2012 WIC Obesity Prevention Mini Grant Project Summary

Local Agency Number and Name:

LA 03 Cameron County Department of Health and Human Services WIC Program

Title of OPMG Project:

Lower Your BMI for a Healthier You

Contact Person:

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Project Overview

List target audience and number of participants seen:

- All Cameron County DHHS WIC Staff were provided the option to participate.
- 110 out of 136 employees participated

List type of activities for this project (a group class, cooking class, physical activity, gardening, breastfeeding, other):

- Group Class
- Physical Activity
- Cooking Demonstration

Overall goal for this project:

The overall goal for this project was to lower Cameron County DHHS WIC Staff's BMI by increasing physical activity and recognizing healthy choices.

Objectives for this project:

- To be able to identify better food choices.
- Learn how to incorporate physical activity in your daily lifestyle.
- Maintain consistency of physical activity and healthy food choices.
- Decrease the BMI of Cameron County DHHS WIC Staff.

Project description:

"Lower Your BMI for a Healthier You" was developed to assist our WIC Staff in losing weight, develop healthier eating habits, increase physical activity, and ultimately lower their BMI. The project lasted for 6 months. Monthly staff meetings served as a pre-cursor for the monthly activities that the staff

completed at their individual clinics. Two degreed nutritionists were selected to be Project Coordinators for the "Lower Your BMI for a Healthier You" project. The project coordinators provided a "What's to Come" presentation to all WIC Staff at our February 1, 2012 Staff Meeting. The presentation provided information about the 6 month long project, highlighting the activities for each month. After the presentation, the project was offered to all WIC Staff as a voluntary participation. Those employees that decided to participate in the project signed a consent form and completed a pre-questionnaire survey with questions relating to their current food habits and physical activity status. Out of 136 employees, 110 agreed to participate. Each employee's height, initial weight, and BMI were recorded.

Each clinic was assigned one Wellness Champion and 2 or 3 Wellness Promoters to assist with staff encouragement throughout the 6 months. The Project Coordinators met weekly at the Administrative office developing wellness information/booklets that focused on topics such as exercise, healthy eating, stress-reduction, and cooking tips. Each week, these materials were distributed to the Wellness Champions to hand out to the participating employees. The Wellness Promoters at the individual clinic sites would help the champions by following up with each employee, whether providing encouragement or helping organize healthy changes in their daily routines.

The monthly topics were as follows:

- February 2012: Food Habits and Physical Actions
    - Modify Your Intake
    - Jump Start Your Day
    - Limit Your Carbs and Fats
    - Track Your Steps
- March 2012: My Plate
    - Whole Grains
    - Fruits and Vegetables
    - Low-Fat Dairies
    - Lean Meats and Beans
- April 2012: Understanding Sessions to Physical Activity
    - Importance of Physical Activity
    - Making Time for Physical Activity
    - Different Forms of Physical Activity
    - Strive to Stay in Shape Everyday
- May 2012: Zumba
    - Introduction to Zumba
    - Benefits of Zumba
    - Practicing Different Types of Zumba
    - Incorporate Zumba Into Your Life
- June 2012: Smart Cooking
    - Home Cooking vs. Eating Out & Cooking on a Budget
    - Grocery Shopping 101

    - Celebrate Your Success
- July 2012: De-Stress Time
    - Yoga
    - De-Stressing Foods
    - Ways to Relax
    - Barriers vs. Stress
- August 2012: Awards and Recognition

On the first of each month, the Wellness Champions were responsible for obtaining each participant's weight and turning it into the Nutrition Education Coordinator for BMI calculation. As each month progressed, educational incentive items such as pocket pals and bookmarks were provided along with the wellness packets/activities. Incentive items such as water bottles, lunch totes, jump ropes, resistance bands, and food container were provided at each staff meeting as a way to help jump start each monthly theme. At the end of July, employees completed a post-questionnaire with the same questions asked on the pre-questionnaire. These questionnaires were turned into the Nutrition Education Coordinator at the Administrative office for comparison of food habits and physical activity. Weight loss and BMI calculations were completed by the Project Coordinators and Nutrition Education Coordinator at the end of July as well. At our August Staff Meeting, the Nutrition Education Coordinator presented a final presentation to the staff revealing the project results by clinic and as an entire local agency. Framed certificates of participation were handed out to each employee that participated in the project and weight loss recognition was announced.

List results and objectives met:

- 61 % of WIC Staff were able to identify better food choices by the end of the 6 months, as self-reported. Goal was met.
- 67 % of WIC Staff learned how to incorporate physical activity in their daily lifestyle by the end of the 6 months, as self-reported. Goal was met.
- 51 % of WIC Staff were able to maintain consistency of physical activity and healthy food choices at the end of the 6 months, as self-reported. Goal was met.
- Our WIC Staff lost a combined total of 254 lbs. Our starting average BMI was 30.4 (obese category) and after 6 months, our ending average BMI was 28.3 (overweight category). Our objective of decreasing the BMI of WIC Staff was met.

List curricula, kits or other educational materials used:

- WIC Wellness Works—Take a Break! DVD
- 3 Mile Weight Loss Walk DVD
- Cardio for Beginners DVD
- Walk Away the Pounds DVD
- Get Your Groove on Mama DVD
- Zumba DVD

List other resources used, if applicable:

- Eatright.org

- Choosemyplate.gov
- Cooking Light Recipe Book

List collaborating agencies or individuals, if applicable:

N/A

List the type of incentives that were given:

- Activity and Food Tracker (journal)
- Healthy Snacking for Busy People (pocket pal)
- Fast Food Snack Guide (pocket pal)
- Be Wise about Portions (pocket pal)
- Good Nutrition Starts with My Plate (pocket pal)
- Exercise Away Your Fast Food (slide guide)
- 50 Ways to Lose Weight (bookmark)
- 10 Steps to Losing the First 10 Pounds (pocket pal)
- Eating Healthy (pocket pal)
- The Busy Family's Guide to Healthy, Delicious Meals for Less (journal)
- Food, Fitness & Fun for a Stress-Free Life (bookmark)
- 101 Ways to Exercise Your Heart (bookmark)
- Calorie Counter Jump Rope
- Water Bottle
- Insulated Lunch Tote
- Resistance Band (full body)
- 3-Section Food Container
- Framed Certificate of Participation

Helpful ordering information for materials or incentives (if available):

- Positive Promotions
- Safe Guard Universal

Tips for Other Agencies

What worked well for this project?

- Time allotted for project results (6 months)
- Project was voluntary, not mandatory. This provided better results among participants.
- Having Wellness Champions and Wellness Promoters at each clinic kept staff motivated.
- Monthly presentations/discussions at each staff meeting kept staff aware and excited of what the next activity or challenge would be.
- Positive recognition and motivation was a benefit to keeping staff on track.

- Monthly weigh-ins kept staff knowledgeable about their weight status. This would keep the staff's interest in the project to continue participation.

What were the challenges?

- Creating the weekly wellness/activity packets within time to send out to clinics.
- Keeping staff motivated outside of work.
- Keeping staff motivated through holidays and special events.

What changes would be made for next time, if any?

- Prepare bi-weekly wellness/activity packets instead of weekly.
- Hold monthly meetings with Project Coordinators, Wellness Champions and Wellness Promoters to discuss any challenges that may have occurred.
- Hold monthly motivational activities with the Project Coordinators, Wellness Champions and Wellness Promoters to build support and excitement for continuing in the project.
- Have each Wellness Champion provide a presentation on various health related diseases to the staff at the monthly staff meetings.