Description of the Organization / Community

The Florida Heart Research Institute (FHRI) is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization with the mission to "stop heart disease through research, education and prevention". The Living for Health® program targets uninsured, underserved adult populations in medically underserved and high poverty areas of Miami-Dade County and provides screenings and education to reduce risk factors for chronic diseases.

Summary of the Primary Program

Living for Health® is a cardiovascular community health program developed by FHRI to screen underserved and uninsured adult residents for risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke. Those found to be at risk are urged to seek treatment and are educated and coached to make healthy lifestyle changes to reduce their risks. Participants who have no personal physician are offered medical services through one of three collaborating Federally Qualified Health Centers that provide treatment on a sliding fee scale based upon ability to pay. Participants identified as being "at risk" are followed by FHRI at 1, 3, 6 and 12 months from initial screening to continue health coaching and urge participants to seek treatment.

Explanation of the Evaluation Plan

Pre and post lifestyle behaviors for nutrition and physical activity are measured through a self-report questionnaire. Follow-up questionnaires are completed through telephone interviews conducted by FHRI screeners. The first survey is conducted 1 month after the initial screening to reinforce the necessity to seek medical treatment and encourage lifestyle changes. Subsequent surveys are conducted at 3, 6 and 12 months from initial screening to confirm that treatment was sought, and examine whether lifestyle changes in nutrition and physical activity were made and sustained. Changes in clinical results compare baseline screening values to those transmitted from the clinic at 3, 6 and 12 months from initial screening.

Program Impact

As of 12/31/11, FHRI has screened 7,141 English, Spanish and/or Creole speaking Miami-Dade County residents regardless of race, ethnicity or immigration status. Of these, 2,224 were referred to FQHCs for medical evaluation. The Living for Health® model for community based cardiovascular screenings aims to save lives by “catching” those at risk BEFORE they suffer a life threatening event. The program demonstrates significant changes in both lifestyle risk behavior and clinical outcomes after the delivery of the intervention. It potentially saves the healthcare delivery system numerous dollars by keeping people healthy and out of emergency rooms, reducing health disparities and connecting those in need to a medical home thus improving access to care.

Table 1 presents lifestyle changes between baseline and second follow-up at 3 months. Using a paired analysis approach, it can be seen that positive changes were made in all lifestyle indicators except Fast Food Type. Analysis of 12 month data shows significant improvement in 5 out of 7 lifestyle behaviors indicating changes were made and sustained.

Table 2 shows the changes in clinical measures three and six months after baseline screening. Post clinical data are derived from data downloaded directly from the clinics. Event though the numbers are small, we see significant improvement in all four indicators. This supports the self reported lifestyle data.

Table 3 presents the demographic characteristics of the 7,141 enrollees in the Living for Health® program since 2008.