AN EVALUATION OF GUIDED GROCERY STORE TOURS FOR SNAP-ELIGIBLE ADULTS IN PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

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Philadelphia-based nonprofit organization Health Promotion Council (HPC) conducted guided grocery store tours in Philadelphia County educating SNAP-eligible adults about shopping for healthy meals on a limited budget. A post survey was distributed to measure intent. From 2011 to 2016, the percentage of Philadelphia residents living in food insecure households increased from 15.4% to 19.3%, while the national percentage dropped from 14.6% to 13.0%. Philadelphia’s poverty rate, the highest of the ten most populous U.S. cities, is a primary factor that limits adults from purchasing and consuming healthy foods.

What were the participant demographics?

- Male: 17%
- Female: 83%
- Black: 81%
- White: 14%
- Other: 5%
- 49% were 60 years and older
- 26% Less than a college degree
- 74% Four year college degree

What shopping behaviors did participants intend to change after the tour?

- Comparing unit prices to find the best deal: 78%
- Reading ingredient lists to find whole grains: 83%
- Comparing food labels to make healthy choices: 85%
- Buying fruits and vegetables in all forms: 79%

Where were the participants referred from?

- Prediabetes class: 29%
- In-store recruitment: 32%
- Friend/Family: 13%
- Community program: 26%

Tour Structure

- Led by a HPC nutrition educator
- Utilized Cooking Matters at the Store evidence-based curriculum
- Conducted at two local grocery stores in Philadelphia County from November 2017 to September 2018
- Covered four priority areas: reading food labels, comparing unit prices, finding whole grain foods, and three ways to purchase produce
- Participants received incentives at the end of the tour, including a $10 gift card, reusable grocery bag, or recipe guidebook

Conclusions

Guided in-store tours are promising approaches to delivering SNAP-Ed services and promoting healthy purchasing behaviors among low-income adults.

Participants presented high motivation and intent to improve food resource management practices after a single education lesson.

Analyzing the population served and recruitment methods helps educators link program participants to additional SNAP-Ed services to meet their health needs.