**Increasing Healthy Eating Behaviors & Improving BMI Percentiles Among Youth in the San Francisco Bay Area**

**VeggieRx** is a behavior change program for low-income individuals, youth, and families who are experiencing diet-related health conditions. The program provides nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, and access to healthy foods through a series of eight classes over 16 weeks, where participants engage in discussions and hands-on activities about food, nutrition, and cooking.

**What is VeggieRx?**

VeggieRx is offered to families with children who have a BMI above the 85th percentile for their age. Parents/guardians and their children come to classes together to learn healthy shopping and cooking techniques. The child’s BMI percentile is monitored at each of the eight class sessions.

**Who is eligible to participate?**

In 2012, 2013, and 2016 Fresh Approach partnered with community-based health centers in Oakland, San Francisco, San Jose, San Mateo, and Vallejo to offer the VeggieRx youth and families programs.

**Participant Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic / Latino</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Participant Results**

Over the course of the 16-week program:

- **30%** Improved their BMI percentile
- **35%** Saw no changes or increases to their BMI percentile
- **65%** Total who improved their health as a result of the program

**Follow-up Surveys**

VeggieRx team members followed up with program graduates 12-18 months after the participant’s completed the 16-week program. A total of 55 of the 98 graduates completed a follow-up survey and BMI measurements.

**Participant Results**

- **68%** Reported eating more fresh fruits and vegetables at the end of the program than they did before starting VeggieRx
- **97%** Reported being more comfortable preparing meals with fresh fruits and vegetables at the end of the program

**Follow-up BMI Measurements**

- **48%** Continued to improve their BMI percentile from the last VeggieRx class to the follow-up date
- **35%** Maintained their BMI percentile from the last VeggieRx class to the follow-up date

**Mission of Fresh Approach**

The mission of Fresh Approach is to create long-term change in local food systems by connecting California communities with healthy food from California farmers and expanding knowledge about food and nutrition. Fresh Approach envisions healthy communities where all people have access to fresh, healthy food from California farmers.