



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN ADULTS – A LOOK INTO THE LONG ISLAND REGION

First in a series of quarterly data reports examining trends and patterns of selected health topics  
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## Introduction

One in every two adult Americans suffers from at least one chronic disease, impeding the quality of life for these adults and costing the U.S. healthcare system 86 percent of its healthcare bill.<sup>1</sup> Yet providers and public health experts know that lifestyle choices play an important role in the onset and progression of chronic diseases. This makes many chronic diseases preventable. Some of the more prevalent chronic diseases include hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and obesity.

The Long Island Health Collaborative (LIHC), a coalition of hospitals, county health departments, dozens of community-based health and social service organizations, health plans, colleges and schools, libraries, local municipalities, and some businesses, has been working voluntarily since 2013 to lessen the burden of chronic disease among Long Island residents of all ages. Obesity, recognized as a chronic disease by the American Medical Association in 2013<sup>2</sup>, is a predominant risk factor for a variety of chronic diseases. This is why the LIHC and its partners have embraced physical activity and nutrition as the foundational pillars for interventions and strategies designed to motivate behavior change. The Are You Ready, Feet?™ health promotion and education campaign is an initiative of the LIHC to promote and incentivize the positive effects of walking. Read more about this campaign under the *Community Initiative* section.

The LIHC is an initiative overseen by the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council, which is the association that advocates for fair and reasonable healthcare legislation and regulation that affects hospitals on Long Island. Funding for the Collaborative's activities comes from the Population Health Improvement Program (PHIP) grant, via the New York State Department of Health.

Data collection and analysis is perhaps the most important function of the Collaborative. Pulling from national, regional, and state secondary data sets, as well as primary surveys the Collaborative distributes and analyzes, this report draws a data picture of the levels of physical activity in which Long Island residents engage and the trends that have emerged during the past few years.

## Report Highlights

- Nassau and Suffolk counties show an increase in physical activity since 2013, but levels are still below the national average
- Select zip codes throughout Long Island show areas where residents desire more health screenings, education, and information related to physical activity
- Two sample wellness programs analyzed showed improvement in physical activity levels, when examined through a pre and post process

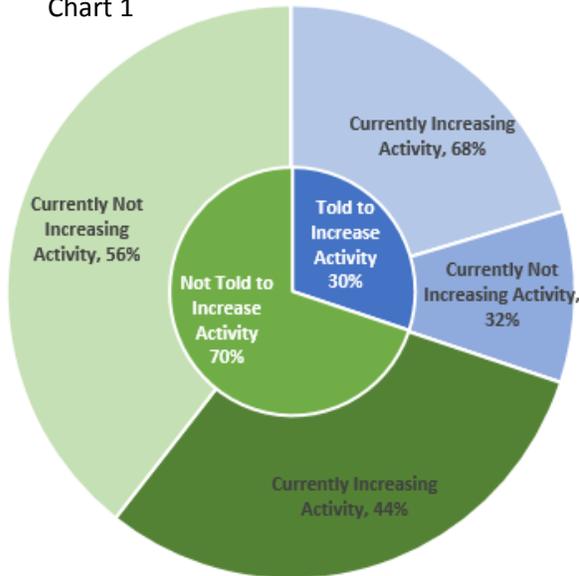
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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ama-assn.org/sites/default/files/media-browser/public/about-ama/councils/Council%20Reports/council-on-science-public-health/a13csaph3.pdf>

## Physical Activity in Adults – a Look into the Long Island Region

Chart 1



Regular physical activity can have a wide array of health benefits, from reducing the risk of chronic diseases to improving sleep and mental health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend adults aged 18-64 complete at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise a week.

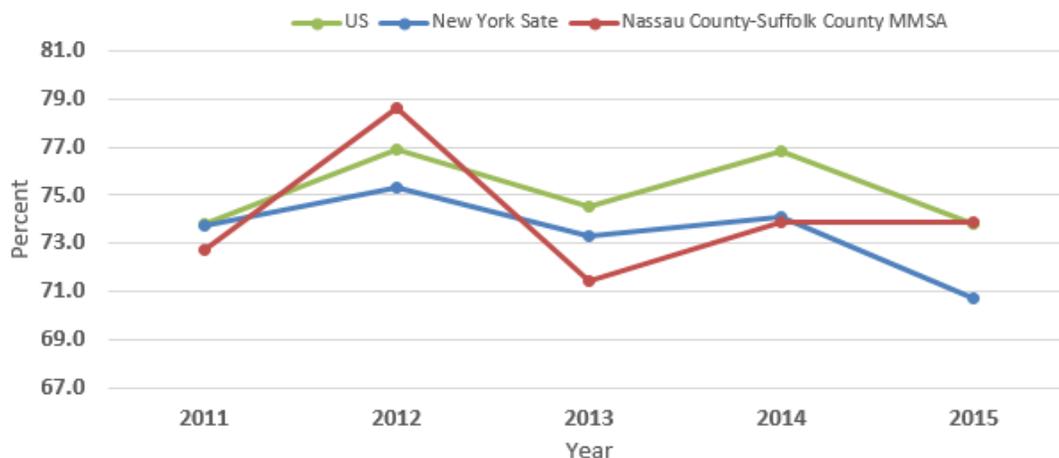
The 2016 National Health Information Survey (NHIS) found that over the previous 12 months, 30% of Americans had been told by a doctor or health professional to increase their physical activity. *See Chart 1.* The NHIS is a national survey administered by the U.S. Census and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). According to the survey, 68% of those told to increase their activity were doing so. A positive sign that, nationally, adults are exercising more frequently when a physician recommends it.

### Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), conducted by the CDC, is the largest continually conducted survey system in the world. It focuses on collecting behavioral health risk data. Each year the BRFSS asks survey respondents if they participated in any physical activities in the last month. Shown in *Graph 1* below, is a comparison of respondents at the national, state, and the local Long Island metropolitan and metropolitan statistical area (MMSA) levels. Between 2011 and 2015, percentages remained relatively the same among the three levels, with each consistently showing between 70-80% of respondents participating in some form of physical activity over the previous month. As *Graph 1* shows, New York State has remained just below the national average while the Long Island region has fluctuated. Nassau and Suffolk counties have shown an increase in physical activity since 2013, but levels are still below the national average. The lack of major change at any level over the years shows more work is needed.

