

# Patient and Healthcare Provider Engagement in the Parks Prescription Program

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## background

- Studies found that increased exposure to nature or nature therapy can improve health outcomes and decrease stress, blood pressure, and risk of chronic conditions.<sup>1</sup>
- The Parks Prescription Program is a national program that focuses on educating healthcare providers and patients about the health benefits of spending time in nature.
- There is a need to expand the program and increase the network of providers to reach the community.

## objectives

- Engage with healthcare providers on addressing barriers and accessibility to increase their participation.
- Educate patients on spending more time outdoors and improve health outcomes.

## methods

### Survey healthcare providers

- Developed comprehensive Excel spreadsheet to track each pharmacy.
- Contacted pharmacies and clinics via email and phone call to assess their desire to participate.
- Conducted survey interview on pharmacies to assess barriers to joining the program.

### Create provider toolkits



- Designed starter guides for healthcare providers participating in the program.
- Included prescription pads, maps of local parks, and informational pamphlets on the benefits of nature.

### Engage with the Community

- Organized a field day to encourage patients to engage with nature and feel the benefits of spending time outdoors.
- Promoted a social media campaign to encourage people to spend time at a local park.



## results

### Patient survey

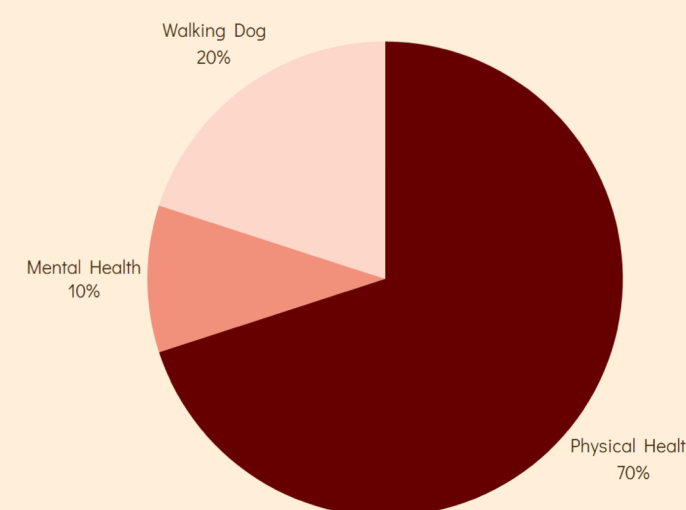


Figure 1: What brought you to the park today?

- On average, people spent 4 days per week at a park, where 50% spent  $\geq 2$  hours.

### Provider survey

- 33 pharmacies were contacted via email or phone call to garner interest
- **Of these 33 pharmacies, 26 pharmacies did not respond** and 6 needed more information

Out of the pharmacies that responded:

- **71%** said they **needed corporate approval**
- **29%** said the program **did not suit their patient's interest**
- **29%** said they were **too busy**

