



# 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 & DISCOURAGE SUGARY BEVERAGES



PROVIDED REUSABLE WATER BOTTLES



PROVIDED STAFF & PARENTS WITH EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS



TESTED WATER FOR SAFETY AND SHARED RESULTS

### STUDY DESIGN

28 centers were randomized to receive either a hydration station or continue using their existing water fountains.

Flow meters were used to measure changes in how much water was used at the fountains and stations during summer camp in both groups (in gallons per day).

Center staff reported how often youth brought sugary beverages to camp as well as their own water and sugary beverage consumption. Maintenance staff reported how long they spent cleaning fountains and how often they broke or required plumber visits.

### 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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