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Needs Assessment for VeggieRx Participants at Native American Health Center

About VeggieRx:

VeggieRx is a continuing education program is sponsored by the organization of Fresh Approach. It is designed for overweight/obese low income individuals and families. Low-income groups with a family history of diabetes are also a common group seen in the VeggieRx program. The program is an 8 class series where participants can listen to and engage in activities surrounding the topics of food, nutrition, and cooking. Height, weight, blood pressure, and BMI are measured for each participant after every class to track behavior change over time for the attending individuals. (Source: <http://www.freshapproach.org/veggie-rx/>)

Areas to be assessed:

1. Baseline of Nutrition knowledge, how much has this group learned from previous VeggieRx classes?
 - a. A group physician helps patients set a weight loss goal, and start discussion on how the patients can enhance their health through diet and nutrition. They provide interactive nutrition, cooking, and exercise classes. Every class session, each person discusses the new fruits and vegetables they have been trying and reports their experience in going to the farmers market. NAHC (National Association for Home Care & Hospice) staff also displayed a series of photos with information about local farms, farmers' markets, and fresh produce to encourage VeggieRX patients to eat healthier foods.
2. Basic demographics: age, gender, ethnicity
 - a. Majority of the class is child-bearing age/female/Latino, African American

3. What kinds of health complications is this community facing as a result of obesity and food insecurity.
 - a. With food insecurity, we often see a decrease in dietary variety along with consumption of energy-dense foods. These foods tend to be of lower nutritional quality. Long term consequences of these dietary patterns including developments of chronic disease, such as hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and diabetes.
 - i. Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2806885/>
 - b. Lower income neighborhoods typically have fewer safe spaces for outdoor physical activity, making it difficult to achieve the recommended physical activity recommendation.
 - c. Many low-income communities lack access to health care resources that could result in untreated existing health issues and poor screening for referrals to other nutrition related community resources.
 - i. Source: <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/why-are-low-income-and-food-insecure-people-vulnerable-to-obesity/>
4. Common ways in which these individuals are getting access to food (ex: supermarket? Corner store?)
 - a. A lot of people are getting their food from corner stores or liquor stores because there were often more corner stores compared to supermarkets in food insecure area. These corner stores usually do not provide enough healthy food options for these people to pick from.
 - i. Source: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3981752/>
5. Common complaints that this group of people have surround food issues and accessibility?
 - a. Since access to supermarkets are limited, some people often complain that the transportation to healthier supermarkets is not convenient, and sometimes time-consuming.

i. Source:

http://www.fairfoodnetwork.org/sites/default/files/FFN_SDV_Gleaners_Small%20Plates.pdf

6. What common community nutrition resources are the participants already tapping into.
 - a. After attending each class, participants are given farmers market vouchers for them to use at local farmers markets. These include:
 - i. Food Within Reach is an assistance program that aims to launch small certified farmer's markets at school sites, library sites, community center sites, and church/religious assembly sites.
 - ii. Fresher Cargo Mobile Farmers Market is a moving farmer market that works to address issues related to accessibility issues regarding locally grown produce in the Bay Area. Their goal is to provide fresh produce to food desserts at affordable prices.

Possible Topics

1. Explore methods to eat healthy but are also cost-efficient. We could potentially talk about in-season produce, easy recipes that are healthy and filling, meal prepping, and quick fixes for snacks.
2. Another possible topic would be assessing how to make healthy choices when eating out. We can explore different menus with the class and go into why certain foods may be healthier than others (ex: fried vs. grilled).