

RELEVANCE

Excessive weight and inactivity are consistently linked with increased incidence of chronic diseases. At least 7 of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States and Texas are chronic disease related.

Data from the 2020 County Health Rankings show that 32% of adults in Palo Pinto County report having a Body Mass Index (BMI) over 30 which falls in the obesity range. Statistics for both Texas and the United States show that 28% of adults report having a BMI over 30. Thirty percent of adults in Palo Pinto County are physically inactive compared to 24% reported for adults in Texas.

Increased physical activity and improved eating habits have been associated with a greater ability to manage the complications of certain chronic diseases and delay the onset of the disease in individuals at risk.

RESPONSE

The Palo Pinto County FCH Program Area Committee has identified Walk Across Texas and programs with a focus on healthy eating/food preparation as educational approaches to address obesity and physical inactivity in the county. Healthy Lifestyles/Disease Prevention was also identified as an issue in Palo Pinto County during the 2019 Texas Community Futures Forum.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Program efforts were targeted towards adults and families.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATORS

Palo Pinto General Hospital and Mineral Wells ISD both established Walk Across Texas Leagues and helped in promoting Walk Across Texas. The Celebrating Family Meals social media campaign was a multi-county effort.

Walk Across Texas

Walk Across Texas is an eight-week program designed to help people of all ages support one another to establish the habit of regular physical activity. Teams of up to eight people set a goal to walk 834 miles (the distance across Texas) during eight weeks.

A county Walk Across Texas challenge was held March 28- May 22nd and promoted through news releases, social media, email and direct contacts. Twenty-one teams and 3 individuals (160 total participants) registered. Miles walked by participants were reported on the Walk Across Texas Website. Weekly newsletters (1753 contacts) were developed and sent to participants by email which contained information on submitting mileage, current standings, a challenge for the week, and educational information related to healthy eating and physical activity. Participants were recognized with team awards as well as reaching individual goals.

Palo Pinto County also had four teams and 1 individual (27 total individuals) participate in the Walk Across Texas! 25th Year Anniversary Challenge! held in the fall of 2021.

VALUE

Walk Across Texas

This eight-week fitness and health program challenges participants to adopt a habit of regular exercise. Research indicates that a walking routine of this duration is more likely to lead to continued moderate exercise, which improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease (including type 2 diabetes). This program yields public value in the forms of reduced public health care costs and a healthier, more productive workforce.



RESPONSE

Healthy Food Preparation and Eating Habits

Recalculating Health Sessions with Palo Pinto General Hospital, January and May

- Presented Cooking Demonstrations based on the Mediterranean Diet as well as provided healthy food preparation tips during one session viewed by 25 (3 live online and 22 in Facebook Group).
- Presented second session on cooking with and growing herbs. Viewed by 24 (4 live online and 20 in Facebook Group)

Celebrating Family Meals

September is Family Meals Month. To encourage families to spend time together around the table, a Facebook group was established called Celebrating Family Meals – Making Meals & Memories. This multi-county effort provided information about the importance of family meals, weekly challenges, healthy recipe ideas from Dinner Tonight, suggestions for conversation starters, and tips for meal planning as well as making family meals special. A total of 135 individuals have joined the group. During September a total of 16 post were created/shared with an engagement of 67.

Healthy Meal Preparation

Social media was also utilized to share healthy meal preparation ideas. In January, 7 posts related to slow cooker safety, tips for using a slow cooker and recipes were shared with a reach of 605 and 41 engagements.



EVALUATION STRATEGY

Participants logged miles daily or weekly into the Walk Across Texas website. The spring Palo Pinto County Challenge had 158 of 160 (99%) report miles. In addition, participants completed a pre-survey and were asked to submit a post-survey. A total of 79 of 160 (49%) completed the post-survey. 24 of 27 (89%) Palo Pinto County participants in the fall Walk Across Texas! 25th Year Anniversary Challenge! reported miles.

RESULTS

- Spring Palo Pinto County Walk Across Texas Challenge
 - 34,292.17 miles total miles walked
 - 138 of 160 (86%) participants walked 100 miles or over
- Fall Walk Across Texas! 25th Year Anniversary Challenge!
 - 4846.39 miles logged by Palo Pinto County participants
 - 19 of 27 (70%) walked 100 miles or more.
- Economic Impact for Palo Pinto County (spring and fall events):
 - Over the lifetime of the 187 participants in 2021, approximately 5.3 could prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes and / or cardiovascular disease through sustained levels of physical activity.
 - Type 2 Diabetes Economic Impact: \$471,423
 - Cardiovascular Disease Economic Impact: \$388,528
 - Total Economic Impact: \$859,951

The economic benefit of the Walk Across Texas! Adult program is a measure that uses WAT! program evaluation results, disease risk rates, health care costs, and productivity parameters. Economic benefits are calculated for program participants who moved from self-reported inactive (pre-WAT!) to active (post-WAT!). The final number of participants benefitting is based on a follow-up survey that determined the percentage of those who maintained activity levels 3 – 9 months post program.

By engaging in regular physical activity, this reduces a person's risk of disease each year of their remaining life. The dollar value of the economic benefit of WAT! is calculated in terms of the projected lifetime health care cost savings and worker productivity gains.

“My family benefited from WAT (Walk Across Texas) by getting competitive and increasing movement.”

“It made me make sure to get up and move more.”

FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Walk Across Texas will be offered in 2022 as well as programs related to healthy eating and food preparation.

For More Information:

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