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Community Recreation and Parks: Active Amherst Healthy Community



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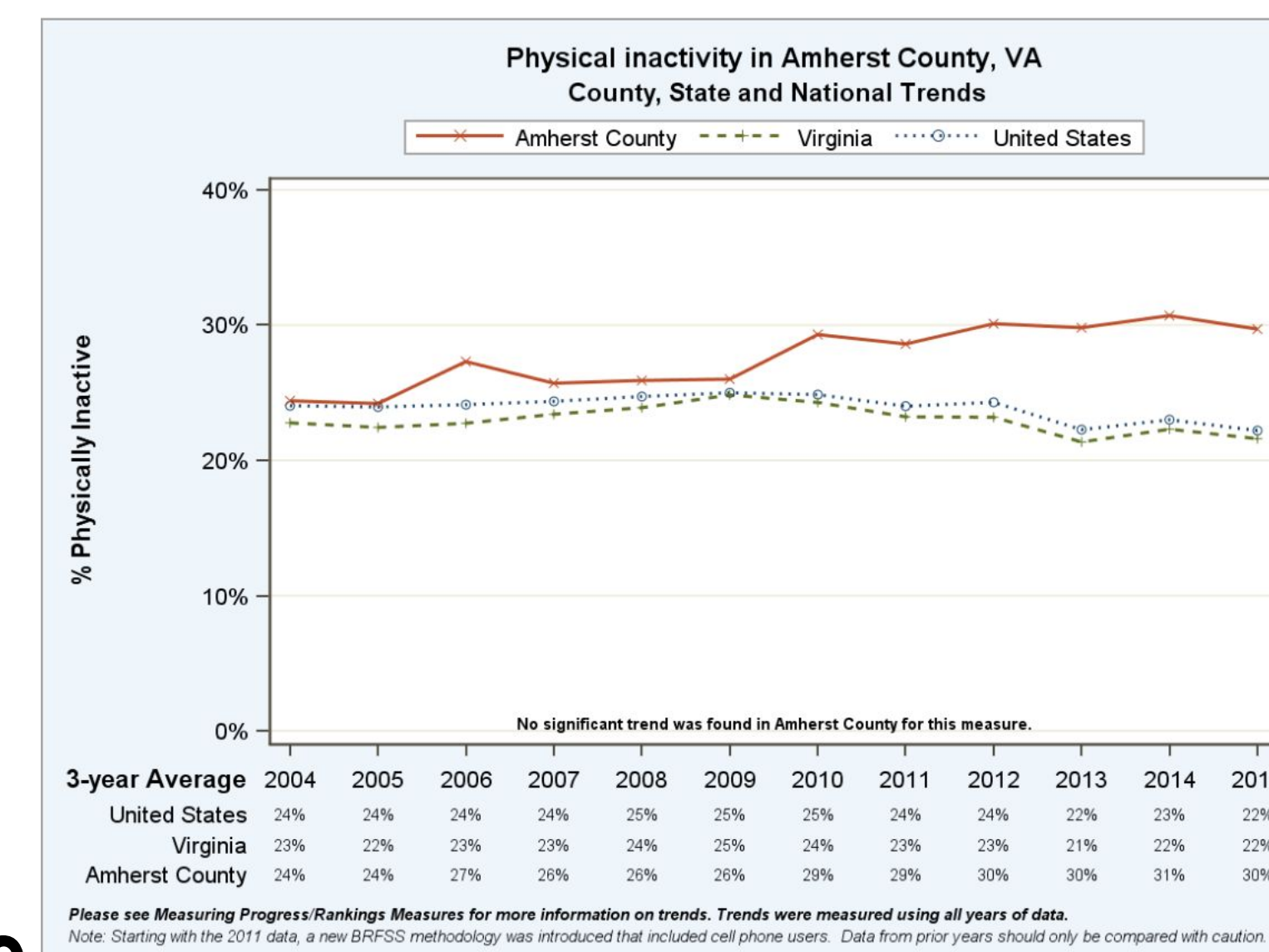
Abstract

Active Amherst Healthy County (AAHC) is an umbrella term for the physical activity programs that will be implemented, created, and/or changed from the Amherst County Recreation and Parks Department's current programs. The specific programs in AAHC will be determined by a countywide survey. The objective of this survey is to create a program that will best help improve the physical activity levels of the most possible constituents in Amherst County. The program will utilize local resources in order to create partnerships that will best serve the constituents. The survey will be analyzed and reviewed in order to implement the best form of the AAHC program. Once the program has been implemented the participants will have the opportunity to complete continual surveys. Continual surveying of participants throughout the programs will allow for the program to stay up-to-date and and to keep the participants involved.

