Visualizing insights in Orange County: Empowering public health change through modernized data dashboards and enhanced data availability

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Orange County Department of Health developed two online, interactive dashboards. Their goal is to raise awareness about health disparities, promote data-driven discussions, and encourage evidence-based actions to address the specific needs and problems faced by Orange County residents.

The "What"

One goal of the Orange County Department of Health's Division of Epidemiology is to highlight local health equity disparities and improve data availability to partners, stakeholders, and the community overall. To achieve this goal, two online interactive dashboards were created. The first dashboard highlights health disparities among racial and ethnic groups in areas like chronic disease, maternal and child health, mental health and

substance use, and mortality. The second dashboard allows for interactive exploration of data with dynamic filtering based on demographics for a survey conducted with community members regarding their perceptions of their own health and the health of their communities.

This approach was selected because online dashboards provide accessible and user-friendly platforms for presenting complex data. They enable policymakers, researchers and the public to easily visualize and understand health inequities and data resulting from surveys. By using interactive features and filtering options, users can explore the data from different angles, gaining valuable insights to inform decision-making and interventions.

Overall, the Health Department's aim is to raise awareness about health disparities, promote data-driven discussions, and encourage evidence-based actions to address the specific needs and problems faced by Orange County residents.

The "So What"

The project has the potential to have a significant impact on public health by providing accessible dashboards with comprehensive data and interactive features. By enabling evidence-based decision-making, it can inform targeted interventions and policies to improve health outcomes.

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Once the dashboards are shared publicly, policymakers and health agencies can utilize the data to identify specific health needs and allocate resources accordingly. The interactive features will allow users to explore the data based on demographic factors, shedding light on health disparities and their underlying causes.

The potential implications of these improvements are numerous. The visual representation of data will enhance communication and understanding among stakeholders and foster collaborative efforts to address public health challenges. By utilizing the dashboards, policymakers can make informed decisions and advocate for necessary interventions, leading to improved health outcomes for the community.

The "Now What"

To build on the project, the Health Department plans to continuously update and expand the data on the dashboards to provide the most recent and comprehensive information. This involves collaborating with local health agencies and organizations to obtain updated data sets and integrate additional relevant data sources.

Ongoing needs include regular maintenance and technical support for the dashboards to ensure their functionality and accessibility. Additionally, gathering feedback from users and stakeholders is crucial for identifying areas of improvement and incorporating new features or functionalities based on their needs and suggestions.

Beyond the immediate project, this initiative could have several implications. First, it contributes to

a better understanding of health equity issues in Orange County, NY, serving as a tool for advocacy, policy development and resource allocation. It empowers community members, researchers and policymakers by providing them with actionable insights to address health disparities effectively.

Moreover, the interactive and user-friendly nature of the dashboards can inspire similar projects in other regions, promote data-driven decision-making and foster collaborations between health agencies, researchers, and the public. By sharing the project's methodology and lessons learned, it can serve as a model for creating impactful and accessible data visualization tools in various contexts, thereby advancing health equity efforts beyond Orange County.