Mayors Wellness Campaign
Put your community in motion.

Physical Health & Nutrition

WEIGHT LOSS CHALLENGE

GET HEALTHY TOGETHER

- Weight Loss Challenges are more effective at encouraging weight loss because they incorporate the social support of friends and community into the journey.
- A **community weight loss challenge** can be a fun and motivating way to lose weight.
- Hold a community-wide challenge to slim down by increasing activity and eating healthy together.

ACTION STEPS

Choose a Date and Registration

- Decide on a timeline for your weight loss challenge. When will it start? When will it end? What is the registration time period?
- Offer multiple ways for people to officially register. It can be through a website, at designated locations (e.g., gyms, grocery stores, schools etc.) or a kick-off event.
- Decide what constitutes "winning" and which categories you will recognize at the end of the challenge. How will you judge the winner(s)? Ideas include total number of pounds lost, total inches lost, most days without smoking, most days without drinking.

Enroll Participants and Create a Buzz

- When people sign up in person or online, offer registration packets with challenge rules, a schedule of educational or fitness events, food logs, weigh-in sheets, and fitness center passes.
- Consider creating a logo or photo filter for people to use as their social media profile to create a buzz.
- Do advance press and outreach throughout the community to encourage sign up. Ask local businesses to create a "team challenge" to compete against other businesses.

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD!

In 2012, Paramus hosted its very first weight loss challenge. It was a 12-week challenge with roughly 140 participants. With the help of the Paramus Board of Health, Paramus' Gold's Gym and the Valley Hospital, Paramus offered the community a chance to learn about nutrition and weight loss, and join the challenge at no cost. The town was successful in reaching its goal of losing 500 lbs! In fact, the challenge was so successful it was extended to all of Bergen County! To learn more, click **here**.

Hold a Kick-Off Day

- Get the community excited to participate in the challenge by hosting a kick-off party.
- Participants can be initially measured and assessed by providers from a local hospital or clinic. Measurements could include body weight, body fat percentage and body mass index, cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular endurance and strength tests, and body dimensions,
- Provide educational material and healthy food at the kick-off party.
- Invite local gyms, restaurants and stores to come out and market any products that might help people through the challenge. Invite local health professionals to participate (midwives, nurses, EMT/firefighters, hospitals, nutritionists, etc.).
- Set up a photo booth for "before" pictures.

Communicate and Motivate

- Communicating with participants throughout the challenge will help in retention and active participation.
- Provide motivation during the challenge such as tips on how to lose weight in a healthy way, different exercises, healthy recipes, and other best practices.
- Send out weekly email updates and announcements or utilize social media to keep people involved.
- Share resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on **how to lose weight** and **how to keep it off**.
- Consider offering prizes to participants who achieve a certain number of points during the challenge. Participants can receive points for every pound and percent of body fat lost.

Recruit Volunteers and Community "Cheerleaders"

- Identify and advertise places where people can do regular weigh-ins and measurement checks.
- Encourage volunteers to assist in weigh-ins and provide consulting and motivation.
- Offer the opportunity for participants to self-report their weight too.

Celebrate Progress

- Hold a closing event at the end of the challenge to celebrate everyone's progress.
- Set up a photo booth for "after" photos.
- Recognize "winners" and give special recognition to category winners. Consider offering a grand prize to category winners, such as a gift certificate for a healthy meal and a walk with the mayor.
- Tally all of the weight and inches lost by all participants. Publicize the victories.

RESOURCES

How to Create an Office Weight Loss Challenge