Graph 1

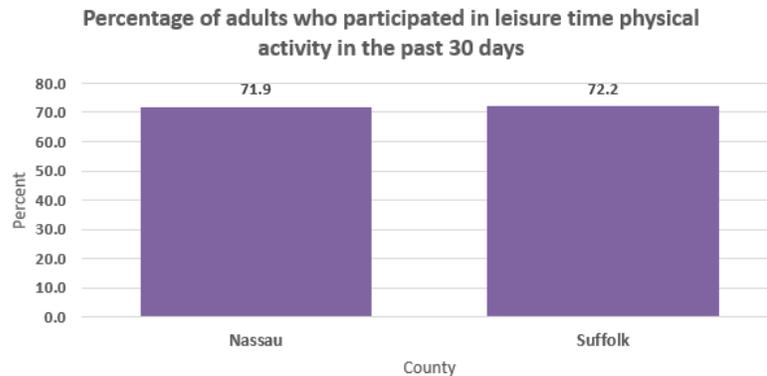
### Percent of Respondents that Participated in any Physical Activities in the Past Month



## eBRFSS

The eBRFSS, an expansion of the national BRFSS survey, collects county-level information specific to New York. *Graph 2* below compares the percentage of adults who participated in physical activity during their leisure time over the past 30 days, as taken from the 2013-2015 eBRFSS. Comparing the two Long Island counties, Nassau and Suffolk, Suffolk County’s percentage of exercising respondents is slightly higher. This may be due to Suffolk’s more suburban landscape, with a higher number of parks and green areas to utilize.

Graph 2



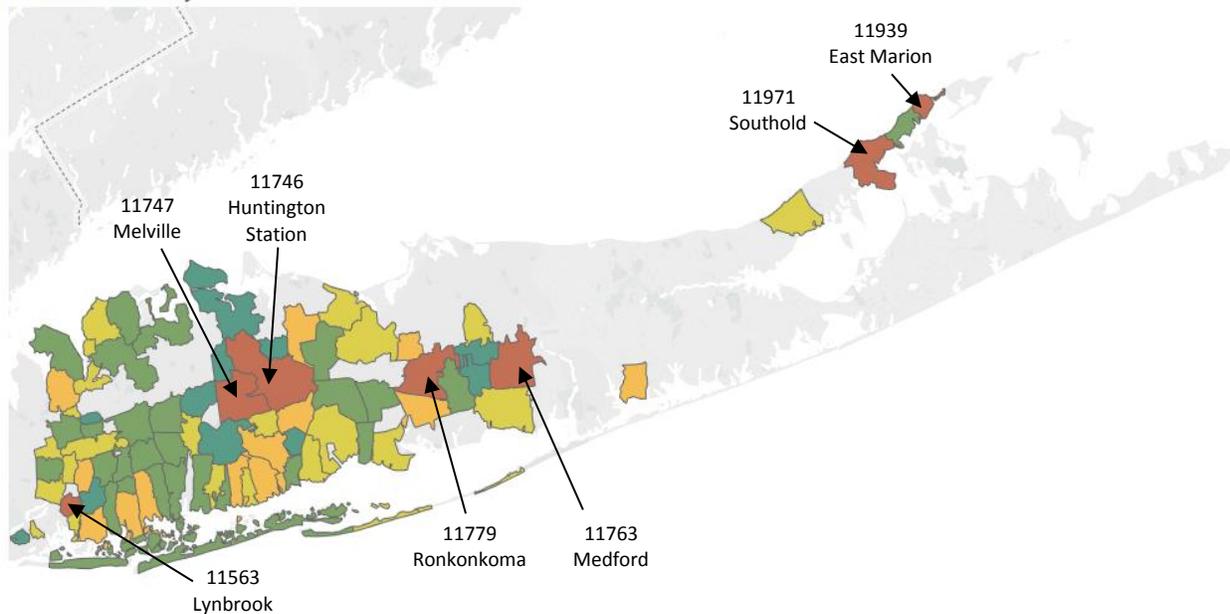
## Long Island and Eastern Queens Community Health Assessment Survey

In order to gain insight at the zip code level of Long Island, the Long Island Health Collaborative’s own Community Health Assessment Survey was used. In addition to collecting basic demographic data, the survey asks six main questions related to individual-perceived and community-perceived information regarding access and barriers to care, major health concerns, education and screenings, and programs/services needed. This survey is continually distributed and collected by Collaborative partners across the region and, to date, over 10,000 surveys have been collected. Long Island community residents over the age of 18 are invited to complete the survey through this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CMLICHAS>.

Within the six questions, respondents have a variety of answer choices, including choices about physical activity. For this report, we analyzed data from January to June of 2017. The analysis was conducted by DataGen, a division of the Healthcare Association of New York State, and mapped (Map 1). This map shows the percentage of respondents who believe physical activity health screenings or education/information services are needed in their community. Zip codes with less than five (5) responses were suppressed. The zip codes in yellow and red are where exercise health screenings, education, and information programs are most needed, according to those who live in that community. The highest need, red zip codes, have been labeled.

## Map 1

Percent of Respondents that Believe Exercise/Physical Activity Health Screenings or Education/Information Services are Needed in their Community



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The map is based on longitude and latitude. The color shows the percent of responses that believe exercise/physical activity health screenings or education/information services are needed in their community for each Zip Code. Zip Codes with less than 5 total responses are not shown on the map.

Percent of Responses that Believe Exercise/Physical Activity Health Screenings or Education is Needed in their Community by Zip Code



