

Walk with Ease Breathe with Ease Success Story

Liberty County - Montana

August -September 2020

Program Overview

The Liberty County Medical Center Wellness Team, Tobacco Prevention Specialist, Chamber of Commerce, and the Toole County Health Promotion Specialist coordinated to offer the Walk With Ease Self-Directed (WWE-SD) program simultaneously with tobacco prevention efforts, calling the program “Walk with Ease Breathe with Ease, No Vape About It”. The program was offered to the Liberty County Medical Center (LCMC) employees as well as community members from August to September 2020.

Collaborative Effort

The goal of the collaboration was to increase physical activity while providing education on tobacco cessation (specifically vaping). Multi-sector collaborations such as this are essential within small rural communities where medical and public health staff often have multiple positions. Combining multiple domains into a single event (i.e. tobacco use prevention, physical wellness, worksite wellness) can be beneficial to participants and leadership alike.

Walk with Ease

The Walk with Ease Self-Directed program is a 6-week, independent walking program that is open to anyone who would like to start or maintain a low-impact physical activity program. Participants received a positive and encouraging Walk with Ease email each week that incorporated tobacco prevention messages.

Tobacco Cessation Collaboration

The tobacco use prevention messages were shared with participants via email and covered topics including: the Montana Tobacco Quit Line, vaping, and general tobacco cessation. In addition, Quit Kits were made available to employees. The goal of incorporating tobacco prevention resources into the Walk with Ease Breathe with Ease, No Vape About It program was to provide education and keep the momentum going in the tobacco prevention movement.

Program Incentives

The Walk with Ease Breathe with Ease, No Vape About It program provided incentives to participants. LCMC employee incentives included four hours of paid time off and coffee gift cards. Community Members that registered for the program were entered into a drawing for a \$40 “chamber buck” gift card which was donated by the Liberty County Chamber of Commerce. “Chamber bucks” can be used at community businesses to help promote shopping locally.

Participation and Results

Twenty-five people registered for the program. Among the 25 participants, 13 individuals completed the Walk with Ease program. A participant is considered a “completer” if they report weekly walking minutes during four of the six weeks. Although participation



declined over the 6 weeks of the program, there was an overall increase in the average number of walking minutes recorded (Figure 1). Additionally, participants who completed the program reported a decrease in their level of pain and fatigue by the end of the program (Figure 2).

Feedback and Future Programs

The Toole County Health Promotion Specialist and Liberty County Medical Center Wellness Team received positive feedback and requests for this program to return. As one participant expressed,

“The WWE program encouraged me to get out and exercise. It helped to improve my mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic by giving me purpose in my walking!”

-Jesse Fulbright
Liberty County Extension Agent

Figure 1.

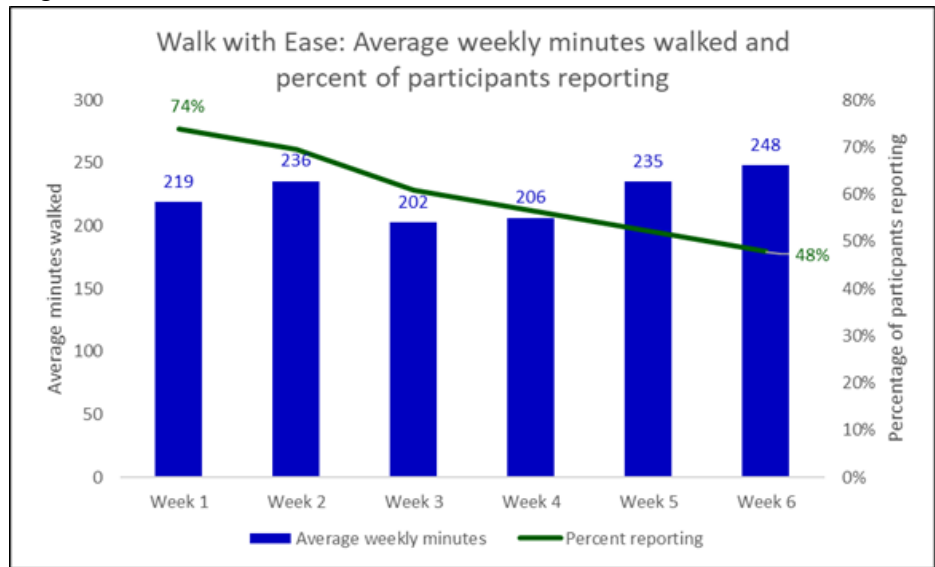
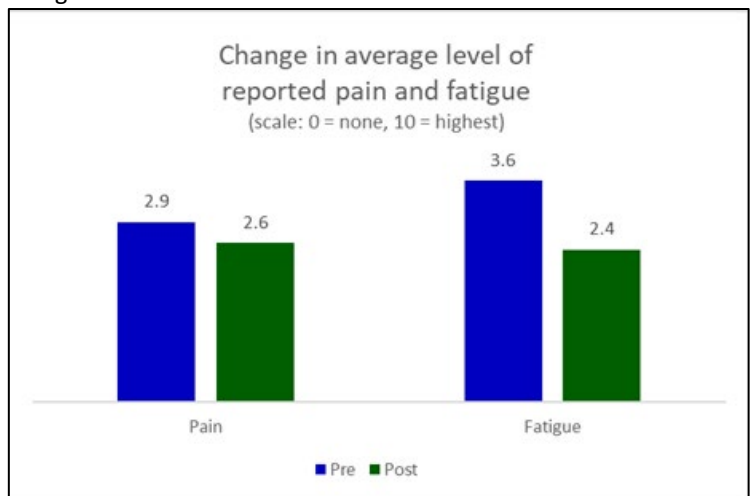


Figure 2.



Most participants found out about the program through friends/family. The wellness team will work on creating more marketing and promotion to increase participation numbers in future programs. One example of a future promotion event is a kick-off picnic to initiate the program. The picnic will be a way to promote healthy nutrition, allow everyone to complete the first walk together, and encourage walking with a friend for accountability. There is potential to collaborate with other groups such as ReACT (Montana's teen-led movement taking action to become the first-ever tobacco-free generation) and AWARE (a statewide nonprofit organization that offers quality, community-based support for people with mental health and/or developmental disabilities and families with children ages 0 to 8) in order to reach a broader audience and include members of these organizations in Walk with Ease Breathe with Ease, No Vape About It efforts.

This adaptation to the Walk with Ease program has gained national attention and Montana workplaces will continue to look at ways to implement these efforts with other evidence-based interventions that address chronic disease prevention and health promotion.

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