

PUBLIC HEALTH PROGRAM SURVEY- Chronic Disease

Contact Information

Mindy Meacham, Health Educator II
Southern Nevada Health District
Phone: 702-759-1270, Fax: 702-759-1416
meacham@snhdmail.org
SNHD, Office of Chronic Disease Prevention & Health Promotion
400 Shadow Lane, Suite #101, Las Vegas, NV 89106

Short Title: Free, web based walking program that increases physical activity

Program Location: Clark County, Nevada

Objectives and Goals:

Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, however, indicate that adults in Clark County, Nevada, are currently not meeting physical activity guidelines. Research has also indicated that walking is an ideal physical activity for many adults, particularly those who are just starting a physical activity program, because of its low cost, low impact, and portability. The goal of the WAN program is to increase physical activity among adults living in Clark County. Specific objectives include:

- Demonstrate progression in the participants' behavior change stage and increases in their level of physical activity.

Methods:

WAN is a web based program that combines behavior modification tips and resources, the ability to join virtual walking groups, and links to community walking groups and events in an easy-to-use and free online program. In the development phase, staff researched model online physical activity programs and the scientific literature. We contracted with a computer programmer to conduct the technical programming components of the project. The WAN online walking program logs and tracks participants' steps or miles and displays progress for his or her virtual trek around Nevada. As the participants virtually reach certain geographic locations around the state, a small pop-up box appears on the screen, giving brief historical facts about that particular location or a health, nutrition, or safety tip. The program is available in both English and Spanish.

Program Length:

The program is ongoing and we currently have users who are completing their 4th and 5th virtual walk around Nevada. The program was developed and tested in early 2006 and implemented in June of that same year. We conducted a scientific evaluation of the program in 2007.

Number of target population reached by effort:

Currently the program has over 5,400 registered users.

Demographic Info:

Clark County is a vast geographical area encompassing over 7,900 square miles. The population in Clark County has doubled in the past decade. Clark County is home to three major cities with a population of about 1.8 million residents. Latinos are the largest minority in the county comprising of nearly 26% of the total population. African Americans are the second largest minority group comprising nearly 8% of the population. With respect to the WAN program, over 75% of the program participants are females between the ages of 21 -50.

Overall Cost:

The estimated total cost of the program to date is \$45,000. The bulk of that funding was used to develop/update programming (\$10,000) and market (\$30,000) the program. The average cost per year to maintain the program including promotion, incentives, printing is approximately \$1,200 per year.

Funding Sources:

100 % Local
percentages ARE estimates

Outcomes:

During registration, participants were asked to select one of four statements that best reflected their current physical activity level and stage of behavior change. Participants were surveyed via e-mail at six months and one year after the initial registration. Data from participants who responded to each of the three data collections were used to evaluate the program. Data were collected through December 2007. At program onset, 28.5 percent of participants were in the contemplation stage, 22.6 percent were in the preparation stage, 18.9 percent were in the action stage, and 30 percent were in the maintenance stage of meeting physical activity guidelines. The proportion of those in the contemplation or preparation stage at the start of the program, 51.1 percent, dropped to 30.7 percent at the end of one year. Conversely, at program onset, 30 percent were meeting guidelines. One year later, 52.2 percent were meeting guidelines.

Did you make any estimates regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented?

No estimates were made regarding costs deferred, outbreaks averted or deaths prevented.

Additional Information:

The evaluation of the WAN Program provides preliminary evidence that an online program may help increase physical activity. This is important because a majority of Nevada adults are not currently meeting physical activity guidelines.

The web-based nutrition program is a low-cost sustainable intervention that may increase physical activity level and advance people along the stages of behavior change continuum in their efforts to be more physically active.

The WAN program was selected by the National Association of City and County Health Officers (NACCHO) in 2008 to receive a Model Practice Award.

Future Plans:

Staff is developing new virtual walking routes to update and refresh the program.