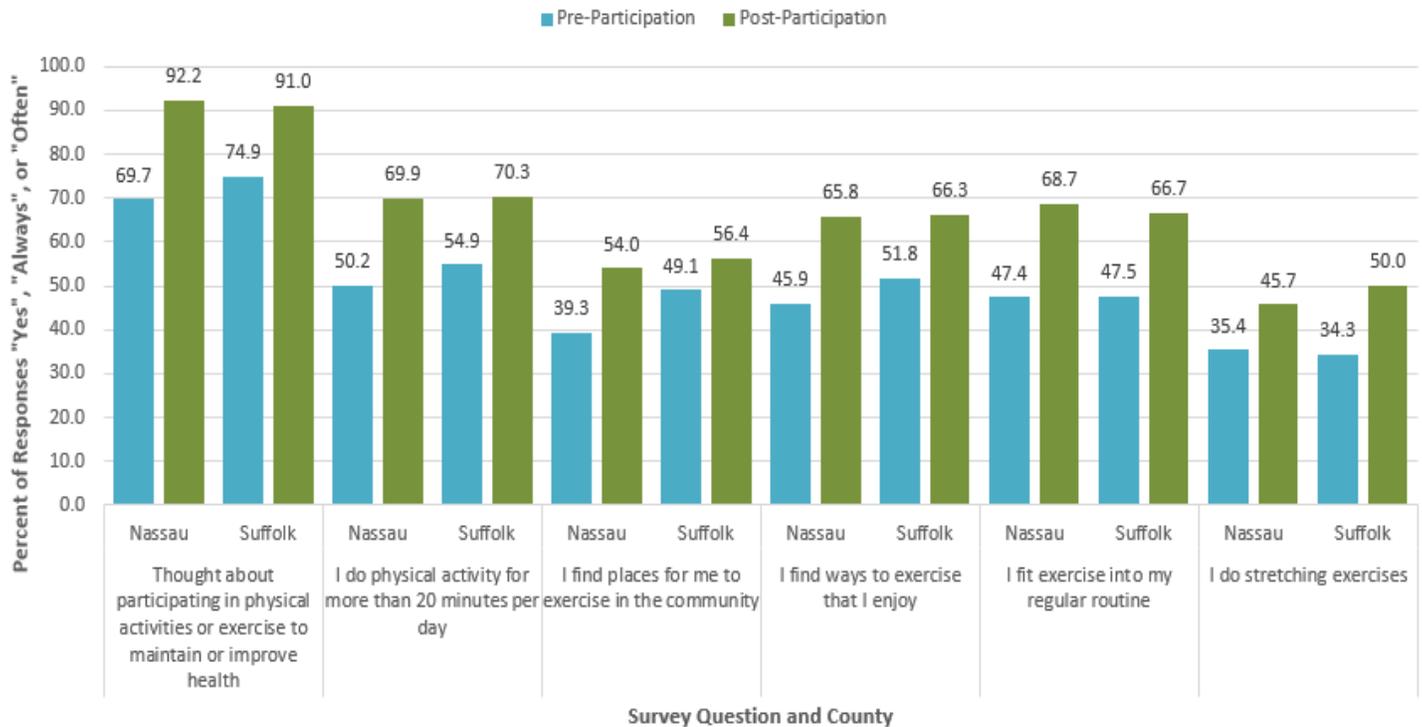
## Wellness Portal

Additionally, the Long Island Health Collaborative's Wellness Survey and Wellness Portal, which captures data about physical activity and exercise habits of Long Island adults, was analyzed. We looked at portal data from January 2015-November 2017. This survey, administered pre and post-program to individuals, is housed within the LIHC's Wellness Portal and is used to determine the effectiveness of chronic disease self-management and wellness programs offered by local hospitals and other organizations. Data is de-identified within the portal, which was built by Collaborative partner Stony Brook University and meets all HIPAA requirements. During the analysis time frame, two hospitals in the region participated consistently enough to provide valid data on their wellness programs for analysis. The survey asks participants various physical activity-related questions. Comparing the percentage of pre vs post-survey responses of "Yes", "Always", or "Often" to these questions, it is clear these wellness programs increase participant's level of physical activity, as well as their thoughts surrounding physical activity. See Graph 3.

The Wellness Survey and Wellness Portal is available to organizations, at no cost, that provide chronic disease self-management programs. It is a useful evaluative tool, which helps inform future programming, resource allocation, program effectiveness, and grant applications. Please call the Long

Island Health Collaborative at 631-257-6957 for more information about the Wellness Survey and Portal and how to access it.

Graph 3



*(Please Note: Graphs 3 through 9 present data for only two hospital-based chronic disease self-management programs. Therefore, this data is not representative of the Long Island population.)*

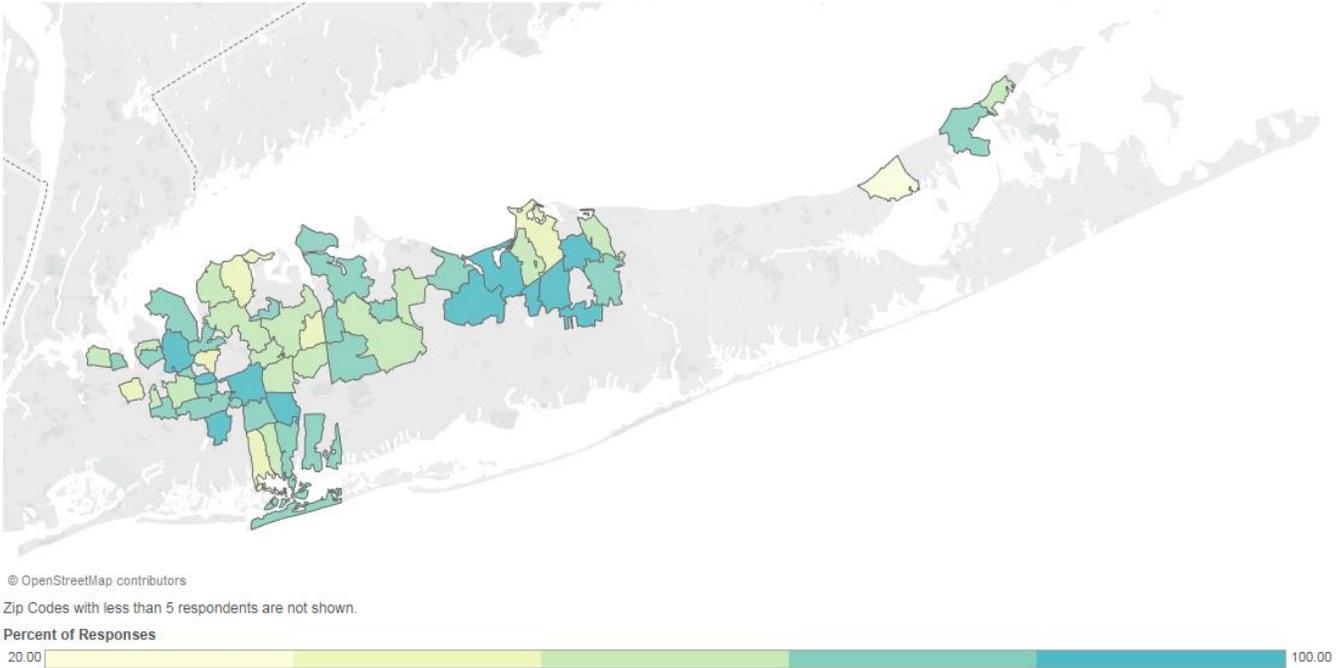
### Wellness Portal Zip Code Level Pre and Post Maps

The following pages include breakdowns of responses to these same questions at the zip code level. Each map shows an increase in blue from pre to post, displaying the improvement and impact these wellness programs have. Again, zip codes with less than five (5) responses have been suppressed.

