

1-2020

Increasing Food Access: Evaluation of a Food Buying Club in Philadelphia

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Recommended Citation

Hoover, Kimberly and Brawer, MPH, PhD, MCHES, Rickie, "Increasing Food Access: Evaluation of a Food Buying Club in Philadelphia" (2020). *Phase 1*. Paper 34.

https://jdc.jefferson.edu/si_phr_2022_phase1/34

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SI/PHR Abstract

SKMC Class of 2022

Word Count: 256

Increasing Food Access: Evaluation of a Food Buying Club in Philadelphia

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Introduction: Children living in food insecure homes are at higher risk of developing a variety of negative health outcomes, including cardiovascular disease, obesity, and cognitive, emotional and behavioral problems. In order to combat these outcomes, Mercy Neighborhood Ministries of Philadelphia (MNMOP) established a Food Buying Club to increase accessibility and affordability of fresh produce. However, the satisfaction with this program among participants needs to be determined in order to strengthen the program.

Objective: The objective of this quality improvement study was to evaluate parental satisfaction with the MNMOP program, specifically regarding produce options, cost, and variety.

Methods: An online survey was emailed to the participants of the July distribution. Satisfaction with the overall program, food variety, food quality, and cost was assessed. Reasons for joining the program, barriers to joining, and suggestions for future changes were also assessed. The survey was adapted to an open-ended format for in-person interviews. 37 in-person interviews were conducted during the October distribution.

Results: 4 participants completed the online survey. Participants rated high satisfaction with the quality, variety, and cost of the produce. No barriers to joining were noted. Suggestions for change included better advertising of the program and making the packages larger. Interview analysis is pending.

Conclusion: While awaiting further analysis, the Food Buying Club should increase advertising in the community because the fresh produce appears to be satisfactory among participants. However, the small

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sample size limits these conclusions. Future analysis should include a larger sample and information about motives for both joining and continuing to purchase from the program.