

# Defining Disparities

## Colorectal Cancer Screening at HMC and UW

### Background:

A multidisciplinary group evaluated disparities in colorectal cancer screening rates between Spanish and English speaking patients at HMC and UW Neighborhood Clinics.

### Methodology:

They compared data from HMC and UW clinics on screening rates among patients by language and insurance status, then conducted surveys and patient focus groups to explore barriers and potential solutions to low screening rates.

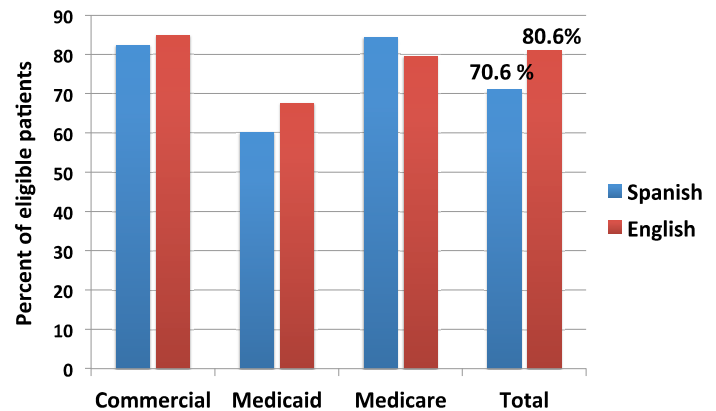
### Results:

They identified significant gaps between the two medical centers. Of eligible patients, only **67% were screened at HMC**, versus **83% screened at UW clinics**, while **four times** as many Spanish speaking patients were screened at HMC. Gaps emerged when the groups were subdivided by insurance and language status, highlighting that differences went beyond site alone.

Survey data revealed that the two hospital systems go about identifying patients for CRC screening in different ways. At HMC, the process was largely **MD driven**, while UW used MAs and nurses much more frequently. Also, **HMC clinics relied on records review**, while **UW used EMR based reminders** the bulk of the time.

Lastly, through focus groups, patients highlighted several barriers. They expressed concerns about **knowledge** gaps, **cost**, **fear** of the procedure and results, **embarrassment**, and competing interests (i.e. needing money or time for something else). Patients offered potential solutions to address these gaps, such as increasing **public awareness** through **social media** and television.

CRC screening by insurance and language



**Conclusions:** Successful colorectal cancer screening workflow involves use of the **electronic health record** to flag patients eligible for screening and **empowering medical assistants as champions** to identify and assist patients with screening efforts. **Social media** offers a patient centered solution to **raise awareness** and address barriers.

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**Potential Strategies to Reduce Disparity in CRC Screening:**  
 »Use of EHR  
 »Empowering MAs  
 »Social Media