

Keeping Parents from Having to Go the Extra Mile: How a Weight Management Program is Addressing Service Gaps

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Introduction

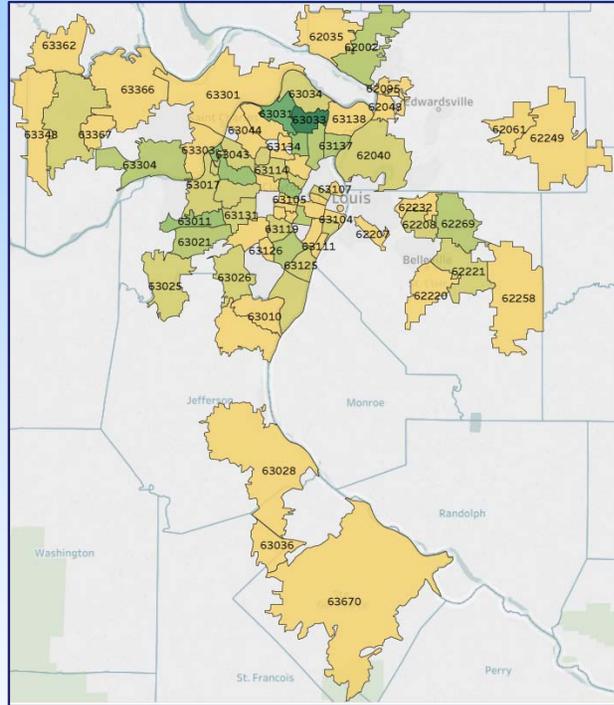
- 17% of young people in the US are considered obese.
- There are harmful comorbidities associated with childhood obesity; high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, breathing problems, socio-emotional difficulties and musculoskeletal problems.
- St. Louis Children's Hospital (SLCH) developed and 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



Total Participants 1 10

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.

	2015	2016	2017
# of ZIP Codes Served	23	41	40
# of Families Served	34	52	49

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.