**“Thought about participating in physical activities or exercise to maintain or improve health”**

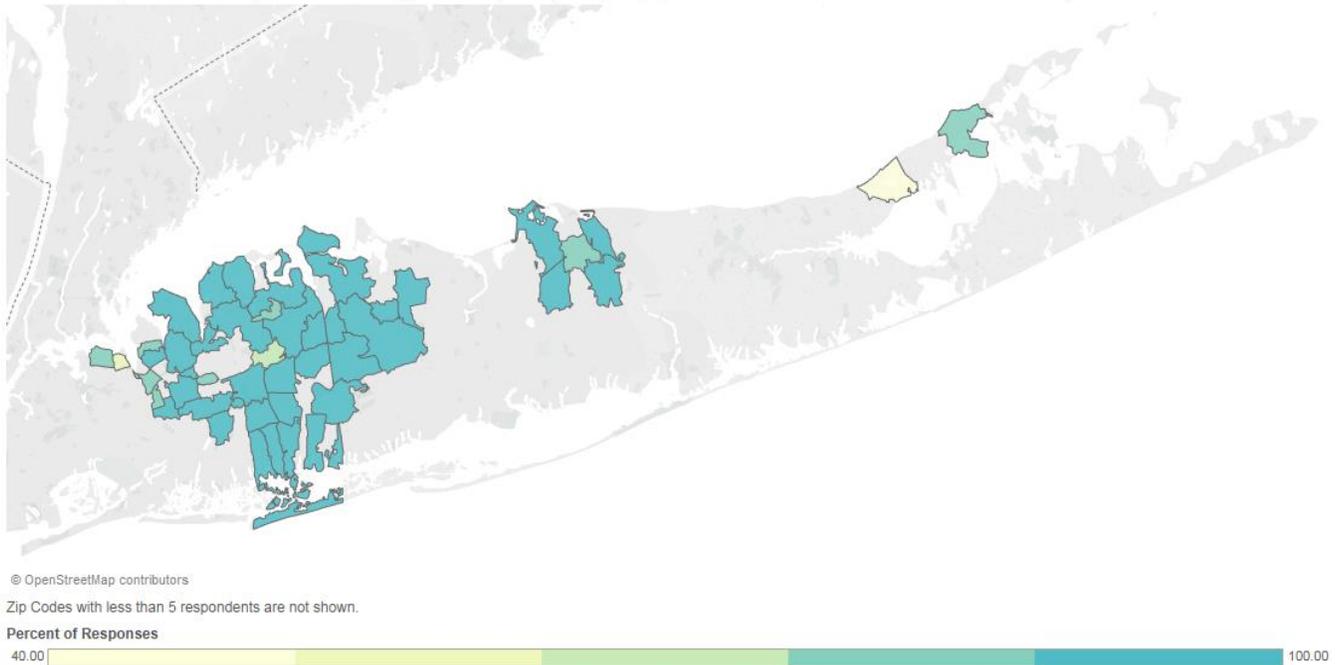
**Graph 4 (Pre)**

Pre-Participation “Yes” responses to: Thought about participating in physical activities or exercise to maintain or improve health



**Graph 4 (Post)**

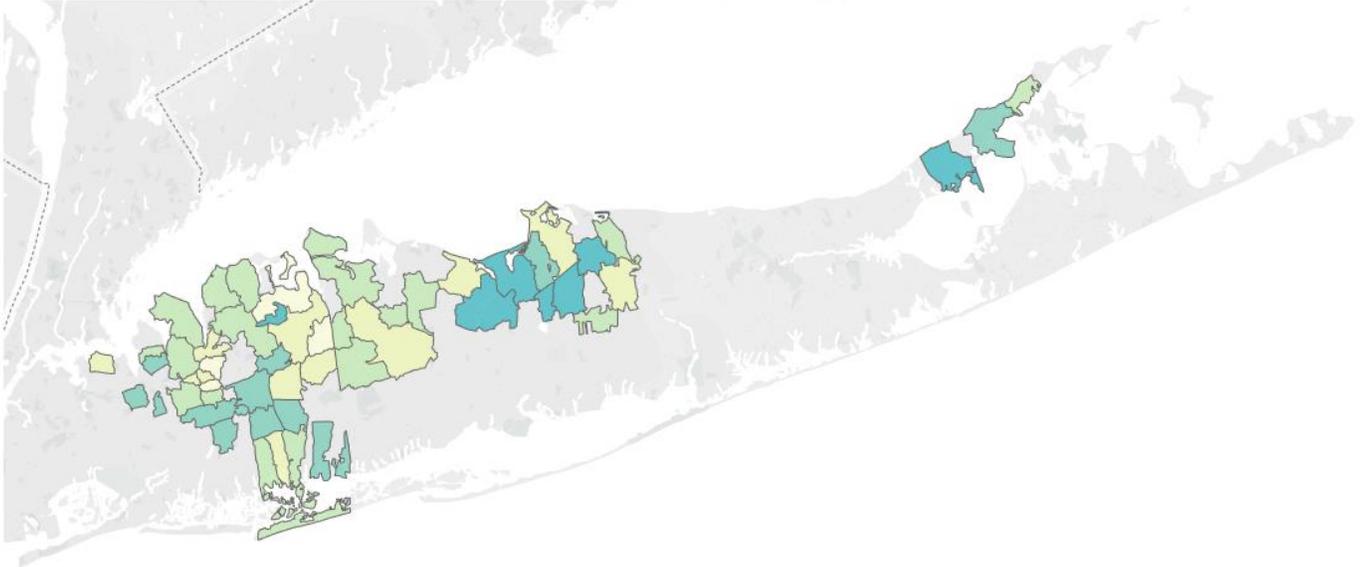
Post-Participation “Yes” responses to: Thought about participating in physical activities or exercise to maintain or improve health



**“I do physical activity for more than 20 minutes per day”**

Graph 5 (Pre)

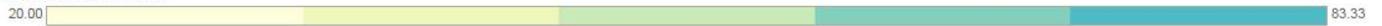
Pre-Participation “Always/Often” responses to: I do physical activity for more than 20 minutes per day



