

East St. Louis: Making Health Happen

With a majority of East St. Louis considered a food desert, residents living in and immediately surrounding this city struggle to find fresh, healthy foods. Often times the only convenient places to purchase foods are at the abundance of local corner stores. Sadly, these corner stores are primarily stocked with unhealthy, highly processed foods high in added sugar, saturated fat, and sodium - all factors that place the largely African American community at an increased risk for chronic diseases. By working within the current food model, the Make Health Happen Coalition decided to partner with the local corner stores to increase both the amount and variety of healthy foods.

This partnership with the corner stores resulted in store modifications including stocking the shelves with more fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat milk, eggs, beans, water, and more. To promote the program, Make Health Happen signage was posted by these healthy foods throughout the stores. Additional outreach to help residents get excited about this program included conducting nutrition educations and cooking demonstrations. The Make Health Happen Coalition also developed informational resources on local food pantries, farmers' markets, and local meal sites. Additionally, the program was promoted in many local doctors' offices through the WIC to 5 promotional materials.

Objectives and Progress

Increase the number of existing stores that sell "healthy" foods in the target community from 3 to 6.

During the project, 2 of the existing stores that sold some healthy foods closed, decreasing the number of stores with healthy foods from 3 to 1. We were able to partner with additional stores and increase the number of stores that sold healthy foods from 1 to 7.



Increase the number of existing corner stores that expand their inventory of "healthy" foods in East St. Louis community from 1 to 6.

The Make Health Happen Coalition worked with 5 corner stores to expand their inventory of healthy foods. Stores expanded their fresh produce options from 2 to 10 or more.

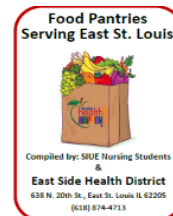
Increase the number of stores with new on-site and in-store placement promotion strategies for healthy foods in the target community from 2 to 6.

Recipes, shelf talkers & nutritional messages were placed in 7 stores promoting healthy foods, along with on-site cooking demonstrations and walk-by nutrition educations.



Increase the number of stores that offer cash or coupon incentives for purchase of healthy foods in the target community from 0 to 4.

One store offered an incentive for healthy purchasing. This store offered \$5 of free, fresh produce with every \$50 purchase.



Increase the number of farmer's market that offer cash or coupon incentives for the purchase of healthy foods in the target community from 0-2

SNAP recipients had an opportunity to double their SNAP dollars at the farmers market and get free \$5 every week for participating in the Eat-Up Illinois program.

Increase the number of new tools or resources to create awareness of how to access healthy food options in the community from 0 to 2.

18 Bulletin Boards were placed throughout the community with information on food access, promotional events & additional community resources. Over 5000 wallet size food pantry lists and 1000 food resource guides were distributed.



Increase the number of participants enrolled in the WIC Program in the target community from 4000 to 4500.

The WIC program partnered with the local doctor's offices and promoted the Illinois WIC to 5 program to increase the number of new moms and babies referred to WIC and continue to stay on WIC.

Increase the number of providers and other community partners that refer to WIC in the target community from 2 to 10.

The marketing materials from the Illinois WIC to 5 was promoted in doctor's offices, daycare centers, housing authority, DHS office and the organizations the coalition members represented.

Increase the number of providers, other healthcare staff and other community partners that receive basic training on WIC services and benefits in the target community from 0 to 10.

The leadership team met with the staff of the OBGYN offices and the pediatrician offices and provided information on WIC and its benefits to the participant and the benefits to the doctors. All the doctors received the WIC 101 training materials.



Increase the number of partner and public messages on CPHMC efforts and achievements related to improving access to environments with healthy food and beverage options from 0 to 18 by the end of the project period.

The partnership used the bulletin boards, door to door canvassing, newspaper advertisements, Facebook, health fairs, and coalition members helped with the dissemination of public and partner messages.

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