

**Erie Family Health Centers**  
*La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz*

**An Innovation Station Promising Practice**

**Purpose:** This document is intended to support MCH professionals to implement a practice found in Innovation Station. This resource provides the information needed to replicate the practice and is divided into two sections: the first section provides a high-level overview of the practice while the second section describes how to implement the practice. For additional information on any of the content provided below, please reach out to the practice contact located at the bottom of this document.

**Section I: Practice Overview**

<b>Location:</b>	Illinois	<b>Title V/MCH Block Grant Measures Addressed</b>
<b>Category:</b>	Promising	<b>NPM #8:</b> Percent of children ages 6 through 11 years and adolescents ages 12 through 17 years who are physically active at least 60 minutes per day.
<b>Date Submitted:</b>	09/2009; updated 4/24/2020	<b>NPM #14:</b> A) Percent of women who smoke during pregnancy and B) Percent of children who live in households where someone smokes

**Practice Description**

At Erie Family Health Centers, our goal is to encourage weight loss in women by continuing to provide programming that increase knowledge, skills, and confidence to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle. At Erie, we continue to provide the La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz program to promote healthy weight in low-income Latinas in Humboldt Park.

**Purpose**

In the Chicago neighborhood of Humboldt Park, approximately 33.5 percent adults are overweight, which far exceeds the national average of 24 percent and the Chicago average of 30.8 percent. This rate can be linked to the fact that only 33 percent of adult females in Humboldt Park are moderately active and 30 percent of all Humboldt Park residents do not understand nutrition guidelines. Additionally, 35 percent of obese residents eat fried or fast food four times or more per week. About 30 percent of overweight adults and 10 percent of obese adults in Humboldt Park perceive themselves as underweight or normal weight.

Erie Family Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Community Health Center in Chicago serving over 80,000 low income patients annually, collaborated with the Greater Humboldt Park Community of Wellness to develop La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz, a program designed to promote a healthy weight in Latinas facing weight loss barriers such as access to healthy foods, time, economic resources, family commitments and motivation. In addition to the group program format,

presentations and workshops are provided at community agencies and an extensive calendar of free community wellness activities is offered and distributed monthly.

**Program Objectives:** The overall objective of the La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz program is to promote a healthy weight in low income Latinas in Humboldt Park who are disproportionately affected by overweight and obesity and face several barriers to weight loss. The program’s goals are to reduce participants’ BMI, cholesterol, waist circumference, and blood pressure, and increase nutrition and fitness knowledge and overall wellness. Additionally, staff members aim to provide access to healthy foods and activities and offer motivational support.

**Target Population Served:** The 56,000 residents of the Humboldt Park neighborhood of Chicago are predominantly Mexican, Puerto Rican or African American, and 1 in 3 families live below the federal poverty line. The La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz program was developed specifically for this neighborhood and is implemented through Erie’s Humboldt Park clinic.

### Practice Foundation

Due to the inequities faced by community members in Humboldt Park and the disproportionate rates in which they are affected by obesity, Erie wanted to create opportunities and spaces to engage our patients and community members in leading healthier lives. La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz was developed based around the social-ecological model. This approach considers both biological and environmental influences in the individual interacting with the environment. The social ecological model identifies 5 targets of interventions: individual factors, interpersonal factors, organizational factors, community factors, and system or policy factors. Individual behavior changes provide for learning new skills, including self-management related to nutrition, physical activity, and healthy weight.

La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz also utilizes the promotora model, in which a lay health educator from the community provides the group education. This model was chosen based on past research suggesting a significant relationship between collective efficacy – the willingness of community members to look out for one another and intervene when trouble arises – and BMI, risk of overweight, and overweight status.

