

Community Health Assessment of Islamic Foundation North

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Islam has been beautifully described as a clear river which takes on the color of the stones beneath as it passes over. The stones representing the race and culture of the faithful. Islam is the most wildly diverse religion on the planet. Of the 3.5 million Muslims living in the US, it has been estimated that at least 64% are immigrants from 76 different countries, and the only known faith community with no majority race. Therefore, from a cultural perspective, entering each Mosque in America is like entering a different country. Interpretations of the nuances of Islam as well as the community's understanding and practice of health care and wellness are deeply influenced by cultural framing.

This truth may be the source of confusion for many clinicians who attempt to apply their understanding of Muslim patients from one culture and become mystified when another Muslim family presents with an entirely different worldview. To further complicate matters, there is a gap in data about US Muslims, which is particularly apparent in the realm of health care.

The best place to reach Muslims for preventative health needs is the Mosque Community where half of Muslims gather at least weekly to pray, socialize, and learn together. A comprehensive Community Health Assessment of each unique Mosque community is the first step for Faith Community Nurses to identify and address pressing health needs in the community.

This Community Health Assessment is an analysis of Islamic Foundation North (IFN), a young, vibrant and expanding moderate Muslim community comprised of more than 300 families in the distant northwest suburbs of Chicago, Illinois. Located on the cusp of Waukegan and Libertyville, the founders chose a Libertyville address "because they liked the sound of freedom." IFN is global community comprised of an estimated 89% first generation immigrants. Members hail from at least 11 cultures and speak seven different languages at home.

The assessment was conducted over a three-month period from July through September of 2019 applying a modified MAPP (Mobilizing for Action through Planning Partnerships) public health model as a framework for strategic planning. Primary data collection includes de-identified IFN member surveys, focus groups and interviews of key leaders in the community. Secondary data was gleaned from the literature and from Lake County Department of Health and the AdvocateAurora hospital system.

The "Wellness Snapshot" of the IFN community reveals alignment with Lake County health concerns and priorities. IFN Health priority issues were negotiated from the perspectives and values of community members. I hope you enjoy this poster presentation and that it enriches you with a greater understanding of Muslims in America and the health related challenges they face.

Assalamu Alaikum!