

California

Promoting Physical Activity for Latina Women in California

Public Health Problem

Getting WISEWOMAN clients in Los Angeles County to be physically active is a challenge because of barriers such as having to work long hours, lack of transportation and child care, and having little time in the day for themselves.

State Example

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation *Healthy Parks* program's aim is to improve the health of county residents by promoting parks as places to be active. The Mid-Valley Comprehensive Health Center shares this goal. Rita Singhal, WISEWOMAN Program Manager, contacted the parks and recreation site closest to the health center about working together. The park has many options and Ms. Singhal decided that aerobics classes would be a good choice for the WISEWOMAN clients. Mid-Valley agreed to pay the \$2 per class charge for women to attend.

Clients are told about all the things to do at the county park nearest to the health center and most of the client's homes. They are offered a punch card that allows them to go to 10 aerobics classes. Women who do not have cars can take the bus to the park. Women who live closer to another site are told about free or low-cost options at the park closest to their home.

The Mid-Valley staff reports that nearly 75% of the women are going to the classes. Many bring family members and friends with them because the \$2 cost is so low. It gives them a chance to spend time together doing something fun that is also healthy. The park has activities for children, so the women (many of whom are single parents) can bring them without having to get child care. It is likely that increasing the women's level of physical activity will also help the whole family become more active.

Implications and Impact

In 2006, Mid-Valley provided WISEWOMAN screening services to more than 320 women. One participant, Dora Roman, decided to bring her adult daughter with her to the aerobics classes. Going together helps them support each other and makes them want to continue the classes. Dora lost 11 pounds and lowered her cholesterol by 44 points. Being able to go to the classes helped improve her health and gave her the chance to spend time with her daughter doing something fun and healthy.

Another WISEWOMAN client, Maria de Jesus Tellez, says she loves going to the aerobics classes. She has a very helpful family who takes her to class. She has inspired her family so much that they formed a family walking group. Maria lost 6 pounds in 2 months, and now her blood pressure is normal. Her granddaughter also has lost weight because the family is walking together.