

BACKGROUND¹⁻⁵

- Rates of obesity and chronic diseases have increased dramatically with a decline in physical activity
- Children ages 8-18 have increased non-active time from 6.33 hours per day in 1999, to 7.66 hours in 2009
- Despite evidence that increased physical activity reduces obesity, chronic disease, and stress, healthcare teams under utilize resources available to patients
- American Journal of Preventive Medicine revealed that fewer than 14% of primary care providers regularly gave forms of counseling on exercise
- The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy introduced the Parks Prescription movement in 2010, aimed at strengthening the connection between healthcare systems and the outdoors
- Numerous programs have been developed nationally to promote wellness through increased park use

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this project is to analyze current Parks Prescription Programs in the United States and current barriers in Austin, TX. This will be used to create an implementation plan for the Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) Prescription Program.

METHODS

- Standard questionnaire was developed for the purpose of interviewing six existing Parks Prescription Programs within the United States
- California, Colorado, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington
- This questionnaire included:



RESULTS IN PROGRESS

Table 1. Selected Parks Prescription Program Questionnaire Results

Parks Prescription Program	San Francisco, CA	Westminster, CO	Philadelphia, PA	Frederick County, MD	Bellingham, WA	New Hanover County, NC
Goal of Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase accessibility for all • Prescribing nature as a preventative intervention for chronic illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To reduce the rates of obesity within the city 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 minutes of daily active play for kids • Increased use of parks, trails and green spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased burden of chronic disease, increase health & happiness, & foster environmental stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide simple resources that have a big impact • Connect more patients with positive outdoor experiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce obesity by encouraging people to use the parks for exercise
Budgeting Utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Park Funds • Kaiser Permanente 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No extensive budget from the city • The diabetes program is funded through CDC/ADA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education (founders of the program) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local businesses sponsor events and prizes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donation based 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None
Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community acceptance of the project • Persistence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patients do not know where to begin when a health care provider recommends increased activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of provider time/knowledge & input • Lack of utilization of the prescription 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of community awareness of the resources • Financing the programs/events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community awareness • Establishing physicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of organized programs • No formal way of checking patient progress
Research or Immersion Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Effect of park prescriptions with and without group visits to parks on stress reduction in low-income parents: SHINE randomized trial" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of program was brought on from a different parks department in Oregon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed health care providers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia & families 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The State of Obesity report is one of the main drivers of this program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years of needs assessment, partner development, & data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the county health department & county strategy office to identify population needs
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Water District • Save the Red Woods • Samuel Merritt University • Ethnic Health Institute (EHI) • Tiburcio Vasquez Health Center 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnered with 12 medical providers in the area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) • Schuylkill Center • U.S. Forest Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick County Health Department • City of Frederick Parks & Recreation Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local health care providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County health department • Internal health clinic for county employees
Outcomes Measured	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up with patient after physician prescribes exercise and after a set period of time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracked number of people that attended parks programs and utilized the service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants fill out surveys at events • Results are used to assess the program's impact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys and following up with patients 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to measure impact through initial and periodic surveys of participants
Successful Strategies Utilized	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted families • Programs for specific disease states • Designed a workflow intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys target population to figure out the best method of providing information • Partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create promotional information • Reach out to local media • Designate a contact person for physicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media coverage • Word of mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

DISCUSSION IN PROGRESS

- Preliminary results from the interviews highlighted the intention to connect patients to outdoor experiences
- Common barriers included community awareness and provider advocacy
- Establishing local partnerships with key organizations, as well as media coverage has helped break some of these boundaries
- In continuing to provide such service, surveys are key indicators used to monitor progress

CONCLUSIONS IN PROGRESS

- Obtained results have provided a template to proceed with the redevelopment of the PARD Prescription Program
- A community needs assessment survey is being conducted to determine barriers in Austin, TX including seeking out green spaces, recreation centers, and transportation
- It has been distributed to residents at local grocery store pharmacies and a library
- Results will be analyzed to determine resource gaps of current PARD resources
- With the knowledge from other programs and the resources gaps identified in Austin, a proposal for the implementation of a program in Austin will be created

REFERENCES

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