

Community Gardening for Heart Health: Improving Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Rural Wyoming

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Hypothesis

- Establishing a community garden in Buffalo, WY will increase fruit and vegetable consumption and subsequent heart health among its residents



Buffalo lies at the base of the Bighorn Mountains, providing the area with a major tourism industry

Background

- Buffalo, WY has 4,585 residents and is the largest municipality within Johnson County
- Buffalo's economy is centered around energy production, tourism, and agriculture
- 22% of Johnson County's residents are over 65 years old
- No community gardens currently exist within Johnson County

Literature Review

- The U.S. averages 1.7 servings of fruit and vegetables per day... the recommendation is 5 servings
- Rural and older populations are less likely to consume fruits and vegetables
- Community gardening improves fruit and vegetable consumption among its participants and their families
- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption by 5 servings per day is associated with a 20% reduced risk of heart disease
- Additional benefits of community gardening include lesser risk of obesity, more physical activity, and greater food security



The USDA recommends consuming at least 4-5 servings per day of fruits and vegetables, preferably 2.5 cups of veggies and 2 cups of fruit.



Community garden success depends heavily on design. Here, raised beds make plots more accessible and more attractive.

Community Project and Delivery

- Verbal support for a community garden was received by the public health department, city council, and patient education at the community clinic
- A literature review on community gardening and fruit and vegetable consumption was performed
- A “project in a box” was compiled including step-by-step instructions for community garden development, funding, and maintenance
- The data and resources were presented at the local Rotary Club's weekly meeting

Next Steps...

- Buffalo's Rotary Club owns a plot of land in town that's being used for a labyrinth
- The club has agreed to present the project again in the spring and, if feasible, will begin garden development on the same site at that time.