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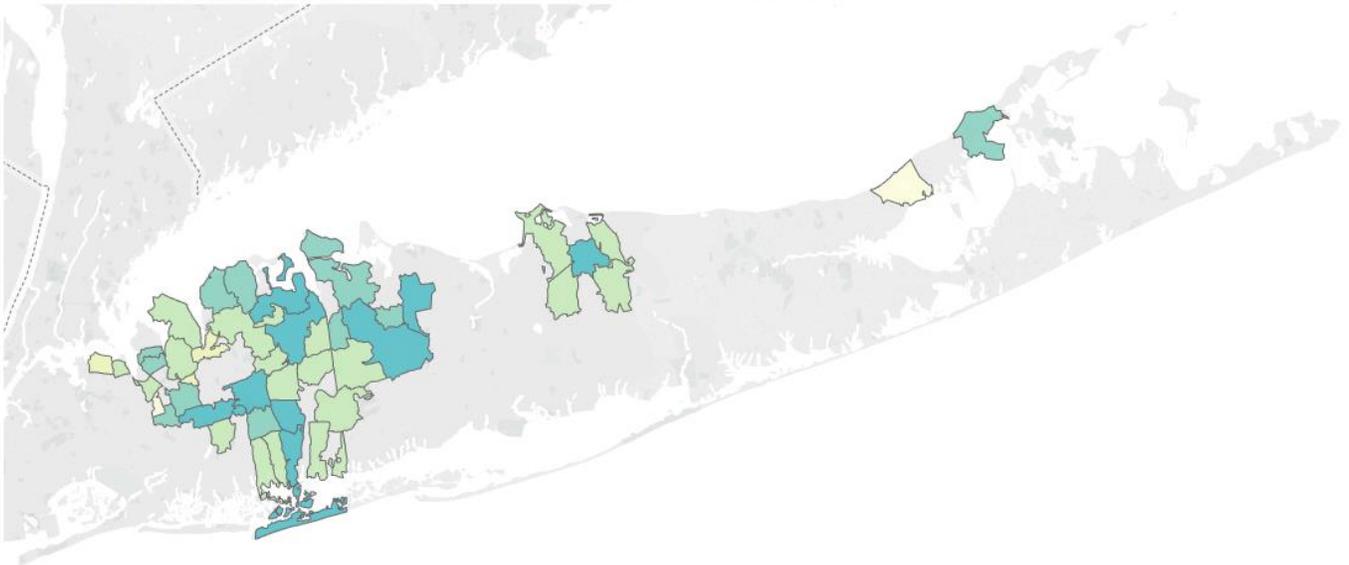
Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

Percent of Responses



Graph 5 (Post)

Post-Participation “Always/Often” responses to: I do physical activity for more than 20 minutes per day



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Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

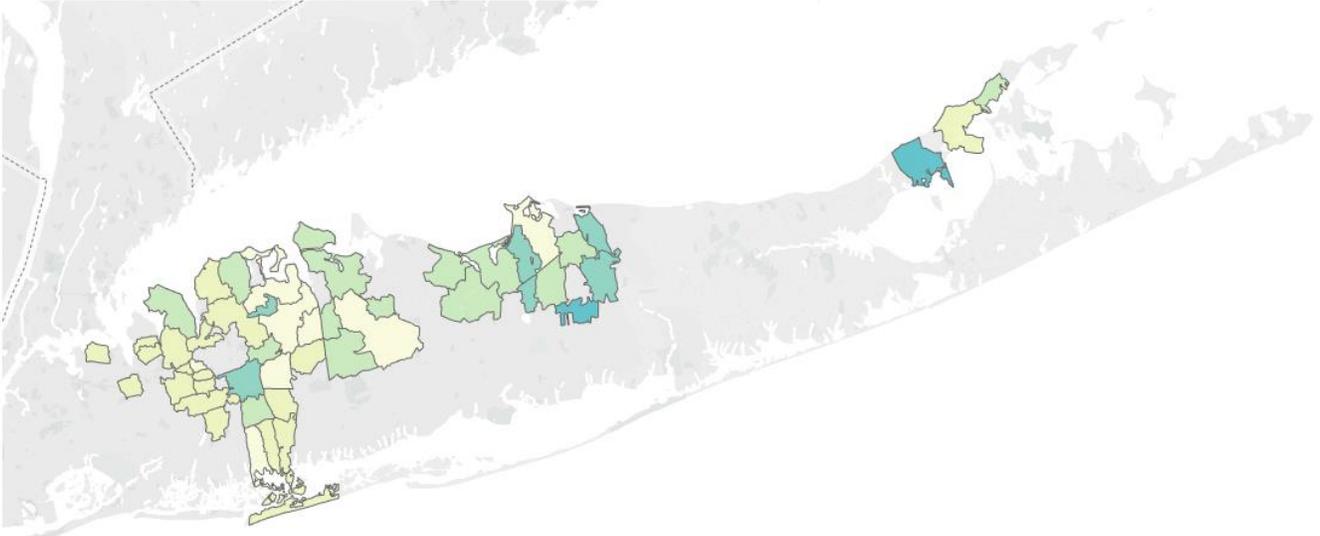
Percent of Responses



## "I find places for me to exercise in the community"

Graph 6 (Pre)

Pre-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I find places for me to exercise in the community



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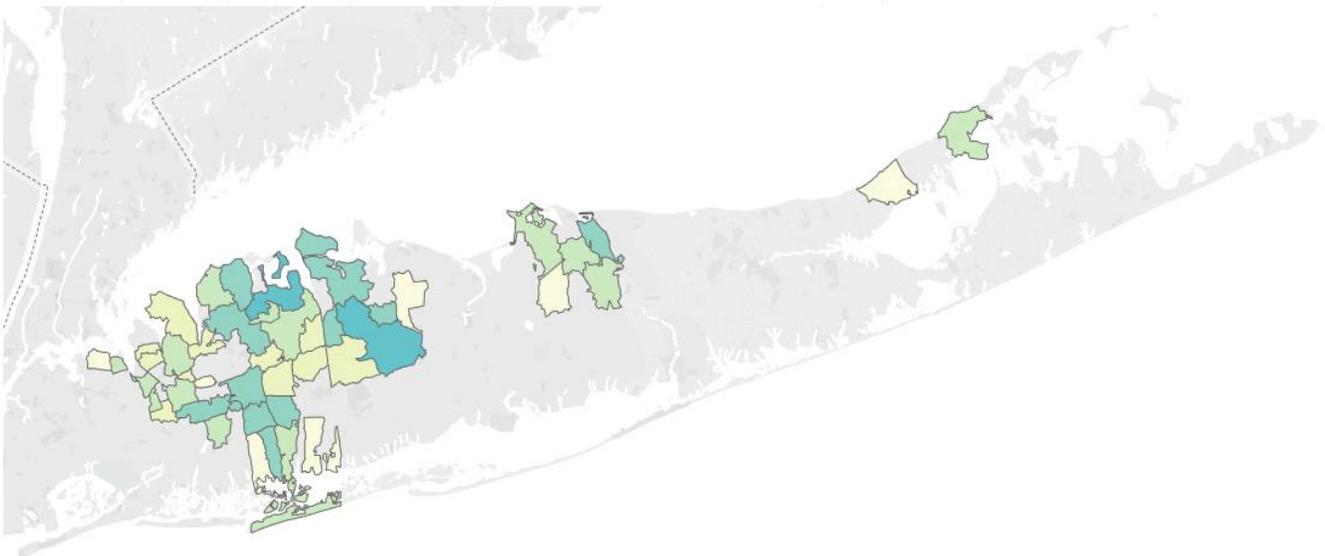
Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

