



Abstract Title: Partnering together: Improving access to chronic disease exercise programs in the community

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Introduction/Background

The Community Health Teams (CHT) at the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) offer free wellness programs and services to residents in the Halifax Regional Municipality and work closely with community groups and organizations toward building a stronger and healthier community. In order to better meet the needs of those with chronic conditions that are not currently meeting the physical activity requirements, CHTs have partnered with Canada Games Center to offer a free exercise program to individuals living with chronic conditions in their community.

Purpose

This initiative will increase accessibility to evidenced based exercise programs grounded in behavior change to the public living with chronic conditions by reducing costs and other barriers to attending programs and providing services right in their communities.

Approach and Action

Working with Privacy and Legal Services at the NSHA a Memorandum of Understanding and Client Consent and Liability was established to address any legal, privacy, confidentiality and liability concerns between the two organizations involved. The Canada Games Center provided their services, including space and fitness leaders, free of charge. The fitness leaders led, designed and delivered the 10-week exercise

program. In return the CHT provided additional training to the facility around exercise for chronic conditions using the *Heartwise Training Program*. The CHT screened clients for appropriateness and safety, collected outcome measures and provided behavior change education to participants enrolled in the program.

Outcomes

Program outcome measures were administered pre and post program that included 6 minute walk test, sit to stand test, self-reported physical activity, SF-12 Quality of Life, blood pressure, weight, body mass index and %body fat. Process measures included number of participants enrolled, completion rate and % attendance. Additionally a partnership evaluation was conducted to evaluate this unique relationship and how the two groups worked together. Results are pending at this time. **Conclusion** Building strong relationships and collaborating on shared priorities with community partners is key to improving health outcomes to individuals. This novel approach of collaboration between the NSHA and a recreation facility to enhance the physical activity of individuals living with chronic conditions will help pave the way for future collaboration between the NSHA and other recreational facilities across the province.

References

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