Background

There will be a needs assessment to determine the current strengths and weaknesses of the current programs in the Amherst County Parks and Recreation Department as well as what the community is or is not receiving from the program that they would like to receive. Determining all of the actual and perceived needs of the community will allow for appropriate program planning (McKenzie, Neiger, & Thackeray, 2017). This community assessment will ensure all resources are being allocated in the most useful ways to help the community increase physical activity rates. .

Amherst County's current trend for physical inactivity is 30%, while the Virginia average is 22% and the top U.S. performer is at 19% (County Health Rankings, 2019). This survey is in an attempt to find the reasoning behind the results. The survey will highlight areas of strength and weakness in the Amherst County Parks and Recreation Department.



Rationale/Purpose

- **Mission Statement:** The Amherst County Recreation and Parks Mission Statement: "To advance parks, recreation and environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people" (Amherst County, 2020).
 - **Goal 1:** To increase public awareness and support for recreation, park and leisure services, by 20% to show the relation to the constructive use of leisure and thereby to the social stability of our community and the physical and mental health of individuals by 2022.
 - **Goal 2:** To increase the public awareness of the environmental and natural resource management aspects of recreation and leisure services that are available by 20% within two years.
 - **Goal 3:** To increase the facilitation attempts of the development, maintenance, expansion and improvement of socially and environmentally relevant public policy that supports recreation, parks and leisure programs and services by 30% within the next two years.
- **Rationale:** Physical activity in adults can result in the lower risk of early death, coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancer, falls, and depression (Healthy People, 2020). These risks and benefits are not something that should be taken lightly. A proposed solution to this situation is the AAHC program.

Method

Participants

- Constituents of Amherst County, Virginia

Materials and Procedure

Program plan

- Utilizing the Precede-Proceed method the program will review quality of life, overall health, impacts on participants' physical activity levels, factors that influence program implementation, and then implement the program.
- A survey will be sent out to the target population, the constituents of Amherst County. After the information has been gathered from the survey it is critical to implement the changes dictated by the constituents to assure their start or continued participation. This will allow for all possible changes to be evaluated and have all of the kinks worked out. All of the changes may not be immediately possible, but there should be the completion of a plan to map out the changes that will be completed in order to better provide for the community. Using this plan, the program will be able to assess any potential barriers and have the appropriate time to reduce them. With the help of motivated staff and partners there will be a clear vision of where the program is heading and will be able to start the full implementation process.

Resource list

- Existing resources and best practices should be identified to make a successful program (RHI Hub, 2020i). This will allow the program to get an idea of how and what previous programs used. Partnering with other programs will give AAHC the access to the other program's resources as well. Partnering with programs and organizations such as public health organizations, volunteer groups, local hospitals, colleges and universities, state and local health departments, and foundations will give AAHC more information on local resources. These partnerships will help to create ways for individuals to participate in the program.

Data Collection

- This survey contains 24 questions that consist of age of participants, age of those in the household, current participation, community input, specific needs, and demographic information. This setup will allow for the surveys to give the most relevant and necessary feedback for the assessment. This information will allow the Amherst County Parks and Recreation Department to provide the community with appropriate and adequate facilities and programs. All of the information provided will be crucial in understanding the community members that are involved and those that would like to become involved.

Data Analysis

- Data analysis will be used to reduce, organize, synthesize, and summarize information to help make sense of the data and to be able to make interpretations about the target population (McKenzie, Neiger & Thackeray, 2016). Descriptive and inferential are two types of data analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to organize, summarize, and describe characteristics of the data. Inferential statistics used to draw an association or relationship between and among the data. The AAHC staff will have a team designated to determine results and to decide which type of statistics should be used.

Results

- The results of the program will determine what changes, additions, and reductions that will need to be made to the Amherst County Recreation and Parks Department. These findings will allow for the AAHC program to help the most population possible increase their physical activity rates.
- After the data analysis has been completed then the interpretation of the data begins. Interpreting data is to attach meaning and beginning to draw conclusions that are careful, fair, and open methods of inquiry (McKenzie, Neiger & Thackeray, 2016). There are many different ways to interpret the data, but the one that AAHC will use is "asking critical reference groups to review the data and to provide their judgements of successes and failures, strengths and weaknesses". This will allow the program to take the data they have gathered and as an affiliated community organization to review the data and then provide an evaluation. This will help the program, because it will have another organization from the community to take an outside look to see if the program has really succeeded.

Evaluation

- A written report would be provided to the board of directors of the recreation and parks services, elected town and county officials, county and supervisors and administrators on the town board, and the public. These entities will be provided with the report because it will allow them to see the benefit of this program. The report is going to include an executive summary or abstract, introduction, methods/procedures, results, and conclusions/recommendations (McKenzie, Neiger & Thackeray, 2016).
- The participants will have the ability to fill out a survey, either online or in person, to allow for constant modifications to be able to suit the participants needs. This will allow them to stay involved with a program they enjoy.

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