

Evaluation of a Rural Community Primary Care Intervention Project to Improve Health and Reduce Expenditures

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HEALTHY FUTURES Community Primary Care Project
Winthrop, ME

The HEALTHY FUTURES Program

- A community-based intervention designed to improve health and reduce health care expenditures through nurse intervention with the patients of primary care physicians
- Public health nurses (Health Advocates) work with patients of primary care physicians to improve patient health care practices, improve physician and patient communication and expand primary and secondary prevention services
- Program components include:
 - health status and health care needs assessments;
 - direct service (e.g., health education, counseling, and physician referrals);
 - improving existing relationship with a primary medical care provider; and,
 - community-wide prevention and health promotion programs.

Program Objectives

- **Establish an efficient, sustainable and replicable community-oriented primary care system available to all residents**
- **Improve the health status of town residents by focusing on health promotion and disease and injury prevention**
- **Reduce health care costs by direct patient intervention of health care needs, networking resources, and developing community-wide prevention programs**

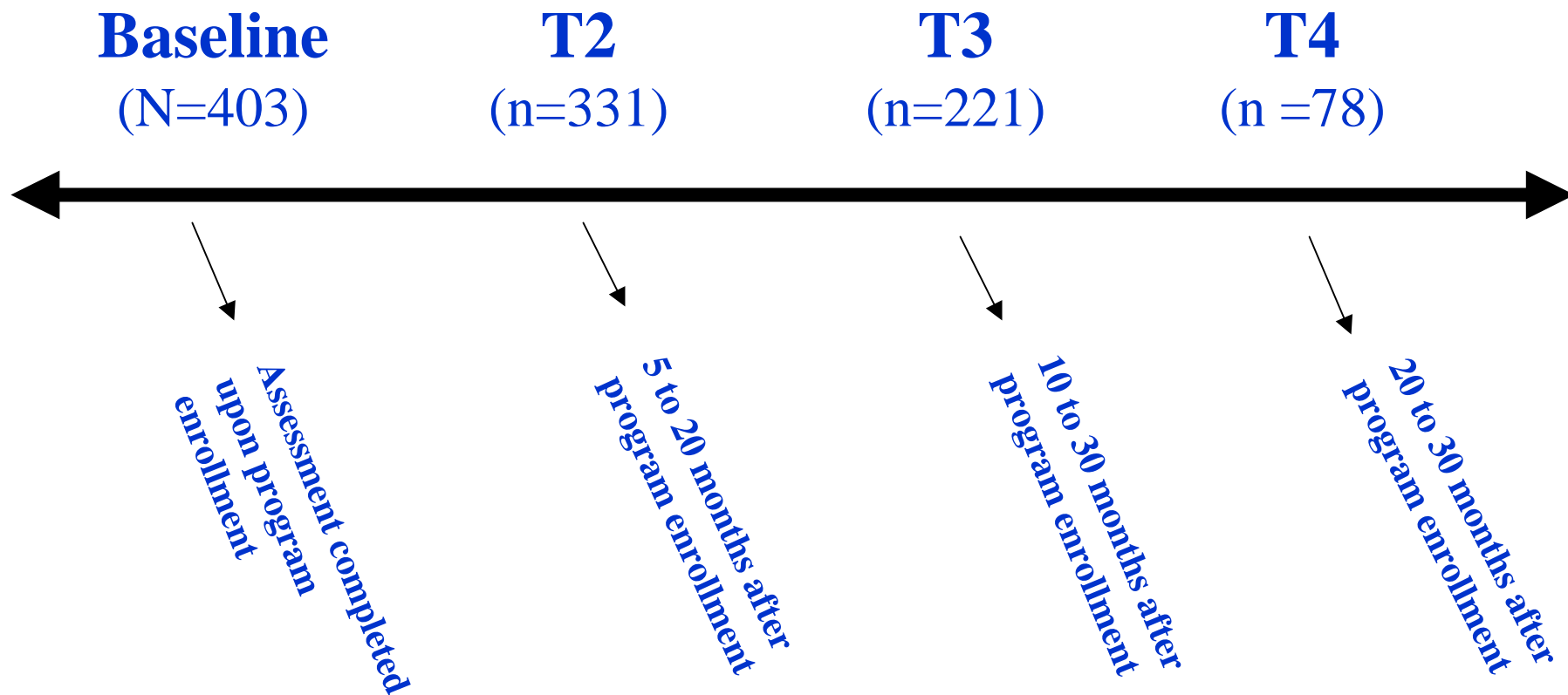
Program Implementation and Evaluation

- **Piloted in Winthrop, ME in 1998 with funds from the RWJ Foundation, The Bingham Fund, BC/BS of Maine, HealthSource (CIGNA) Maine, Hannaford Brothers and the Maine Medicaid Program**
- **Two-pronged evaluation:**
 - **Health Assessment Component: analysis of structured interview data to assess pre- to post-intervention changes in the health status and health risk behaviors of program participants, and**
 - **Expenditure/utilization Assessment Component: analysis of patient claims data to evaluate pre- to post-intervention changes in health care utilization and expenditures among program participants and non-participants**

Evaluation Methodology: Health Assessment Component

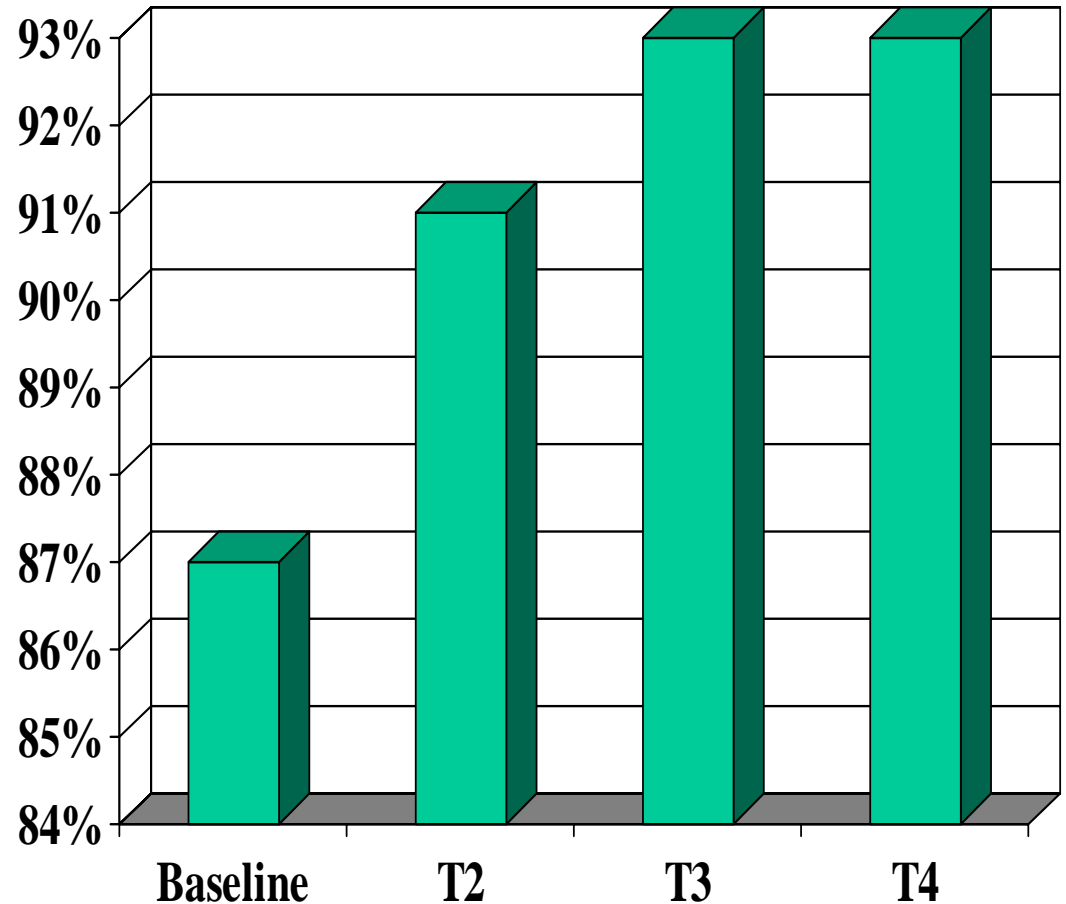
- **Baseline and 6-month follow-up assessments of participants,**
- **Assessments include health risk behaviors (e.g., smoking, alcohol use), age and gender-appropriate use of preventive services (e.g., cancer screening, adult immunizations), and health status (e.g, chronic condition prevalence).**
- **Innovative follow-up system that automatically customizes health assessments for each participant based on information provided in previous interviews.**

