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Allina Health Neighborhood Health Connection™

2015 Six-Month Follow-up Survey Evaluation Summary

Overview and initial survey results

The Allina Health Neighborhood Health Connection (NHC) grant program was created to help individuals build social connections and participate in activities that encourage physical activity or healthy eating. The evaluation results gathered to date show a number of promising program outcomes. The initial survey administered at the end of the 2015 NHC funding period, suggest positive changes in social connections, physical activity, and healthy eating occurred for a majority of participants.

Follow-up Survey Highlights

Six months after the end of the NHC grant period, most respondents reported maintaining or increasing the positive changes in social connections, healthy eating and physical activity that they had achieved immediately following their NHC activity. However, nearly one-third and one-fifth of respondents reported no changes at any time to their physical activity and healthy eating behavior, respectively.

Evaluation methods

NHC grantees received funding to implement their social connectedness activity during a 6-month period (July-December 2015). At the end of the NHC funding period, an initial survey was administered to grantees and participants. Six months later, follow-up surveys were sent to participants and grantees who completed the initial survey. The follow-up survey was sent to 733 participants and completed by 420, a response rate of 57 percent. Participants from 49 NHC-funded activities responded to the survey. Respondents tended to be white, be female, not receive public support (a proxy measure of socioeconomic status), speak English in their household, and be in good health. Use caution when interpreting the participant follow-up results as they may not represent the thoughts of all participants who were eligible for that survey. The follow-up grantee survey was sent to 53 grantees and completed by 50, a response rate of 94 percent.

In this summary, participants' and grantees' follow-up survey results are shared. In addition, comparisons are made between participants' results from the initial and follow-up surveys.

A majority of participants continued participating in NHC activities

More than three-quarters of grantees (76%) reported continuing their activity after the NHC grant period ended. Most decided to continue their activity because it helped participants make social connections (87%) and it had a positive impact on their health (84%).

A majority of participants (60%) who completed the follow-up survey reported that they continued to take part in the NHC activity. The most common reason individuals stopped participating was because the activity was no longer offered.

Participants who continued to take part in NHC activities more likely to strengthen social connections

Eighty-two percent of participants indicated that they met new people through the NHC activity. Most (83%) reported that they still talk to or meet with at least one of the new people they met. Eighty-six percent reported strengthening their existing connections. Those who continued taking part in an activity were significantly more likely to report strengthening their existing connections (93%), compared to those who did not continue to participate (75%).*

Most participants' social connections strengthened or maintained

Eighty percent of participants reported strengthening their existing connections at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up. Nine percent reported strengthening their social connections at the end of NHC funding period and maintaining those improvements at the follow-up (Figure 1).

1. Participants' change in their current connections at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up (N=431)

End of NHC funding	Follow-up	
↑	↑	80%
↑	—	9%
—	↑	7%
—	—	5%

↑ = connection increased, — = no change in connection

Note: This figure displays the total number of participants who answered survey questions regarding changes to their social connections both at the end of the NHC funding period AND at the follow-up. The total percentage is greater than 100 because of rounding. As a result, the percentage of participants who strengthened their current connections at the follow-up appears one point higher.

A majority of participants maintained changes in physical activity

A majority of participants (52%) reported doing about the same amount of physical activity as six months ago and 46 percent reported being more physically active. Nearly half of participants (49%) who continued taking part in a NHC activity reported increased physical activity. Fewer (40%) who no longer continued to participate in the activity reported an increase in physical activity. These results were not statistically significant.

Physical activity increased or maintained for half of participants

Thirty-one percent of participants reported doing more physical activity at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up. Twenty-one percent reported doing more physical activity at the end of NHC funding period and maintaining those improvements at the follow-up (Figure 2).

2. Participants' change in their physical activity at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up (N=315)

End of NHC funding	Follow-up	Percentage
↑	↑	31%
↑	—	21%
↑	↓	1%
—	↑	16%
—	—	31%
—	↓	1%
↓	↓	<1%

↑ = physical activity increased, ↓ = physical activity decreased, — = no change in physical activity

Note: This figure displays the total number of participants who answered survey questions regarding changes in their physical activity at the end of the NHC funding period AND at the follow-up. The total percentage is greater than 100 because of rounding. As a result, the percentage of participants who increased their physical activity at the follow-up appears one point higher.

Most participants increased healthy eating

At the follow-up, 66 percent of participants reported eating more healthy meals and snacks compared to six months prior.

Participants who continued participating in a NHC activity and those who did not reported nearly identical levels of increased healthy eating (65% and 67%, respectively). These results were not statistically significant.

Healthy eating increased or maintained for most participants

Forty-nine percent of participants reported eating healthier foods at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up. Thirteen percent reported eating healthier foods at the end of NHC funding period and maintaining those improvements at the follow-up (Figure 3).

3. Participants' change in their healthy eating behavior at the end of the NHC funding period and at the follow-up (N=239)

End of NHC funding	Follow-up	Percentage
↑	↑	49%
↑	—	13%
—	↑	16%
—	—	19%
↓	↑	2%
↓	—	2%
↓	↓	<1%

↑ = healthy eating increased, ↓ = healthy eating decreased, — = no change in healthy eating

Note: This figure displays the total number of participants who answered survey questions regarding changes in their healthy eating behavior at the end of the NHC funding period AND at the follow-up. The total percentage is greater than 100 because of rounding. As a result, the percentage of participants who increased their healthy eating at the follow-up appears one point higher.

* Significance tests were conducted using a chi-squared test. Differences are statistically significant at $p < .05$.

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