Percent of Responses



Graph 6 (Post)

Post-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I find places for me to exercise in the community



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Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

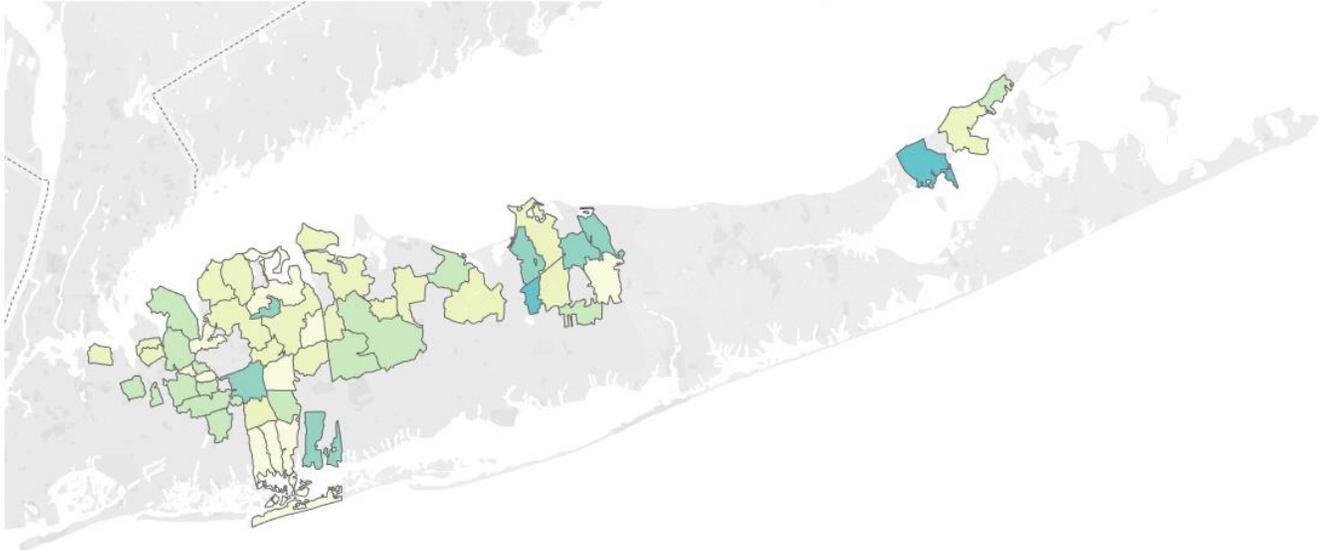
Percent of Responses



## "I find ways to exercise that I enjoy"

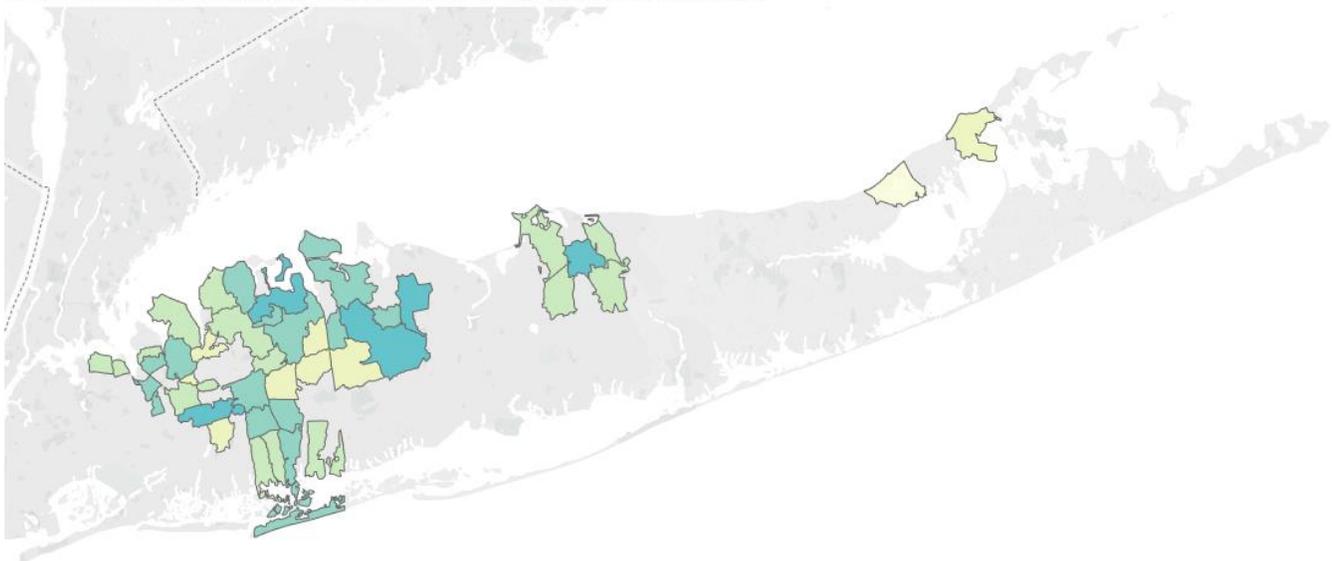
Graph 7 (Pre)

Pre-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I find ways to exercise that I enjoy



Graph 7 (Post)

