

# Leveraging electronic medical records for produce prescription program referral for improved enrollment and participation.

Monica K Esquivel PhD RDN<sup>1</sup>, Cherese Shelton<sup>2</sup>, Alicia Higa<sup>2</sup>, May Okihiro MD MS<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Human Nutrition, Food and Animal Sciences, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, <sup>2</sup>Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center



## Background:

The Keiki (child) produce prescription (KPRx) program provides food insecure pediatric patients with vouchers to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. An automated referral processing system was introduced to overcome low enrollment and participation in the KPRx program.

## Objective:

To quantify the impact of integrated and electronic referral processing on KPRx enrollment and participation.

## Methods:

Program enrollment (# referred vs. enrolled) and participation (# of participants active at 3 months) compared using independent t-tests.

**Referral Mechanism 1:** Paper prescription was provided with instructions to visit the farmers market to enroll (Figure 1), and the clinic called to remind patients to enroll.

**Referral Mechanism 2:** Electronic Medical Record (EMR) template for referral (Figure 2). KPRx staff were alerted of the referral via the EMR and subsequently contacted participants to enroll at the farmers' market.

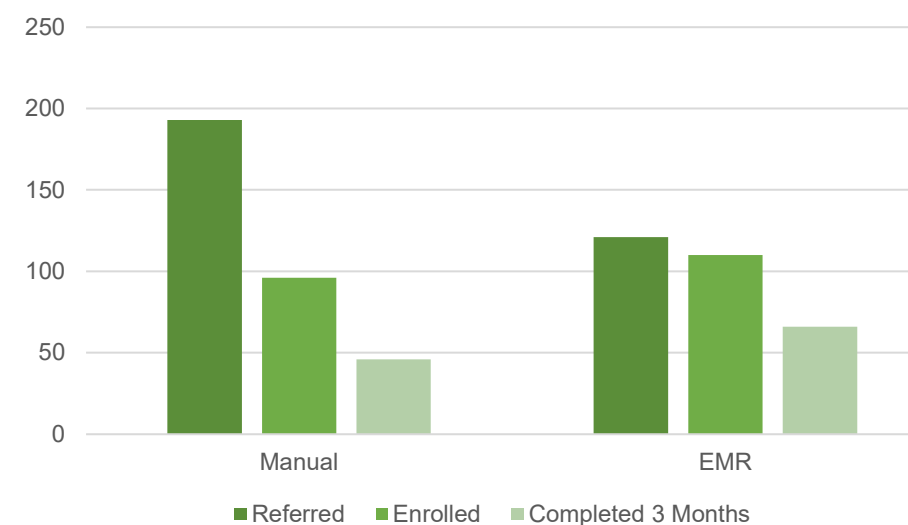
Figure 1: Paper KPRx Referral

Figure 2: EMR KPRx Referral

## Results:

Significant improvements in enrollment and participation with the EMR innovations (manual referrals=193, 49.7% enrollment, 23.8% participation vs EMR referrals=121, 90.9% enrollment, and 54.5% participation)  $p < 0.05$ . (Figure 3)

Figure 3: Program referral, enrollment, and participation at three months, manual vs. automated electronic medical record (EMR) systems.



## Implications:

EMR innovations can be leveraged to enhance enrollment and participation in fruit and vegetable prescription and possibly other healthy food incentive programs. Utilization of EMR may create system for long-term follow up and monitoring of participants after program completion.