

# UVM ScholarWorks

## A Healthier Diet for Weight Loss

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# A Healthier Diet for Weight Loss

Location: Newtown Primary Care: Newtown, CT

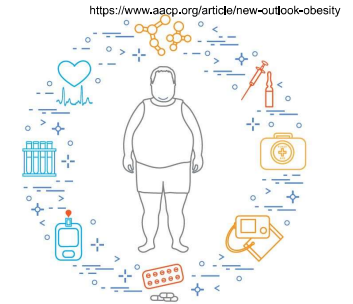
Student: Hannah White, MS3

Date: May-June 2023

Mentor: Dr. Eurica Chang



# Problem Identification



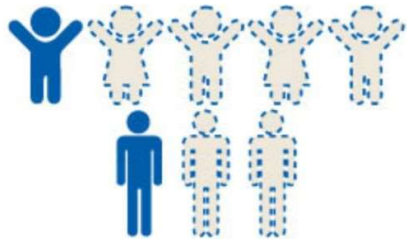
• Many patients presenting to clinic have the goal of weight loss to improve their health as obesity has many comorbidities. Many patients have multiple health concerns like Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertension, Hyperlipidemia, PCOS, or joint pain. Part of the management of their conditions include weight loss, but many patients struggle, for years, to lose weight. A referral to the Metabolic Weight Loss clinic in Newtown, which will provide patients with nutritional information, evidence based diets, medications, exercises, and more, can take up to 1 year to get an appointment. The goal of this project is to provide information to patients in clinic who are hoping to lose weight on strategies, nutritional education, tips and resources.

• AHEC Focus Areas: Social Determinants of Health; Education

# Public Health Cost and Unique Considerations

## Public Health Cost of Obesity:

- CDC estimates: \$173 billion per year



1 in 5 children and more than 1 in 3 adults struggle with obesity.

<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/about-obesity/why-it-matters.html>

## Unique Considerations:

- Wait time for appointment at the metabolic weight loss clinic in Newtown, CT: ~12 months.



Obesity is incredibly prevalent in the United States and has many comorbidities. The estimated public health cost of obesity, by the CDC, is \$173 billion per year. The burden of obesity on our healthcare system is immense. Addressing obesity can decrease public health costs across the board by decreasing prevalence of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and more. In Newtown, CT, the demand for the Metabolic Weight Loss clinic is so high that many patients cannot get an appointment for up to 1 year.

# Community Perspective On Issue



TF (wishes to remain anonymous)

- In her experience, she feels that people want the “easy way out” like Ozempic, because dieting and exercise is really hard, especially after COVID.
- People really struggle especially because it takes a year to get a referral to the metabolic weight loss clinic.
- She thinks handouts on what types of foods to eat and what types of exercises to do would be helpful because often times people just don’t know where or how to start.
- Another big barrier is that people are really busy; the fastest and cheapest food options are the least healthy.

Dr. Eurica Chang

- She feels the biggest barrier patients face is lack of knowledge on nutrition and lack of access to healthier food choices.
- She notes that a large majority of her patients struggle with weight and weight-associated medical conditions.
- In an ideal world, she believes that patients struggling with obesity would have a plan tailored to them that included a nutritionist and was also customized to their needs: for example, if they have arthritis, what exercises they could do.
- She wishes there were more resources and options for patients who struggle to eat healthier and exercise more.

# Intervention and Methodology



- Intervention:

- Print-out with information on lean proteins, vegetables, recipe ideas, tips & tricks, and resources for weight loss.
- To be handed out to applicable patients.

- Methodology

- Literature review of weight loss interventions and strategies, nutrition, and heart healthy diets.
- Clinical experience with patients sharing their struggles and successes.
- Recipe inspiration from Myplate.gov, NYT Healthy Recipes, Mayo Clinic recipes, Harvard recipes.
- Interviews with providers.

## Results/Response Data

- No formal data collected.
- Providers happy to have a resource to distribute to patients who need guidance on food choices.
- Patients have been pleased with previous handouts about diet, such as diabetes-friendly snacks.



# Evaluation of Effectiveness

Proposed:

- When the handout is given to a patient, write in their office visit note “handout provided to patient”
- At the next visit, follow up with the patient:
  - What strategies worked for you and what did not?
  - Have you been successful/have your goals been reached?
  - Did you use other resources listed in the handout?
  - Any questions about the information in the pamphlet?



## Future Interventions/Projects

- Create handouts that are specific to different insurance plans, such as which dietitians are covered under Medicaid.
- Create specific plans for diet, exercise, and behavioral interventions that are tailored to different needs, such as a pamphlet of exercises for patients with arthritis.
- Identify resources such as online or in person support groups for patients.



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