

Partnering for Community Health & Wellness: A County-Wide, Mayor's Fitness Challenge

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Situation

A Mayor's Fitness Challenge traditionally is a competition designed to promote health and wellness in a specific city. The United States obesity rate is at nearly 35% and rising (Smith, K. and Smith, M. 2016) and only 37% of adults are meeting the recommended daily minutes of exercise (Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans 2018). With many cities across Brevard County, FL dealing with decreased funding, minimal staff, and increased learning objective demands, a single city or organization may not be able to do it all.

Methodology

To mitigate these challenges, our program takes a county-wide approach and utilizes partnerships to provide an opportunity for multiple cities and organizations to address community health and wellness via a challenge that shares resources, funding, personnel, and expertise. **Eleven out of the sixteen municipalities participate in a free 8-week fitness challenge designed to get citizens involved in a healthy competition and positively impact their community.** Each Mayor assembles a group of people from the community to form a city team. Everyone who joins in with a municipality is considered part of that mayor's "team." All participants must do is start moving and track their progress. A conversion chart is used to assign points, which are based on the average number of minutes exercised plus the number of team minutes actively participating in the challenge. The municipality with the most points will win the challenge trophy, "Most Fit City 2021." Throughout the challenge, city leaders, county parks, and other organizations partner together to host free physical activities to keep citizens involved. Examples of past events include beach clean ups, goat yoga, 5k walks, Zumba, and pickleball.

Results

Outcomes are measured by participants' weekly tracking and by an end of competition survey. Last year, 2500 residents registered, with an 80% participation rate completing the full challenge. Over 4.4 million minutes of exercise were recorded throughout the competition by participants. Based on post-survey results, **70% of participants reported an increase in the number of days they exercised, the development of at least one new healthy habit, and an intent to continue what they learned.**