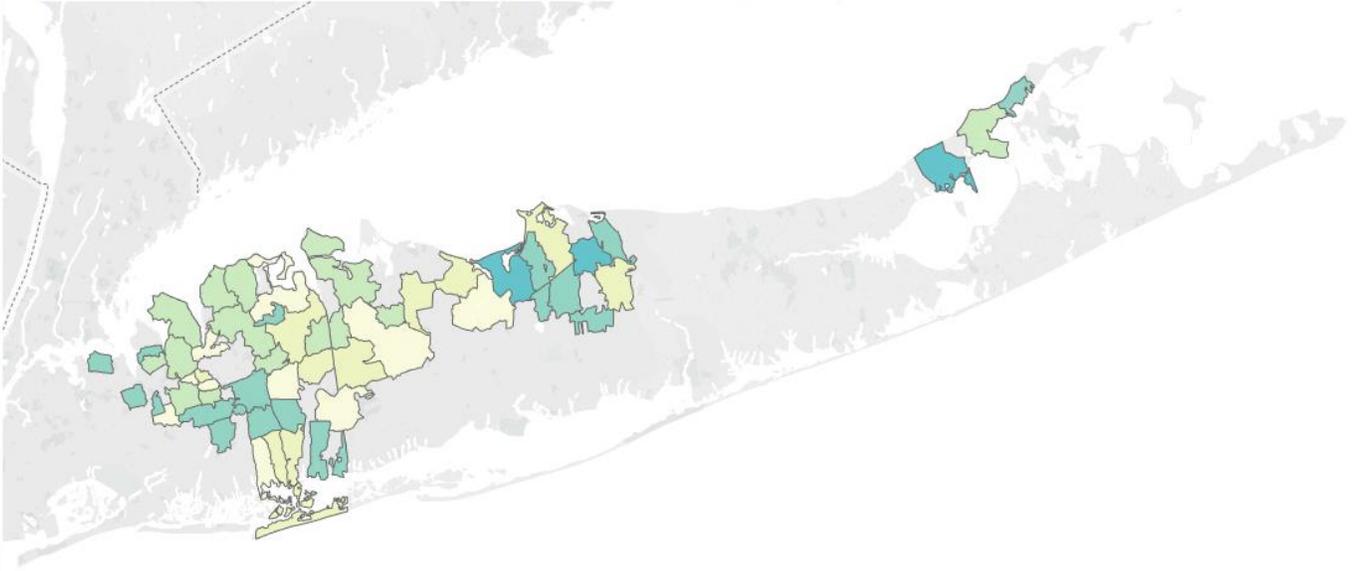
Post-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I find ways to exercise that I enjoy



**“I fit exercise into my regular routine”**

Graph 8 (Pre)

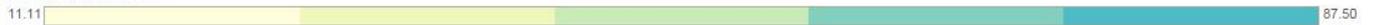
Pre-Participation “Always/Often” responses to: I fit exercise into my regular routine



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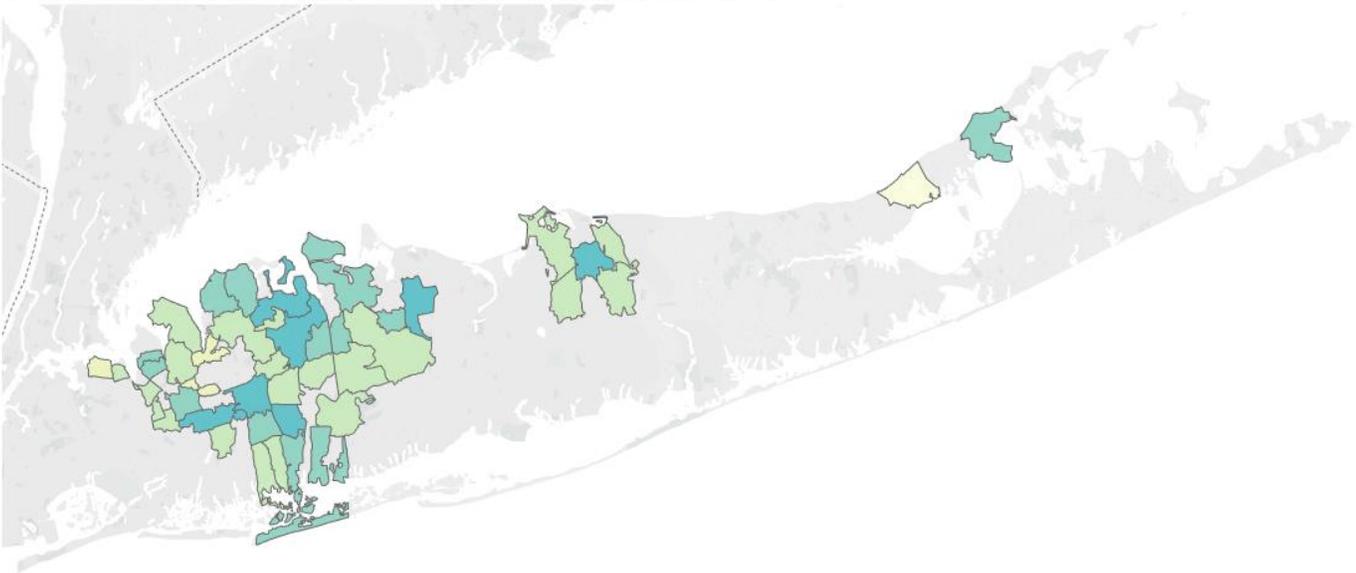
Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

Percent of Responses



Graph 8 (Post)

Post-Participation “Always/Often” responses to: I fit exercise into my regular routine



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Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

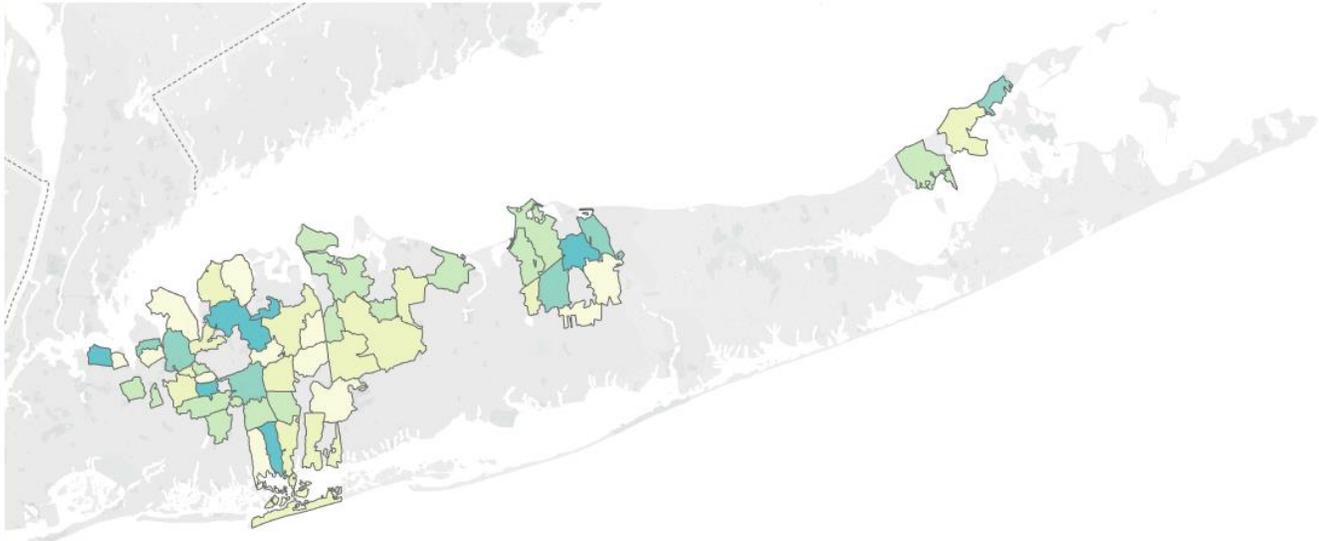
Percent of Responses



**"I do stretching exercises"**

Graph 9 (Pre)

