

Promoting Physical Activity in Jackson Heights, Queens: A Memo

Gisela Morocho

MEMO

To: Chris Constantino, Executive Director, and Senior Staff
From: Gisela Morocho, Chief Operating Officer
Date: April 8, 2016
Subject: Promoting Physical Activity in Jackson Heights, Queens

This memo will provide information about the need for a community-based collaboration to increase physical activity among adults living in Jackson Heights.

The *Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act* of 2010 (*PPACA*) requires the improvement of quality and delivery of health care. In order to be in compliance with *PPACA* requirements, Elmhurst Hospital could promote health in its surrounding community: Jackson Heights, Queens. The community is predominantly Hispanic (64%). Almost half of the total Jackson Heights population speaks a language other than English and has limited English proficiency. The main language spoken is Spanish. The residents of Jackson Heights have a high rate of obesity (20%), which is a preventable condition (King et al., 2015). Obesity leads to illnesses such as heart failure and diabetes (De Lade, 2016).

A walkthrough assessment of the hospital's community was done to better understand the community's resource needs. The Jackson Heights community has residential buildings and homes. It also has high accessibility to public transportation, a playground, several religious entities, and community organizations that focus on immigration services and housing services. The community lacks affordable community fitness centers and health clubs that promote physical activity in adults.

In order to offer resources that promote physical activity in adults, Elmhurst Hospital can expand its existing health education program to include physical education. The funding for the expansion could be acquired through grants, donations, and organizing charity walks and runs. Additionally, Elmhurst Hospital could operate the program with volunteer labor by offering internships to bilingual students or recent graduates of physical education programs. Elmhurst Hospital could also partner with religious entities and community organizations to extend the physical education program outside the hospital. Studies show that

religious entities serve as sources of social support and leadership in their communities and therefore are effective settings for implementing health interventions (Tussing-Humphreys et al., 2013). In order to efficiently target the predominant Hispanic community, Elmhurst Hospital could prioritize partnering with bilingual religious entities.

The expansions of the health education program and the partnership with religious entities may promote physical activity, and consequently reduce the rate of obesity and its related illnesses in Jackson Heights.

Please feel free to provide me with any feedback, ask any questions or add any ideas. I will be available to discuss this in more detail at the next senior staff meeting. Thank you for your time.

References

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Nominating Faculty: Professor Noemi Rodriguez, Health Services Administration 3510, Department of Health Services Administration, School of Professional Studies, New York City College of Technology, CUNY.

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