

Identifying Barriers to Weight Management for Cancer Survivors


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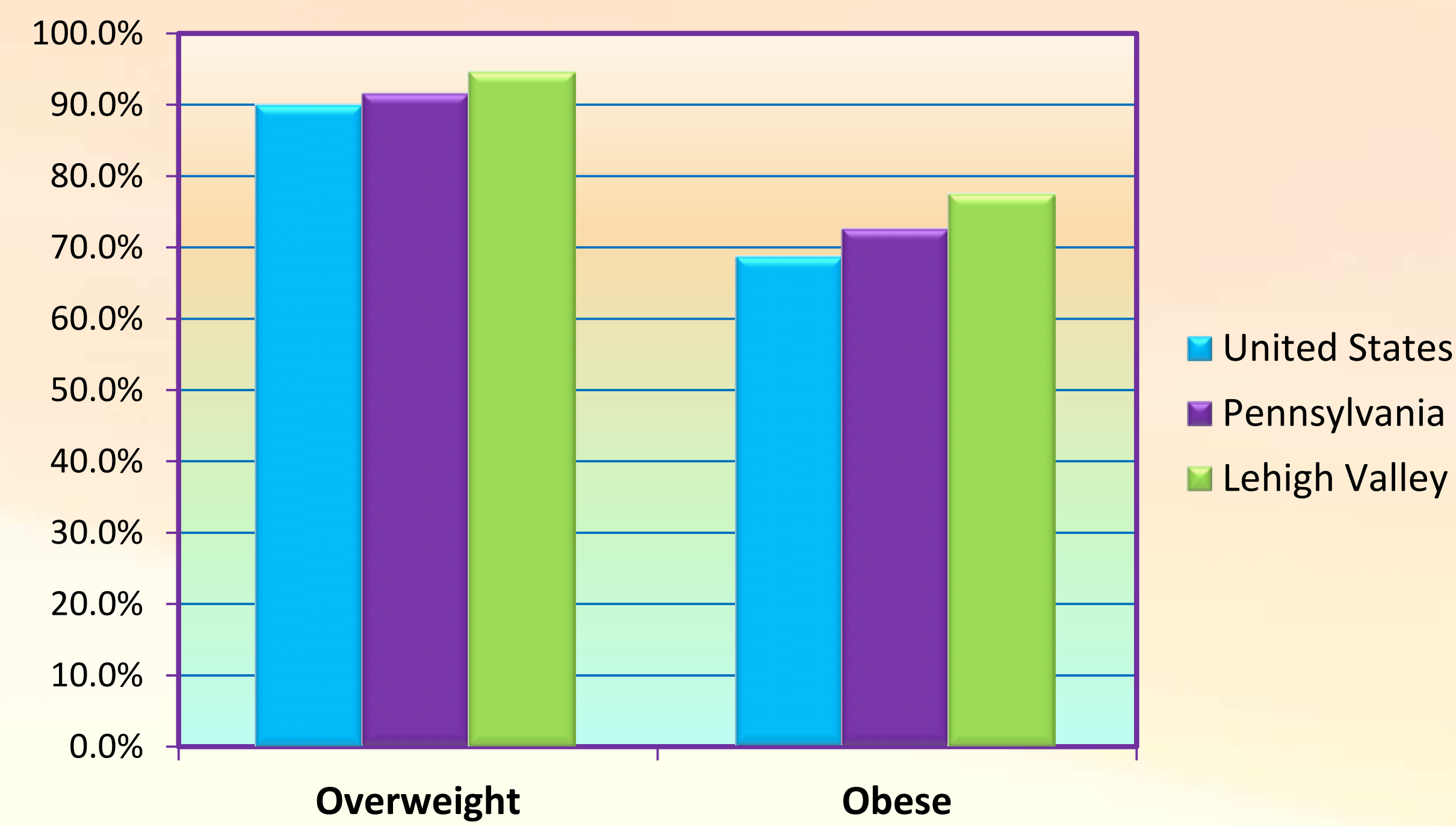
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Identifying Barriers to Weight Management for Cancer Survivors

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Background

Overweight and obesity is a nation-wide issue that is a preventable cause of multiple health concerns and diseases. The prevalence of overweight and obesity is greater in the Lehigh Valley than the national average.