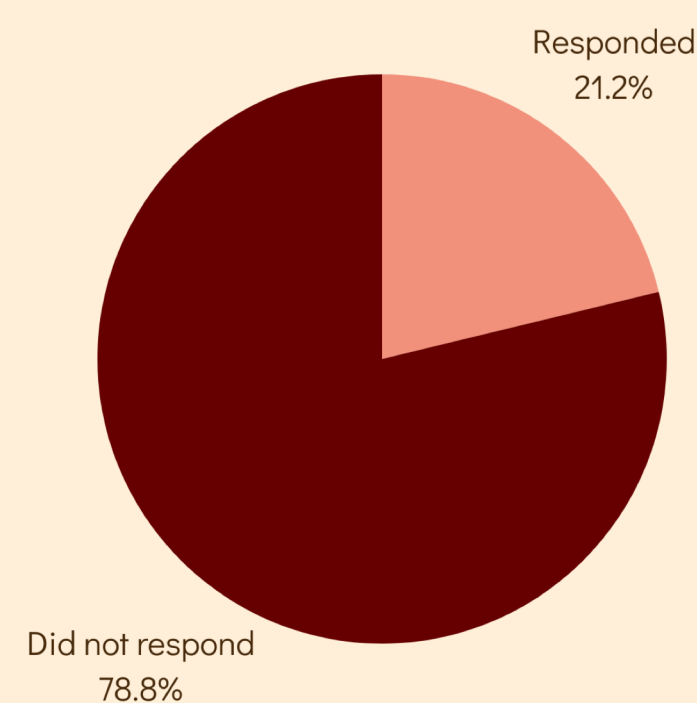
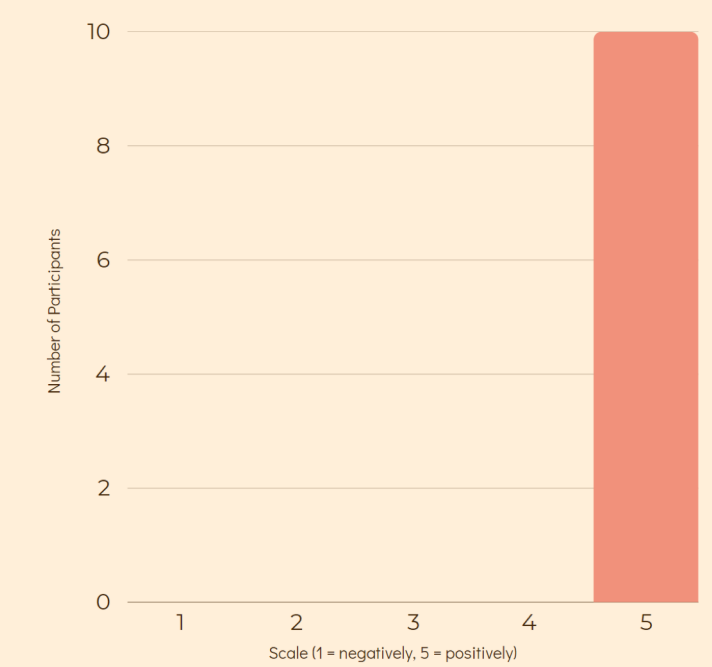


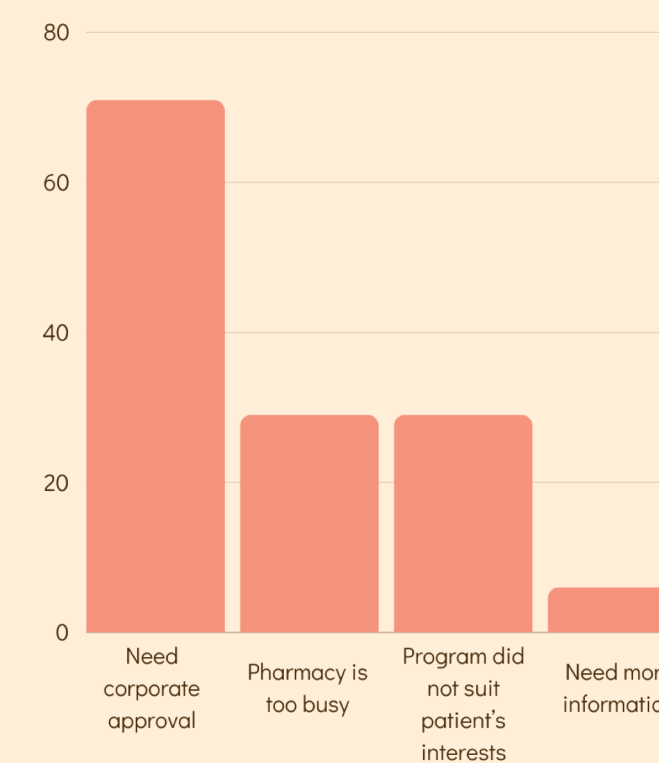
Figure 3: Number of providers that responded to the survey

Figure 2: On a scale of 1 through 5, how did being outdoors affect your physical health?



Scale (1 = negatively, 5 = positively)

Figure 4: Provider reasons for refusal to participate in the program



## conclusion

- Most people spent time at parks for their physical well-being.
- Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the contacted providers failed to respond, demonstrating that barriers to community outreach and engagement from community pharmacies start at the first point of contact.
- Of the pharmacies that responded, almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  said they required approval from upper management first.
- This study highlights opportunities for recruitment among smaller, independent pharmacies and clinics or individuals in management roles in the future.

## Acknowledgements

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## references

1. Jimenez MP, DeVille NV, Elliott EG, Schiff JE, Wilt GE, Hart JE, et al. Associations between nature exposure and health: A review of the evidence. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2021 Apr 30;18(9):4790.

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