

University of Vermont

ScholarWorks @ UVM

---

Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects

Larner College of Medicine

---

2020

## Addressing Pandemic-Related Barriers to Fitness

Kyle Leonard

*University of Vermont*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk>



Part of the [Medical Education Commons](#), and the [Primary Care Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Leonard, Kyle, "Addressing Pandemic-Related Barriers to Fitness" (2020). *Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects*. 611.

<https://scholarworks.uvm.edu/fmclerk/611>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Larner College of Medicine at ScholarWorks @ UVM. It has been accepted for inclusion in Family Medicine Clerkship Student Projects by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ UVM. For more information, please contact [donna.omalley@uvm.edu](mailto:donna.omalley@uvm.edu).

# Addressing pandemic- related barriers to fitness

CVPH Family Medicine  
Plattsburgh, NY  
September-October 2020

Kyle Leonard, MS3

Project mentor: Dr. Steven Heintz

# Problem identification

- ▶ Obesity is defined for children as a BMI >95<sup>th</sup> percentile and for adults as a BMI >30 kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- ▶ Obesity is a risk factor for all-cause mortality and many diseases, including type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia, sleep apnea, osteoarthritis, hypertension, ASCVD, stroke, and several cancers
- ▶ Roughly 1 in 3 obese adults will be diagnosed with osteoarthritis, which leads to increased prevalence of disability and mobility issues that impact ADLs, especially in older adults
- ▶ In Clinton County:
  - ▶ 37.3% of school-aged children are overweight or obese, largely unchanged from prior assessments
  - ▶ 71.5% of adults are overweight or obese, largely unchanged from prior assessments
  - ▶ 29% of adults are sedentary, with 29.8% of residents identifying physical activity as a health challenge and 24.9% identifying issues with opportunities for physical activity
- ▶ In summary, residents of Clinton County remain at risk for obesity-related comorbidities and disability with a significant proportion reporting barriers to physical activity

# Public health costs

- ▶ Hypertension, dyslipidemia, and osteoarthritis were the most expensive obesity-related comorbidities, each responsible for over \$18 million spent on healthcare per 100,000 people
- ▶ Patients with obesity had on average \$1429 more annual healthcare spending than those of normal weight, accounting for over \$40 billion of increased spending
- ▶ Obesity additionally accounted for a 77% increase in medication costs compared to normal weight
- ▶ Increasing prevalence in obesity-related diseases in the US is projected to add over \$48 billion in annual health care costs by 2030

# Community perspective

## Dr. Steven Heintz, Family medicine physician and member of the Plattsburgh community

- ▶ As a member of the Plattsburgh community, how did the pandemic affect your personal access to a fitness center?

*“The center I used closed. There were not other options for “gym” fitness opportunities. There are some local facilities that have opened back up, but we lost two of the larger size and larger service sites which markedly limits the opportunities in the area.”*

- ▶ Do you feel that many primary care providers feel equipped to provide resources for patients to begin a fitness program?

*“I think primary care providers are very comfortable with the basic and general components of fitness counseling. In pandemic restricted time, there is probably some variability in provider confidence in discussing innovative and creative ways to help patients with fitness goals.”*

- ▶ Have your patients expressed financial difficulties in accessing a fitness center?

*“Many patients have this as one of their biggest barriers. Not only did the pandemic shut gyms for a time, but it led to the “loss” of two sites due to financial constraints. Often the most financially accessible sites in a community like these are ones that are somehow subsidized, either by being public and funded by tax dollars or by being non-profit and subsidized by a mission-oriented approach to keeping services accessible to many.”*

# Community perspective

## Larry Roberts, Personal trainer and fitness coach in Plattsburgh

▶ What is your role in the community?

*“I try to help people in a different way. I am a personal trainer, fitness and diet coach, spin class instructor, and I recently began working with the New York State Department of Corrections to help inmates work on skills to gain employment when they are released.”*

▶ How has the pandemic affected your interactions with clients?

*“It shut off like a switch. Everything completely shut down, and I tried to be more active outside. I dropped from 40 clients to between 15 and 20, but I maintained my daily connection with clients.”*

▶ Have you experienced any trends in clientele from the start of the pandemic to now?

*“I had a little surge a few months ago, but I found that a lot of people became acclimated to working on their own. Of the clients lost initially, about 10 have come back. In the last few months I gained about 10-12 new clients, but I still have room to add more alongside spin classes and my job. Morale has changed where clients are being more cautious and avoiding the gym, while others don't like the new policies regarding wearing masks while working out and wiping off equipment. The people who are serious about fitness tolerate it, but we sometimes have to remind people about the policies.”*

# Intervention

## Home workouts

Check out YouTube for endless workouts as short as 5 minutes!



No equipment?  
No problem!

There are plenty of ways to exercise with your body alone. You can also build your own weights:

- Fill empty gallon jugs to use as dumbbells
- Fill a backpack or suitcase with books
- Work out with a partner to provide each other counterweight

## Financial Assistance

Accessing fitness centers and personal trainers can be expensive. Contact your health insurance provider and ask about fitness incentives today!

