

# PARKS PRESCRIPTION



## Austin Parks and Recreation: Cultural Places, Natural Spaces

A group of University of Texas at Austin College of Pharmacy students have collaborated with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) to develop this educational brochure regarding Parks Prescription Program. This will provide you with background information regarding health benefits of physical activity in nature, needs of the Austin community, and the steps each provider will need to take to see improved health outcomes for patients.

Other states have implemented similar programs and the successes of each program have involved forming partnerships with local providers and healthcare systems. For more information about current Parks Prescription Programs, go online to: <https://www.austintexas.gov/pardrx>

PARD would like to seek your input on this program to ensure it has relevance in your work caring for patients. Providing feedback regarding this program will require 5 minutes of your time. A link to our follow-up survey to provide feedback about this program can be found at:

[https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_ezdRvRDUz3yW8VT](https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ezdRvRDUz3yW8VT)

The University of Texas College of Pharmacy students would like to thank you for your time.



## What are the benefits of nature?



### I'm so glad you asked!



Exposure to nature can improve symptoms of depression, anxiety, stress, and ADHD.<sup>1</sup>



Children living in close proximity to parks and recreational facilities were not as likely to have significant increases in BMI at 18 years of age.<sup>2</sup>



Increasing the amount of physical activity can reduce hemoglobin A1C values.<sup>3</sup>



For the elderly, time outdoors in nature can improve cognition and encourage social interactions.<sup>4</sup>



For children, outdoor play in a natural setting can improve motor strength, balance, and coordination.<sup>5</sup>

## PARKS PRESCRIPTION SUCCESS STORIES AROUND THE COUNTRY



### 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



### 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



### 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



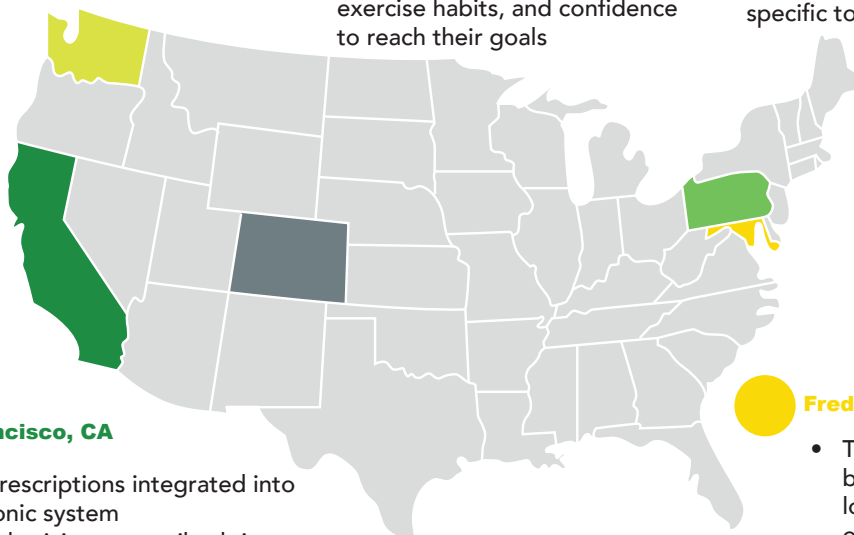
### San Francisco, CA

- Park Prescriptions 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



### Frederick County, MD

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



# LOCAL SURVEY RESULTS FROM COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN RUNDBERG AREA

Conducted by University of Texas Pharmacy Students, October 2018

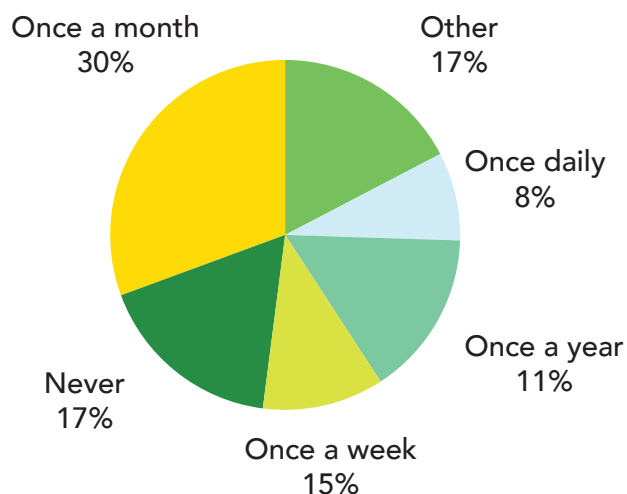
## Percentage of People Who Agreed They Could Make Changes to Improve Their Health:



## Favorite Outdoor Activities:



## How Often Community Members Report Visiting Parks:



## OVERCOMING PATIENT BARRIERS

### TIME

- City of Austin Parks & Recreation Department has
  - 300 parks open 7 days a week, 5am-10pm
  - Over 227 trails, 35 swimming pools, 26 recreation and senior centers
  - 147 playgrounds, 20,254 acres of green space

### TRANSIT

- PARD's goal is to ensure residents living in the urban core should be within
  - 1/4 mile (5 minute walk) of a publicly-accessible and child-friendly park
  - 1/2 mile (10 minute walk) for those outside the urban core

### MOTIVATION

- Social: encourage finding a workout buddy and quality time with family
- Mental: reduce stress and improve sleep
- Physical: improve or maintain health, lower blood pressure, and building strength

## DESIGNING YOUR PARKS PRESCRIPTION PROGRAM



### WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN:

- Partnering with the Parks Department in hosting an event in the park?
- Collaborating with other organizations aligned with the work and mission of the Parks Prescription Program? (such as Austin Public Health Community Health Improvement Plan)
- Connecting with Community Partners to share resources?

**Contact Jill Habegger-Cain for further information and questions**

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#### ADA Statement

The City of Austin is committed to compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Reasonable modifications and equal access to communications will be provided upon request. For assistance please contact (512) 974-3914 or Relay Texas 7-1-1.