Helping citizens adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and to have fun while doing it!

Marion County is in the bottom quartile of the Robert Woods Johnson County Health Rankings. These rankings are used to assess how long people live and how healthy they feel. Using this data and recommendations from a County Health Improvement Plan, the Marion County Hospital District developed a long-term chronic disease management project. Knowing 95% of Americans own a mobile device, the District utilized technology to solve the challenge of reaching the most citizens in a county that is geographically large with many rural areas. The project addresses health behaviors, specifically physical activity, to have a large impact on resident's health. Consistent physical activity, including walking, improves quality of life, promotes healthy aging, maintains mental health, and prevents chronic disease. By moving more and finding ways to enjoy physical activity, we can create a community that thrives on healthy behaviors.

With a focus on fitness and nutrition in a fun and competitive environment, we are promoting a culture of health to residents of Ocala, Belleview and Dunnellon. This culture will ultimately help us prevent chronic, long-term illnesses such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease.

Active Marion Project (AMP) is a project of the Marion County Hospital District. AMP acts as a challenge to residents of Marion County to get up and running (or walking) towards healthier lifestyles. Through community and workplace initiatives, fun challenges and events and free diet and exercise tips, AMP aims to motivate the community to become healthier, together.

Active Marion Project
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Smart Phone Application- Research indicates that health information technology is an effective tool for physical activity interventions. Over 30% of cell phone owners use their phones to seek health information. In 2017, the District developed a competition-based smart phone application that tracks activity, provides health information, and rewards users for physical activity. The app launched in January 2018 and there are already 2,000 users.

The app is proprietary to the District, so we have control over adding features to enhance the users experience and compile data. There is the option of licensing the app to other counties in the future.

Application Components:
- Free to download - available for IOS and Android smart devices
- Integrates with FitBit, Apple Health, and Google Fit
- Earn points for each step. The more points, the more rewards
- Join a team to build a social support network, and view leaderboards
- Messaging allows users to communicate with fellow teammates
- Notifications: upcoming challenges, wellness tips, events, motivational quotes
- Calendar of community events focused on health behaviors, nutrition and exercise
- Quarterly challenges and recognitions
- Metrics and analytic data

Health Education Campaign- AMP increases awareness, fosters healthy behaviors, and encourages physical activity. AMP inspires activity through notifications and calendar features on the smart phone application, and through print, mass and social media. Combining these coordinated efforts with small media (brochures, flyers, etc) and community events, AMP impacts its target markets.

Workplace Wellbeing- initiatives that strive to improve the organizational health of participating employee and employers. AMP can assist by providing resources and support for workplaces, business owners and employees to create a wellness culture that is employee-centered

- Health program: opportunities to begin change or maintain health behaviors and improve employees' health knowledge and skills. This includes the Core4- tobacco cessation, nutrition and healthy lifestyles, physical activity and diabetes management.
- Health-related Policies – formal/ informal written statement that protect or promote employee health
- Environmental Supports – the physical factors at and nearby the workplace

Data and metrics are collected and reported to the Marion County Hospital District. Projects and programs use recommended best practices with effective evidence-based outcomes, including CDC's Community Guide on Health Communication and Health Information Technology.