### Core Components

- Promote program and build relationships internally and externally
- Increase knowledge of participants regarding nutrition, fitness, and overall health
- Encourage changes to increase overall wellness by reducing BMI, cholesterol, waist circumference, and blood pressure
- Successfully evaluate participant knowledge, skills, confidence, and overall wellness
- Develop community relationships for access to resources contributing to healthy lifestyles

### Practice Activities

Core Component	Activities	Operational Details
Promotion	Build relationships to increase engagement and interested in program	Disseminate information using the following methods: print materials, social media, community bulletins, and provider engagement

		Identify community leaders for engagement in programming
<b>Cultivation</b>	Educate on nutrition, physical activity, and health weight	Provide opportunities to practice and reinforce skills and knowledge related to nutrition, physical activity, and healthy weight were provided through nutrition counseling and fitness programs.  Utilize Promotoras in implementation of program to foster collective efficacy towards goals
<b>Assessment</b>	Assessment of knowledge, skills and overall wellness	Assess and Reassess changes in knowledge, skills, and confidence levels  Routinely measure weight, waist circumference, BMI, cholesterol, and blood pressure to assess implementation of skills/knowledge and wellness  Accurately assesses and routinely reassesses the knowledge of health, development, and safety held by childcare directors, caregivers/teachers, and staff
<b>Connecting</b>	Referrals and linkages to external community resources	Supportive environments were created through education and linkages to community resources, making healthy lifestyle options more accessible, affordable, and safe.

### Evidence of Effectiveness (e.g. Evaluation Data)

Pre- and post-test data related to BMI, waist, blood pressure and cholesterol scores were collected along with Patient Health Questionnaire scores. Changes in physical activity and nutrition knowledge and behavior, participant’s self-efficacy and program satisfaction were also measured using pre-tests and post-tests in both English and Spanish. Specifically, self-reported data were collected related to weekly physical activity participation; fruit, vegetable, tortilla and rice consumption; soft drink, water, milk and alcohol consumption; and regular label reading and purchasing/cooking with low-fat/low-sodium ingredients.

Throughout program history, over 2,000 patients have been referred by their providers. Participants who have attended an orientation and graduated from the program have made significant lifestyle changes by using the skills and knowledge learned in La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz to reduce their overall weight, BMI, blood pressure, cholesterol, and waist circumference. These improvements have been tied to significant funding to continue delivering this program to community members and patients.

In our most recent cohort:

- 57% of participants successfully graduated from the program
- 67% of graduates lost weight and 47% decreased waist circumference by 1 inch
- 67% of graduates improved cholesterol and blood pressure
- 80% of graduates increased physical activity throughout the program
- 86% of graduates stated they are most likely to continue activities and skills learned throughout the program

## Replication

Erie Family Health Centers has not replicated La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz in any of our other clinics. The program only operates out of our Humboldt Park location.

## Section II: Practice Implementation

### Internal Capacity

Personnel used to support this program are:

- Health Educator (1-2): Implement La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz program; Data collection
- Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator (1): Support Health Educator; Ensure fidelity of data
- Manager, Health Promotions (1): Provide oversight, Budgeting; Grants Development

Support:

- Increased training opportunities for Health Educators
- Engaged site and organizational leadership

### Collaboration/Partners

There are many local partners that continue to support and collaborate with this program by providing exercise space for participants, educational materials, wellness classes, cooking recipes and continuing education credits for the promotoras. The support of this diverse group of community partners make this program possible.

### Practice Cost

When fully funded the Project cost (personnel and program supplies and materials) for one year with 150 participants was approximately \$100,000 going towards the items listed below. We have been able to retain the program at a smaller scale serving approximately 60 participants a year and without as robust patient incentives and patient barrier supports for at approximately half the cost.

Funds are used to purchase and/or address the following:

- Patient incentives
- Patient Barriers (childcare, transportation, etc.)
- Groceries
- Community resources

- Office Supplies
- Patient refreshments
- Staff time

## Practice Timeline

The delivery of the La Vida Sana, La Vida Feliz program is continuous throughout the year. Our goal is to implement 3-4 cohorts throughout the year through the following activities:

- Promotion and outreach to eligible patients and community members
- Internal promotion to increase provider engagement and referrals
- Training of Health Educators
- Delivery of program at 2-3 Erie locations
- Identifying funding for continued delivery

## Resources Provided

For more information and available resources, contact:

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## Lessons Learned

- Strong communication with referring providers encourages referrals
- Phone contact between group meetings is essential for participant motivation/program satisfaction
- When participants become engaged in program, they want to share that passion with others (referrals, promotora trainings)
- Developing an evaluation and data collection plan as part of the planning process is key

## Next Steps

- Continue seeking funding to deliver program across the organization
- Plan for expansion to Erie Family Health Centers Division Street location
- Provide additional seminars and workshop on wellness to graduated participants

Practice Contact Information
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