

**Live Well Springfield (LWS) -- A Community Transformation Initiative
Springfield MENU Program Evaluation**

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Studies have shown that low-income and minority Americans have a poor diet quality, which increases obesity and chronic disease risk. According to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Springfield is among the top five poorest cities in the state. To promote healthy eating behaviors among Springfield residents, Mason Square Health Task Force, a Live Well Springfield (LWS) partner, created a 6-session nutrition curriculum, entitled *The MENU Program*. The goal is to increase overall health awareness and healthy eating behaviors among residents in communities that are being targeted by the LWS initiative. The program was piloted with a group of female Mason Square residents, aged 60-85 years (n=12), at the Dunbar YMCA in Springfield, MA. Pre-and post-surveys were administered at sessions #1 and #6 to assess nutrition-related knowledge, attitudes and behaviors. Brief process evaluations were administered at the end of each 60 to 90 minute session to identify program strengths and limitations. Preliminary analysis reveals that participants increased their vegetable intake by 34% and consumption of fresh/frozen fruits and vegetables (vs. canned) increased by 9% and 18%, respectively. Those who reported “always” or “usually” reading nutrition labels increased from 54% to 72%, and those who reported “always” or “usually” shopping at a farmer’s market increased from 18% to 36%. Process evaluations showed positive responses to most of the material presented, particularly information regarding My Plate, portion control, and nutrition label reading. Further data analysis will inform revision of *The MENU Program* for use with larger, more diverse groups of Springfield residents.

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