Pre-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I do stretching exercises



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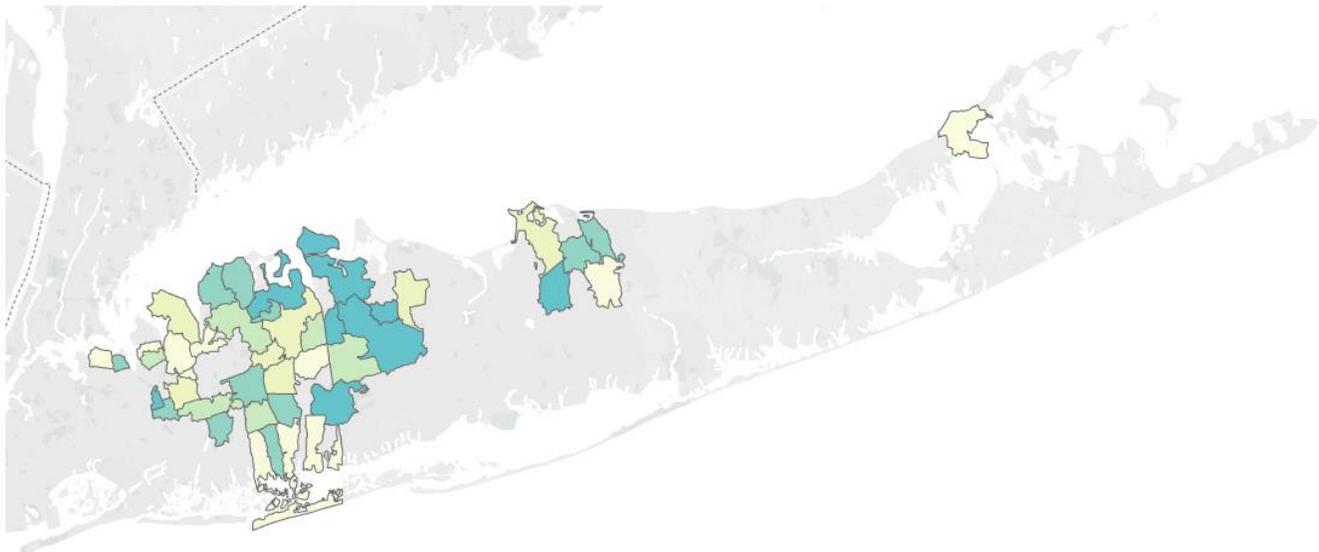
Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

Percent of Responses



Graph 9 (Post)

Post-Participation "Always/Often" responses to: I do stretching exercises



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Zip Codes with less than 5 respondents are not shown.

Percent of Responses



## Community Initiative to Engage Long Islanders in Physical Activity

Partners of the Long Island Health Collaborative are invested in lessening the burden of chronic disease among Long Island residents of all ages. As a collective, the LIHC supports the physical activity of walking as a way to engage Long Islanders in healthy practices. Walking is a simple, inexpensive physical activity, crossing the boundaries of the various social determinants of health and allowing Collaborative members to promote the positive effects of walking to all their constituents. The Long Island region is home to an expansive network of state, town, and village parks, pathways, and walking spaces suitable for all levels of walkers.

The Are You Ready, Feet?<sup>™</sup> health promotion and education campaign is an initiative of the LIHC to promote and incentivize the positive effects of walking. The campaign features:

- the 'Recommendation for Walking' slip, a faux-prescription pad that can be used by healthcare providers to 'prescribe' or recommend a regime of walking to patients, to encourage lifestyle interventions versus medical interventions;
- an online portal where walkers can log their steps walked, minutes moved, or miles traveled, rewarding participants with entries into random drawings for health and wellness prizes;
- and an online list of walking opportunities across the region, housed at [www.lihealthcollab.org/walking](http://www.lihealthcollab.org/walking). For more information about the Are You Ready, Feet?<sup>™</sup> initiative, contact the Long Island Health Collaborative.



*Logo of the Are You Ready, Feet?<sup>™</sup> health promotion and education campaign.*

## Summary

Since chronic disease is so prevalent, data that delves into lifestyle habits, such as physical activity, provides healthcare providers with targeted information to better design and locate programs and services that meet the health needs of the population. Multiple intervention and prevention programs currently exist, but with zip code-based data those current efforts can be improved and enhanced. Further, these localized data collection activities uncover pockets where health disparities, whether due to income, race, education or other factors, exist. Such a collective approach is the first step toward improving the health of the entire Long Island population.

## About the Authors



### About the [Long Island Health Collaborative](#)

The Long Island Health Collaborative is a partnership of Long Island's hospitals, county health departments, physicians, health providers, community-based social associations, human service organizations, academic institutions, health plans, local government, and the business sector, all engaged in improving the health of Long Islanders. The initiatives of the LIHC draw funding from the New York State Department of Health through the Population Health Improvement Program grant. Work of the LIHC is concentrated in the following areas:

- Convening diverse partners
- Engaging in primary and secondary data collection and analyses
- Conducting consumer and provider-facing public information/awareness campaigns
- Supporting adoption of policies related to healthier living
- Promoting chronic disease self-care
- Providing a free web-based walking initiative for use by the public and organizations seeking a platform in which to engage patients/clients/employees in a walking program



### About [DataGen](#)

For more than a decade, DataGen has been an essential partner to healthcare organizations across the country, illustrating the financial implications of payment policy changes and promoting a pragmatic view of how changes will affect revenue and profitability. DataGen provides data analytic support to hospitals, health systems, state hospital associations, and other healthcare groups across the nation as they strive to improve quality, outcomes, and financial performance. Drawing on specialized health policy and payment expertise, as well as in-depth understanding of the power of analytics to drive change, DataGen simplifies the complexities of healthcare payment change.

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