

CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Evaluation results of an innovative pilot program to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in Cobb County, GA

Rebecca C. Woodruff, MPH,¹ Rebecca Shipley, MS,³ Agnes F. Brown, BA,² Anne-Marie Coleman, MPH,² Jennifer Munoz, MPH,² Sally Honeycutt, MPH,¹ April K. Hermstad, MPH,¹ Lorna Loh, BA,³ Michelle C. Kegler, DrPH¹

¹Department of Behavioral Sciences and Health Education, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; ²Cobb and Douglas Public Health, Marietta, GA; and ³McCleskey-East Cobb Family YMCA, Marietta, GA

Background: This abstract describes a public health practice initiative called the Farm Fresh Market (FFM) and presented pilot evaluation results.

Methods: The FFM, developed by Cobb and Douglas Public Health, the McCleskey-East Cobb Family YMCA, and Cobb2020, sold low-cost fruits and vegetables to families living in the 30168 zip code of Austell, Georgia. The evaluation focused on documenting to what extent the FFM reached its intended population and increased perceived access to fresh fruits and vegetables among customers. A convenience sample of 100 returning FFM customers completed self-administered, written intercept surveys at the end of the 2014 market season.

Results: The market served customers from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Most customers strongly agreed that the FFM made it easier (69%) and less expensive (79%) for them to buy fresh fruits and vegetables and easier for them (63%) and their families (64%) to eat a healthy diet. Most customers reported that they ate more vegetables (65%) and fruit (55%) as a result of shopping at the FFM and reported high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the FFM.

Conclusions: The results suggest that the FFM served customers from the local area and that the FFM may have increased perceived access to healthy food options among customers. Community-level interventions to increase access to healthy foods may play an important role in chronic disease prevention.