### Fidelis

- Access a fitness center 50 times in 6 consecutive months for a \$200 reimbursement, up to twice a year

### United Healthcare: Motion

- Earn up to \$3-4 daily by meeting daily step goals using either your own or a provided step counting device

### Medicare: Silver Sneakers

- Access to thousands of fitness centers across the country, including Eclipse Fitness and Planet Fitness in Plattsburgh
- Access to countless online workouts and classes all in one convenient app

## FITNESS:

Resources  
available during  
the COVID era



411 State Route 3  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901  
Inside the Comfort Inn & Suites

Memberships include access to the entire gym and all group fitness classes. Classes are otherwise \$5 for non-members—sign up online!



Individual membership:  
\$40/month with a 12-month contract  
\$48/month with no contract

Couples membership:  
\$60/month with a 12-month contract  
\$68/month with no contract

\*Discounts for law enforcement, state or federal employees, and CVPH employees!

\*Masks are required at all times; equipment must be wiped before and after use

## One-on-one Coaching



Larry Roberts, owner of The Diet Doc—Plattsburgh, NY, has been serving the Plattsburgh community through diet and fitness coaching. He has helped dozens of Plattsburgh residents meet their weight loss goals for 10 years.

### Programs offered:

- 10 weeks: \$300
- 20 weeks: \$550
- 30 weeks: \$750

Each program will provide you with support, accountability, and techniques to help YOU meet YOUR personal goals. Contact Larry for a free consultation!

Larryroberts1081@gmail.com



73 Centre Dr  
Plattsburgh, NY 12901

Judgment-free fitness center for anyone from first-time gym goers to fitness veterans—register online or in person today!

### Memberships:

- \$10/month with a 12-month contract and a \$39 annual fee for fitness center access
- \$15/month with no contract and a \$39 annual fee for fitness center access
- \$23/month with a 12-month contract and a \$39 annual fee for fitness center access with several additional amenities

\*Membership rates subject to change

# Response

- ▶ Presentation of the project and the pamphlet as a resource to distribute was well-received by residents and attendings at the clinic; they will counsel patients who are interested in fitness accordingly
- ▶ Prior to production and distribution of the pamphlet, one patient was counseled about group fitness classes at one of the reopened facilities, and this patient was excited to resume their physical activity

# Evaluation of effectiveness and limitations

- ▶ Distribute pamphlet to patients who express interest in seeking fitness and document the interests and current habits in EHR
- ▶ Follow up with patients at subsequent visit and inquire about progress, ask about any difficulties encountered, reassess for changes in habits
- ▶ Not every patient will have the time, financial stability, or comfort in using a fitness center during the pandemic—interview patients who were unable to incorporate this into their routine and find out why

# Future recommendations

- ▶ Quality control
  - ▶ Find what information on this handout was useful
  - ▶ Adjust information provided to optimize its impact on patients' lifestyles
- ▶ Survey patients about participation in fitness programs
  - ▶ Assess prevalence of active patients and their frequency of activity
  - ▶ Assess financial burden of fitness among patients
  - ▶ Assess participation in insurance reimbursement programs
- ▶ Survey providers about their familiarity with fitness resources
  - ▶ Assess confidence in providing guidance to patients seeking change
  - ▶ Assess knowledge of local or remotely accessible resources
  - ▶ Assess awareness of financial implications of accessing fitness resources

# References

- ▶ Apovian CM. Obesity: definition, comorbidities, causes, and burden. *Am J Manag Care*. 2016 Jun;22(7 Suppl):s176-85.
- ▶ Dixon JB. The effect of obesity on health outcomes. *Mol Cell Endocrinol*. 2010 Mar 25;316(2):104-8.
- ▶ Reynolds SL, Saito Y, Crimmins EM. The impact of obesity on active life expectancy in older American men and women. *Gerontologist*. 2005 Aug;45(4):438-44.
- ▶ New York State Department of Health. New York State Community Health Indicator Reports: Obesity and Related Indicators. [health.ny.gov](http://health.ny.gov). Revised April 2019.
- ▶ Clinton County Health Department. Community Health Assessment 2019-2021. [cvph.org](http://cvph.org). Revised April 2019.
- ▶ Clinton County Health Department. Community Health Assessment 2013-2017. [cvph.org](http://cvph.org). 15 Nov 2013.
- ▶ Li Q, Blume SW, Huang JC, Hammer M, Ganz ML. Prevalence and healthcare costs of obesity-related comorbidities: evidence from an electronic medical records system in the United States. *J Med Econ*. 2015;18(12):1020-8.
- ▶ Wang YC, McPherson K, Marsh T, Gortmaker SL, Brown M. Health and economic burden of the projected obesity trends in the USA and the UK. *Lancet*. 2011 Aug 27;378(9793):815-25. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(11)60814-3. Erratum in: *Lancet*. 2011 Nov 19;378(9805):1778.