

# International Conference on Obesity and Weight Loss

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## The Healthy Weights Initiative

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**Background:** According to Statistics Canada, the number of adults that are overweight or obese rises every year in Canada. After extensive community consultation, the Healthy Weights Initiative (HWI) started in Moose Jaw and expanded to Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada.

**Objectives:** To determine adherence, factors impacting adherence, and impact on various health outcomes

**Methods:** From January 2014 to March 2015, 229 participants started the comprehensive six-month HWI program. Given that having a “buddy” and signing social support contracts with family members or friends were important to program adherence, both went from being recommended to becoming mandatory.

From April 2015 to August 2016, 771 additional participants started the program – allowing evaluation of the two new policies. As well, HWI participant adherence was compared to 1000 YMCA new members.

**Results:** Among the first 229 HWI participants, 79.9% completed the six-month program. After the two new policy changes among 771 participants, 96.1% completed the HWI program (RR = 1.20; 95% CI = 1.01-1.49). In comparison, among new YMCA regular members without supervision or assistance, 14.0% were adhering to their fitness program after six months (RR = 6.85; 95% CI = 3.88 - 12.10). After logistic regression, the only variable with an independent effect for not completing the HWI program was not having a spouse/partner supporting the program (OR = 2.31; 95% CI = 1.13 – 3.67).

Although weight loss reductions were obtained (mean 9.5 pounds), the more significant benefits observed were numerous benefits to various health outcomes. For example, the prevalence of depressed mood reduced from 44.0% to 16.4% (p = 0.000).

**Conclusions:** With two new policy changes including a mandatory “buddy” and a signed social support contract, the HWI has become more successful at promoting program adherence. As well, numerous positive health outcomes have been obtained during this free, community based initiative.

### Biography:

Dr. Mark Lemstra is the owner of Alliance Health multi-disciplinary medical clinics in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. He has eight university degrees including doctorates in epidemiology, public health and psychiatry.