

Weight Counseling in Community Health Centers

Exploring weight counseling practices and barriers among Community Health Center (CHC) clinicians in Southwest Georgia

WHY WEIGHT COUNSELING AT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTERS (CHCs)?



1 in 3 adults in Georgia are considered obese, more so among people of color

Obesity significantly increases the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cancer, and more



CHCs serve around 30 million people, predominantly low-income patients of color

Many CHCs do not provide weight counseling because they lack resources and worry patients may face barriers to acting

WHAT DID WE DO?

We interviewed 30 CHC clinicians in rural SW Georgia about:

- Their weight counseling practice
- The barriers they face when providing weight counseling
- The barriers their patients face in maintaining a healthy weight



WHAT DID WE FIND?

Clinician barriers

There is a lack of available weight loss resources and evidence-based recommendations.



Clinician practice

So, counseling varied and relied on personal experience.

Patient barriers



For example:

Limited healthy food options

Social norms about obesity

Literacy & economic resources

[More >>](#)

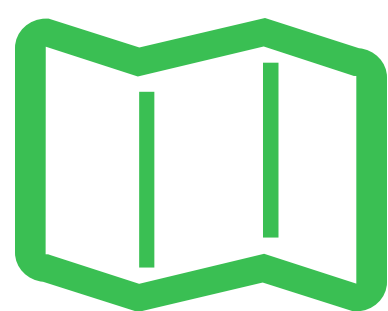
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

CHCs in Georgia use a variety of approaches to address weight with patients, but lack sufficient tools, staff, and resources.

Some ways to improve weight counseling in CHCs are:



Electronic medical record reminders & decision support prompts



Increase the availability of evidence-based referral resources



Using clinical team training to address weight loss in patients



To help patients at the individual level, use counseling materials that include:



Simple behavior change advice using *graphics*



Cost-neutral recommendations and resources

To help patients at the social and community a level:



Partner with public health researchers & practitioners to develop, adapt, and implement evidence-based multi-level interventions, including community-clinical linkages.

Read more about the original studies:

Schauer, Gillian L., Rebecca C. Woodruff, James Hotz, and Michelle C. Kegler. "A Qualitative Inquiry About Weight Counseling Practices in Community Health Centers." *Patient Education and Counseling* 97, no. 1 (2014/10/01/ 2014): 82-87. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pec.2014.05.026>.

Woodruff, Rebecca C., Gillian L. Schauer, Ann R. Addison, Ajay Gehlot, and Michelle C. Kegler. "Barriers to Weight Loss among Community Health Center Patients: Qualitative Insights from Primary Care Providers." *BMC Obesity* 3, no. 1 (2016/10/21 2016): 43. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40608-016-0123-3>.

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