant said she applied for a position (being able to speak both languages) and never received a response.

Participants appreciate the medical services offered. However, **they want ODFMC to more intentionally address Black health concerns**. Examples included performing blood pressure screenings at health fairs and offering an English-language depression support group.

Participants expressed desire to see events and services tailored for Black culture. Participants said the Wellness Program is a good starting point and that establishing these services would elevate ODFMC's value in the Black community, because Ossining as a whole is missing culturally Black spaces.

Feeling like an outsider goes beyond ODFMC. Emcees at the Sankofa Festival revealed that the Ossining's Black community feels this in general. **Demographic shifts have led to a decline in Black population and Black business in Ossining. Residents feel that all new business is Latinx-centered**. They feel shut out, but pledged initiatives that revive the community.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, here are recommendations for improving Black clients' experience:

- **Ensure that DFMC's English ads and literature are as visible as those in Spanish**

- **Reassess ODFMC's rules and regulations regarding where/how ads can be placed**
 - Use the automated calling system to send clients voice messages that advertise outreach events or special programs
 - Send automated text messages — many participants were receptive to the idea
 - Use television screens in waiting areas
 - Place a chalkboard or balloons outside facilities in the days leading up to an event
- **Sponsor culturally relevant events or create them with community partners**
- **Find community partners that are well-known and already do a lot for the Black community in Ossining**
- **Modify hiring procedures to give more opportunity to Black applicants**
- **Train staff on racial and cultural sensitivity**
- **Diversify the Wellness Program offerings**
 - Add culturally relevant rhythms or songs to Zumba playlists
 - Add a step dance class to the curriculum
 - Add culturally relevant dishes to the Cooking Matters curriculum
 - Add culturally relevant markets to the the supermarket tour schedule
 - Offer support groups in English or provide bilingual instruction
 - Create a depression support group or look for community partners who have them
 - Create curriculum for the NYMC Workshop that covers culturally relevant topics such as natural hair care