Opt4Health (Obesity Prevention Texts for Health): A social marketing mHealth campaign, integrating text, web, and voice messaging, for obesity prevention efforts in Mississippi and Louisiana

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HEALTHY NETWORKS DESIGN & RESEARCH
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Learning Objectives

- **Describe a social marketing public health strategy** for multi-sector obesity prevention that uses **mHealth** to promote good nutrition, physical activity, and healthy eating for children and families in states with high obesity rates (MS and LA).

- **Demonstrate the components of an integrated, multi-function technology mHealth campaign** (text, web, and voice messaging), and how they are integrated, to support community-wide public health campaigns.

- **Formulate a strategy** to add multi-functional mHealth to existing obesity interventions in schools, child care centers, clinics, and other socializing institutions.

Child Socializing Institutions as "Hubs" of Childhood Obesity Interventions:
Improving Good Nutrition and Healthy Living Behaviors

Hollar D, Lombardo M, Hollar TL, McNamara K. "Schools as *Laboratories* for Obesity Prevention: Proven Effective Models." In Bagchi D (ed). Global View on Childhood Obesity: Current Status, Consequences and Prevention. London, UK: Elsevier, 2010.

Leveraging Existing Obesity Prevention Programming
Thriving Communities, Thriving Children

Mississippi and New Orleans:
- 45 Elementary Schools
- 48 Early Childhood Sites

- Fun cartoon characters of organs of body
- Grade-specific, evidence-based classroom curricula
- Integrated cafeteria education
- Daily classroom-based physical activity

100+ Health Improvement Project (HIP) grants

Randomized evaluation design including anthropometric outcomes.

**$1.2 Million
(June 2013 – May 2016)**

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Slide 1:

Primary Messaging Modality:
Text
(smart and "dumb" phones)

Secondary Messaging Modality:
Voice
(smart phones and "dumb" phones)

Secondary Messaging Modality:
Video
(smart phones and computers/tablets)

Fun, healthy text messages for the whole family sent every Friday to your cellphone that includes:

- Short health tip
- Link to a fun YouTube video about health
- Phone number to call to hear a recorded health message

Go to www.go-OPT4Health.com to learn more!

Tracking data:
- Sign-ups by site (school/child care center)
- Clicks on videos by site
- Calls to voice system by state and sector

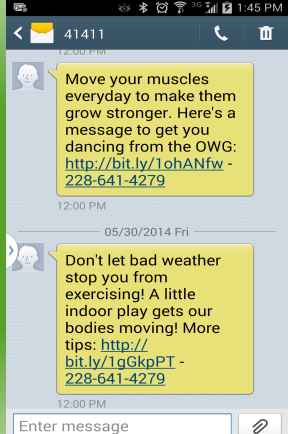**No rewards for participation, except healthy family fun!**

Slide 2:

Text
"Healthyfun"
to
41411

Slide 3:

Recruitment:
OPT4Health Club

- Posters in elementary schools, child care centers, & Head Start Centers
- "Ads" in parent newsletters
- "Ads" on school/center menus
- Announcements during school meetings

ANNOUNCING

OPT4Health Club!
Fun Friday Health Texts to Your Cellphone

TEXT 'XXXXXXXXX' TO
54321#
TO JOIN TODAY!

Fun, healthy text messages for the whole family sent every Friday to your cellphone that includes:
- Short health tip
- Link to a fun YouTube video about health
- Phone number to call to hear a recorded health message

Go to www.go-OPT4Health.com to learn more!

Slide 4:

OPT4Health Club
Screenshot of
Weekly Texts Received

41411

12:00 PM

Move your muscles everyday to make them grow stronger. Here's a message to get you dancing from the OWG: http://bit.ly/1ohANfw - 228-641-4279

12:00 PM

04/04/2014 Fri

Have nuts and fresh beans in April! Top green beans with sliced almonds for a healthy side dish. http://bit.ly/1nyGpoP - 601-207-7320

11:00AM

05/30/2014 Fri

Don't let bad weather stop you from exercising! A little indoor play gets our bodies moving! More tips: http://bit.ly/1gGkpPT - 228-641-4279

12:00 PM

Enter message

Results

- Interestingly, 40% reported they have to pay for texts (<u>unexpected!</u> We thought they would be included in plans).

- Overall, participants indicated during focus groups that they looked forward to the Friday texts, and found certain topics most useful, such as:
  - Tips to drink more
  - Exercise reminders
  - Short recipes

Results

Respondents indicated changes/improvements in eating behaviors:

- "Fiber over the summer…reminded me to eat fiber while driving all summer between pools [summer job] as I worked – took grapes, apples, sandwiches with whole grain bread at Subway." (PE Coach)
- "The texts helped me see what is in season – a reminder about that." (Principal)
- "Not lost weight! But it makes me more aware." (Media Center Director)
- "Fiber - made me think about whole grains, when buying bread at the store, and f/ v's"
- "Tips for different meals…pizza with whole grain crust; spinach and cheese in eggs; mango salsa; recipes were great." (Parent Volunteer)
- "Eating smaller portions." (Head Start Director)
- "Drinking more water instead of Coke." (Head Start Director)
- "Added spinach to my salads." (Head Start Director)

Results

Respondents indicated changes/improvements in physical activity behaviors:

- "We started exercise after school, may not have otherwise." (Media Center Director)
- "Suggestions regarding walking were good… Suggestions on how to exercise even if could not go outside were good." (Principal)
- "Reminders to go outside were good." (Parent Volunteer)
- "I walk more." (Head Start Director)
- "Exercise tips were good." (Head Start Director)

Challenges

- For those who do get free texting, they need(ed) to be told/ reminded that texts don't cost money.

- Including a video link reduced participation due to data usage.

  "They have to be told [about the free texts]. They have to know it does not use their data plan – It is no different than texting your friend. They see the video [link] and then they are concerned their data will be used. Low income people, this is an issue for them. As wifi becomes more accessible, then ok. When they don't have it and for the clientel we serve, data will be an issue. A regular text message would be good, but with video it makes it troublesome. "

Challenges

- Despite multi-media advertising/outreach, recruitment was lower than expected.

- Many of the cell phone companies/services used by potential participants in our MS and LA communities block participation in mass/bulk texting programs (pre-paid phones would not work on the system).

- That being said, those who did participate indicated they found the program useful!

> "Will this begin again in the spring? Hope so!" (Media Center Director)

Lessons Learned

- This program produced behavior change, but through the texts, not voice nor url modalities

- m-Health programming can be improved by providing the same information on *Facebook and Instagram* to prevent loss of users.

  Respondents said these platforms do not "disappear" when a phone is lost/changed, which seemed to happen a lot in this population.

- Facebook and Instagram are possible because this population without data plans frequently uses wifi.

- Incentives are required to engage this group (coupons, giveaways, etc.), but the funder did not allow this for our project.

  "Clients we serve are always looking for an incentive – if they know they will win something, if at the end there was an incentive bonus for participating 'you will be enrolled for an iPad,' then they will sign up."

OPT4Health: Obesity Prevention Texts for Health
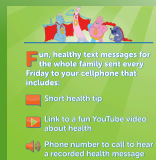
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