Being overweight or obese and having a sedentary life style is known to increase cancer risk. The following cancers are associated with being overweight or obese:

- Post-Menopausal Breast
- Esophageal
- Colorectal
- Kidney
- Endometrial
- Pancreatic/Gallbladder

Studies have shown that obesity and weight gain, particularly in breast cancer survivors, may lead to a greater risk of recurrence and decreased survival. Weight management can play a crucial role in disease management for the cancer survivor.

Our goal is to increase awareness of the role weight management plays in survivorship, as well as to provide guidance for the necessary lifestyle changes. Weight management referrals are typically made by oncology dietitians after patients have completed their treatment. The majority of patients referred to weight management were identified through Survivor PLACE, a LVHN multidisciplinary clinic for survivors.

Objectives

- Develop strategies for identifying overweight and obese patients and increase awareness of the Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN) weight management programs available to patients.
- Determine the rate at which referred patients attended the weight management program.
- Identify barriers which prevent referred patients from attending the weight management program.

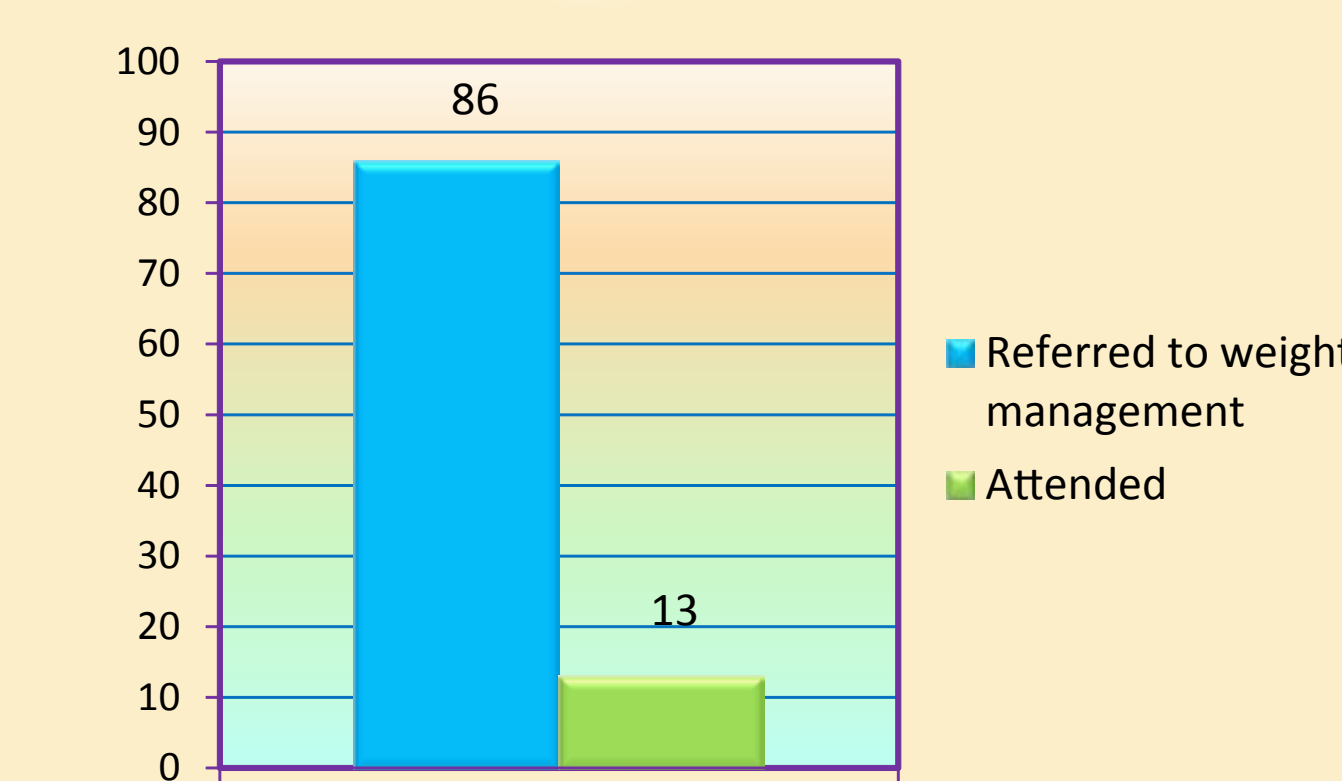
Process

- Created and distributed an Oncology Nutrition Brochure.
- Offered additional supporting resources including laminated BMI posters.
- In-serviced staff regarding available resources and referral procedures.
- Requested feedback or suggestions from staff.
- Contacted Weight Management Center to determine referred patient attendance.
- Developed and conducted phone survey to determine the barriers which prevented referred patients from attending the weight management program.

Results

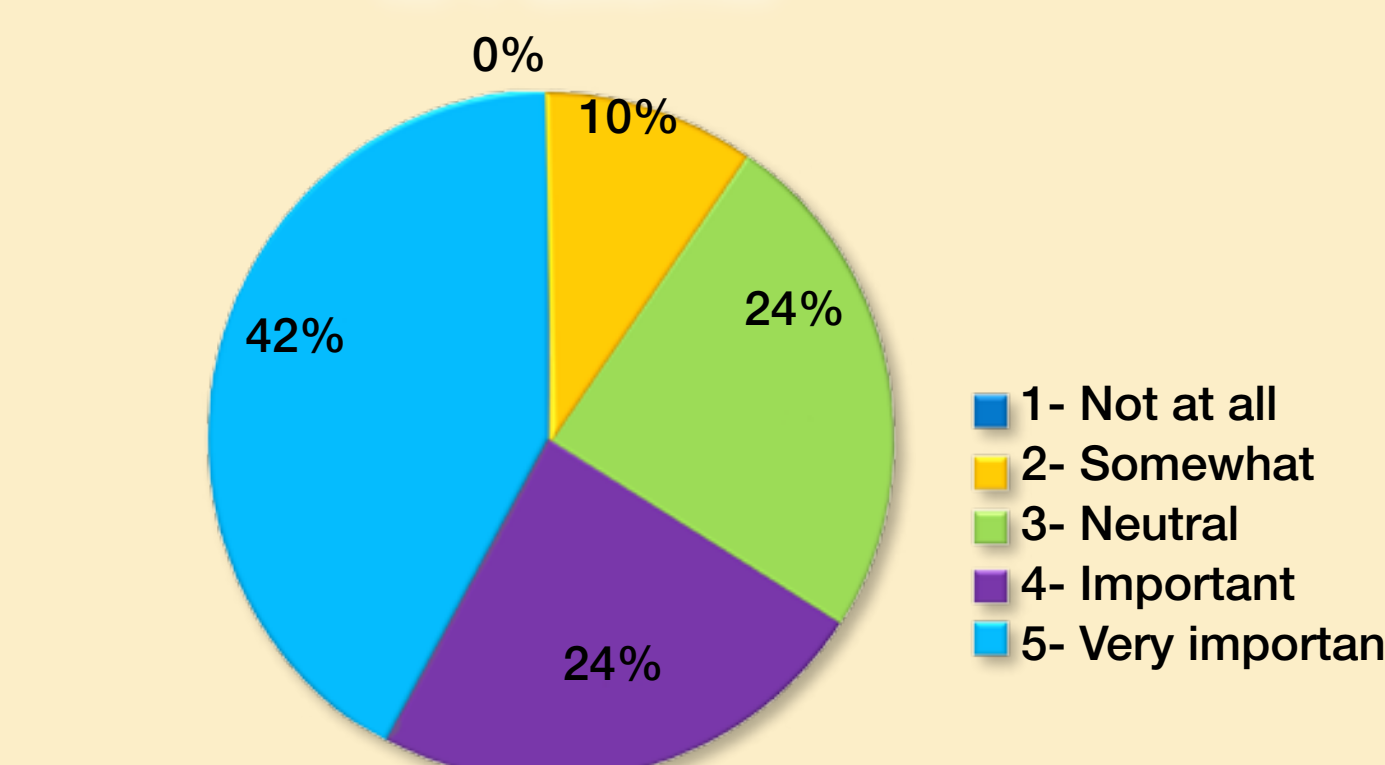
Only 15% of the patients referred to the LVHN weight management program by the oncology dietitians between January of 2011 and May of 2013 attended the program.

