

PARKS Rx

Analysis of Parks Prescription Programs within the United States: Tools for Implementation in Austin, Texas



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BACKGROUND

Parks Rx Programs are innovative programs developed to improve the quality of life in patients with chronic mental and physical illnesses

Parks Rx Programs consist of:

- A healthcare provider
- A recommendation for outdoor activity in local parks
- Improved quality of life and overall health for patients

Several cities throughout the United States have implemented a Parks Rx Program and tracked the success of the program through various methods of patient follow up

Phase One: Data from surveyed community members was used to develop a Parks Rx brochure for healthcare providers in Austin

OBJECTIVE

To effectively design an informative Parks Rx brochure and survey for healthcare providers in order to gain feedback to aid in the success of implementation of the program in Austin, Texas

METHODS

Collected and analyzed data in surveys from phase one:

- Survey to collect data on current Parks Rx Programs
- Community needs assessment survey

Developed a brochure for healthcare providers in order to provide education and justification for the program. Included information:

- Health benefits of being in nature
- Successful Parks Rx Programs
- Data about local Austin residents (ie. preferred exercise methods and exercise barriers)
- Steps for the providers and patients

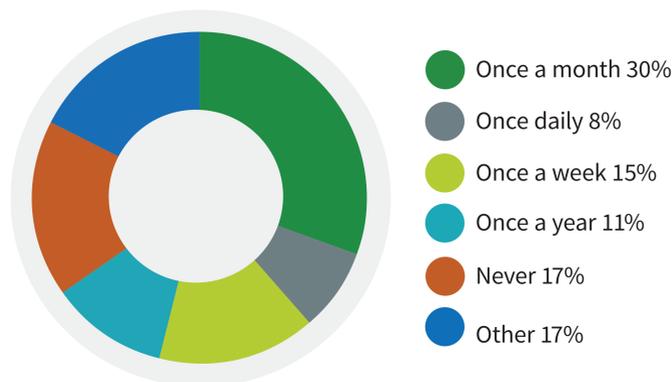
Created a survey for healthcare providers for feedback about implementation of a Parks Rx program in Austin

OUTCOMES AND RESULTS IN PROGRESS

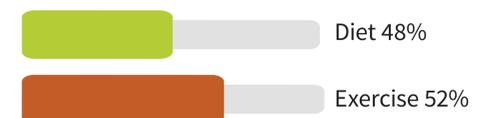
Phase One: Data Collection

Below is the data collected from Austin community members by University of Texas pharmacy students in 2018

How Often Community Members Report Visiting Parks:



Percentage of People Who Agreed They Could Make Changes to Improve Their Health:



Favorite Outdoor Activities:



Phase Two: Brochure Development

Below is the evaluation of successful Parks Rx Programs throughout the United States and the steps taken for providers and patients participating in the program

Bellingham, WA

- In 1 year, increased participants from 12 to 51 health providers
- Doctors noticed how beneficial the program was for patients and encouraged other doctors to join

Philadelphia, PA

- Partnered with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, U.S. Forest Service, and Schuylkill Center
- Success was based off of catering to the target population and including services that were specific to the patient population

San Francisco, CA

- Parks Rx integrated into electronic system
- 100+ physicians prescribed time spent in nature to children with chronic illnesses
- Example Rx: Must hike at least one trail at a natural park every month

Westminister, CO

- Patients were provided a free, 30-day pass to any Westminister recreation facility
- Patients reported an increased awareness of their diet, exercise habits, and confidence to reach their goals

Frederick County, MD

- The key to their success: built relationships with local doctors, non-profit organizations, and corporate businesses for support and ideas

Who receives? One

Patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes, stress, obesity, and heart disease

What is prescribed?

Time in local parks including walking, biking, playing sports, meditating, and attending a fitness class

Two

What is the outcome?

Mental and physical health benefits including improved cognitive ability and lowered blood pressure

Three

What is next?

Physicians follow up with patients and the Parks Department provides local resources

Four

NEXT STEPS AND CONCLUSIONS

The brochure and survey are currently being disseminated to local Austin-area providers. Improvements and changes to the Parks Rx programs will be made once feedback is collected.