Hydrate Philly
An Intervention to Increase Water Access and
Appeal in Recreation Centers
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The benefits of hydration to our physical health, brain functioning, and mood are numerous and clear. However, 54% of children in the U.S. do not drink enough water. The authors examined the effect of the Hydrate Philly program to promote water in Philadelphia community recreation centers and youth summer camps.

What did Hydrate Philly do?

- Installed new water fountains with bottle fillers
- Trained recreation center staff to encourage water and discourage sugary beverages
- Provided reusable water bottles
- Provided staff & parents with educational materials
- Tested water for safety and shared results

Key Findings

- Hydrate Philly almost doubled the amount of water used at recreation center water fountains from 8 to 15 gallons per day.
- The average recreation center staff member reported drinking 35 fewer sugary beverages a month at sites participating in Hydrate Philly.
- The odds of maintenance problems was reduced by 91% with new fountains. These savings offset the cost of fountains and installation after just 5 years.

Policy Implications

- Installing new water fountains with bottle fillers in community recreation centers can substantially increase water consumption and may help to keep youth, adults, and staff hydrated.
- Facilities with old infrastructure may see cost savings as soon as 5 years after replacing old fountains with new ones.
- Staff are important role models for healthy beverages. In addition to water promotion, strategies targeting sugary beverages specifically may be needed to reduce youth sugary beverages during summer camp.

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