

Implementation of a Parks Prescription Program in Austin, TX: Creation of a Network of Providers

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BACKGROUND¹⁻⁷

- As of 2018, the prevalence of obesity in the United States was 42.4% and within Travis county, the percentage of adults rose by 21% from 2011 to 2016
- Obesity can lead to heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes mellitus, and certain types of cancer
- An active lifestyle has been shown to improve daily activities, help control weight, improve health, develop stronger bones and muscles, and improve mood
- In previous studies people reported an increased amount of physical activity in parks
- While there are no studies on prescribed exercise, recent studies have shown the recommended amount of aerobic exercise has proven to be an effective treatment for mild to moderate depression compared to a placebo

OBJECTIVES

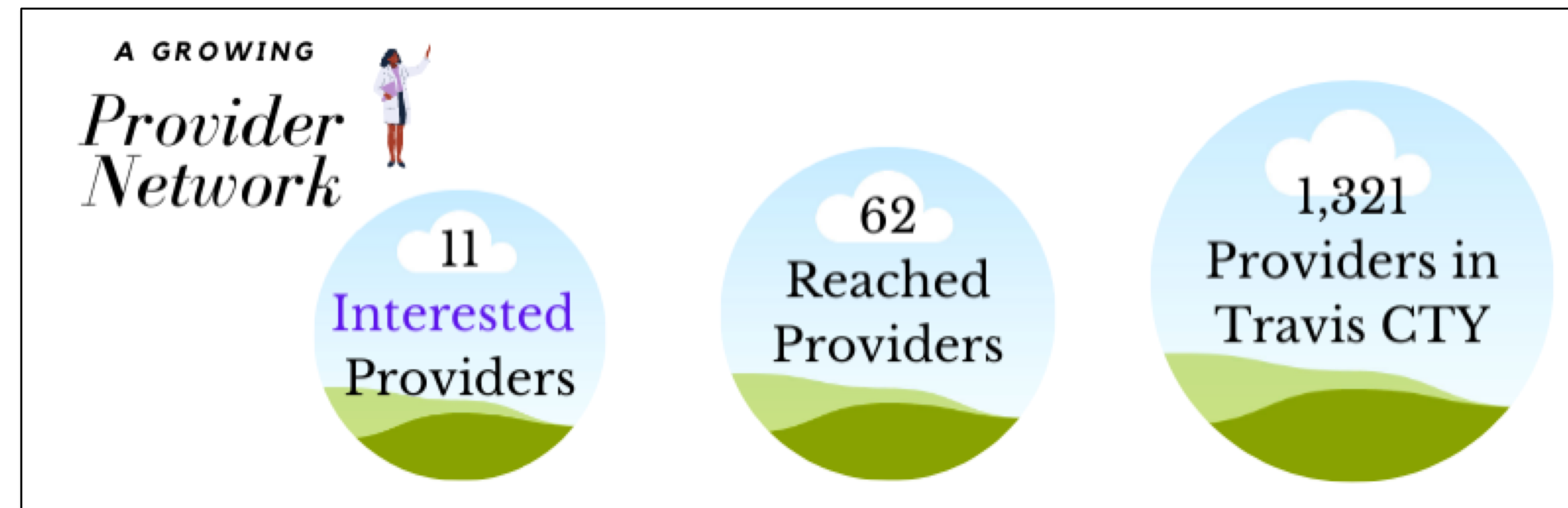
- Create a network of providers that will encourage patients in Austin, TX to use existing resources in the parks to exercise and spend time in nature by:
 - 1) Create a list of potential providers
 - 2) Develop a qualtrics survey and assemble a communication packet to gain feedback about how to gain more interest in joining the program
 - 3) Distribute the survey and packet to our list of providers for future projects to analyze/implement feedback

METHODS

- A communication packet was assembled to contact providers in Austin, Texas. This packet included:
 - An email
 - Program brochure that was developed from the previous project team
 - Letter for the PARD
 - Survey for provider feedback
- Providers will be contacted via phone and email with the communication packet to review and provide feedback. Data will be compiled, and the network of providers will be used to implement the program.

RESULTS IN PROGRESS

Graphic 1: Growing Network of Providers



SURVEY QUESTION EXAMPLES

1. Would you be willing to implement the Park Prescriptions Program into your practice? Yes / No
2. Does the brochure provide you a better understanding of the Park Prescriptions Program? Yes / No
3. Is your practice willing to participate in a low-risk, high-outcome intervention, such as the Park Prescriptions Program for any patients experiencing medical conditions such as hypertension or prediabetes? Yes / No
4. What Park Prescriptions Activities would you be willing to implement into your daily practice?
 - Prescribe exercise in local parks
 - Follow-up emails, calls, or text messages bi-weekly or monthly
 - Rewards when patients meet certain goals
 - Diet and exercise education during office visits
 - Recommending recreation centers or parks in the area for patients to utilize
 - Other, please explain
5. Of the following challenges, which do you feel is the most relevant to you and your practice if you implemented a Park Prescriptions Program:
 - Limited time with patients
 - Lack of training or awareness of resources to have conversations with patients
 - Patients' healthcare needs beyond exercise
 - Lack of awareness of where to send patients for PA
 - Hesitation to write a prescription for something they do not believe a patient can comply with daily

DISCUSSION IN PROGRESS

- This project demonstrates the importance of parks services and their ability to promote physical activity and spending time in nature
- Common barriers include COVID-19 restrictions and difficulty connecting with providers and/or office staff
- Future students will have a provider contact list and feedback from providers outlining what it would take for them to join the network in the Park Prescriptions Program
- Interprofessional collaboration, including community members, is crucial in promoting parks services and exercise

CONCLUSIONS IN PROGRESS

- Providers are currently being contacted, and the contact list is being finalized
- The survey and communication packet is being sent to the provider list, and data will be collected based on the survey results
- Data from the survey will be compiled, and feedback will be used to improve the program structure
- The network of providers will be used in the next phase of piloting the program which could include making a smartphone application or equally accessible way to track time spent at the park

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