Keeping Parents from Having to Go the Extra Mile: How a Weight Management Program is Addressing Service Gaps
Sarah Reinhold, MPH; Melody Schaeffer, MPH; Nila Garba, MPH; Morgan Drexler, BA
St. Louis Children’s Hospital

Introduction

• 17% of young people in the US are considered obese.

• There are harmful comorbidities associated with childhood obesity; high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, breathing problems, socio-emotional difficulties and musculoskeletal problems.

• St. Louis Children’s Hospital (SLCH) developed and implements a 16-week intervention, Head to Toe, with the goal of reducing obesity among children.

• Classes are offered for children 8-17 years old and their families. Participants are taught by a registered dietitian, a licensed social worker and an exercise specialist. Sessions focus on making healthy food choices, increasing physical activity, body image and family support.

• It is recognized that program attendance has an instrumental part in participant success and the further someone lives from the program site the less likely they are to attend.

Methods

• In 2016, hospital staff analyzed results from a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) parent health concerns survey, where 1,083 parents were measured.

• In 2016 the program expanded to include two sites that offer Head to Toe.
  1. City of St. Louis
  2. City of St. Peters (St. Charles County)

Participant Map

• 135 Families from 74 ZIP Codes in the region from 2015 - 2017

Results

• The 2016 CHNA identified 59% of parents in the St. Louis area believe obesity is a big or medium concern for their children.

• Of these parents, 26% live further than an hour drive from SLCH.

• After branching out the program to an additional site in the City of St. Peters, only 13% of parents surveyed who identified child obesity as a big concern were more than hour from a program site.

• From 2015-2016, when a second site was added, the number of zip codes served increased 44% from 23 to 41 zip codes.

• An additional 11 families were able to be served with the addition of the St. Peters program location.

• A statistically significant relationship was found between program attendance and weight loss.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of ZIP Codes Served</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># of Families Served</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

• By adding an additional site SLCH was able to reduce the amount of potential participants living more than a one hour radius, ultimately increasing access to the Head to Toe, weight management program.

• Reducing distance to adequate programs acts as a catalyst for increasing access and program attendance, ultimately leading to a reduction in comorbidities associated with childhood obesity.

• Creating an online presence to administer the Head to Toe program is in the works, with the goal of eliminating transportation barriers.