Weight Management Referrals Oncology Survivors



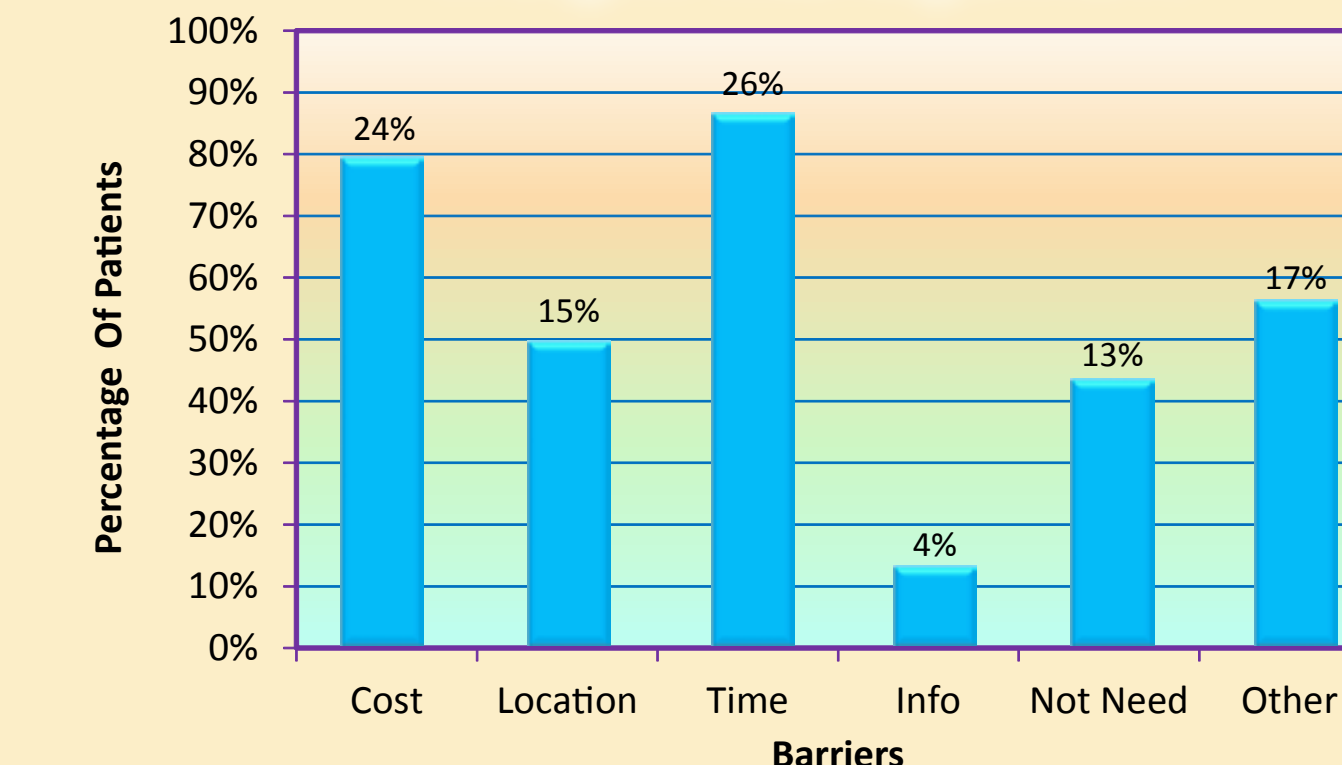
Twenty-nine of the eighty-six (34%) patients who were referred to weight management completed the phone survey.

Importance of Weight Loss to Patients

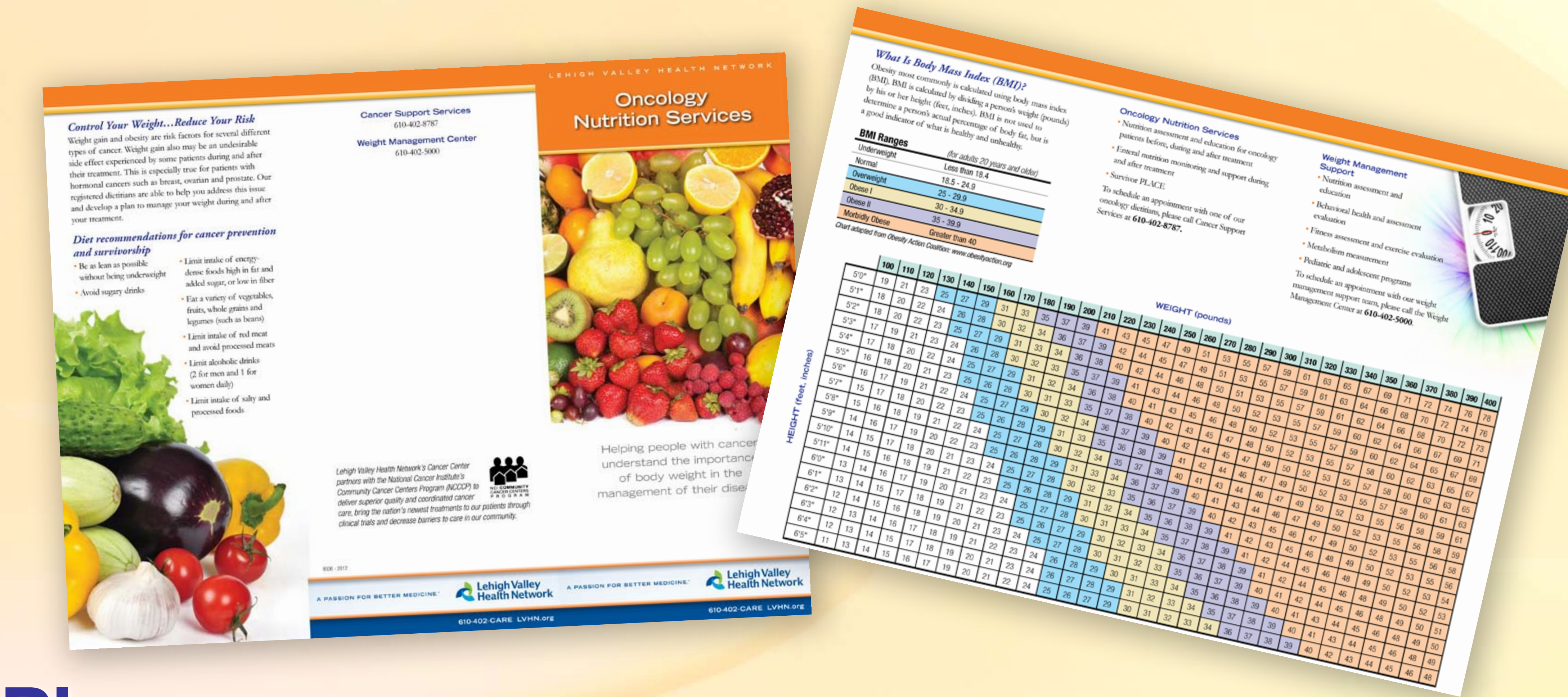


Results show that weight loss is important to all survivors contacted.

Barriers to Attending Weight Management



The survey indicates the most prominent barriers to enrolling in a LVHN weight management program are time commitment and cost. Of the ten persons surveyed who identified cost as a barrier, six (60%) would consider attending if they were to receive a discount. Of the twelve respondents who identified time as a constraint, eight (67%) stated they would be interested in attending a free group weight management class for survivors.



Plan

Based on survey results, consideration of the following options may help increase attendance to the LVHN weight management program and assist cancer survivors with their weight loss goals:

1. Provide free, quarterly weight management classes to our cancer survivors.
2. Explore funding to alleviate some of the financial burden of the Weight Management programs.
3. Require follow up with dietitian at annual Survivor PLACE appointment.

References:

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