Health Assessment Timeline



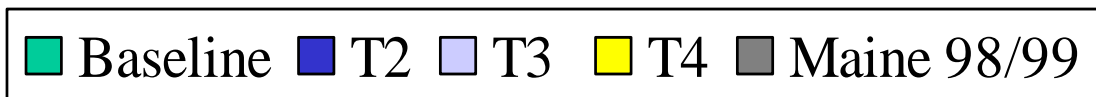
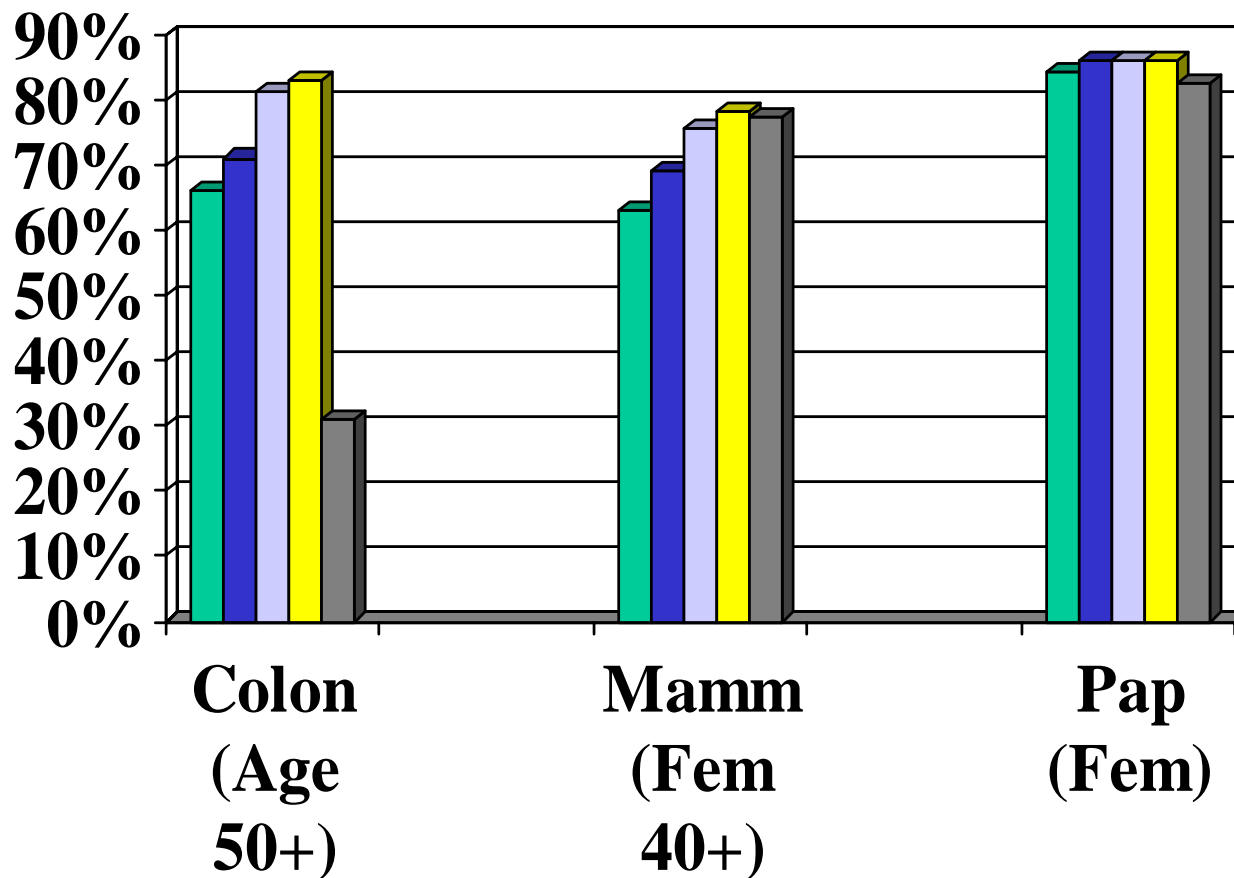
Health Assessment Findings: Primary Care

The proportion of program participants who had a recent physical exam (past 3 years) increased from 87% at Baseline to 93% at T4.



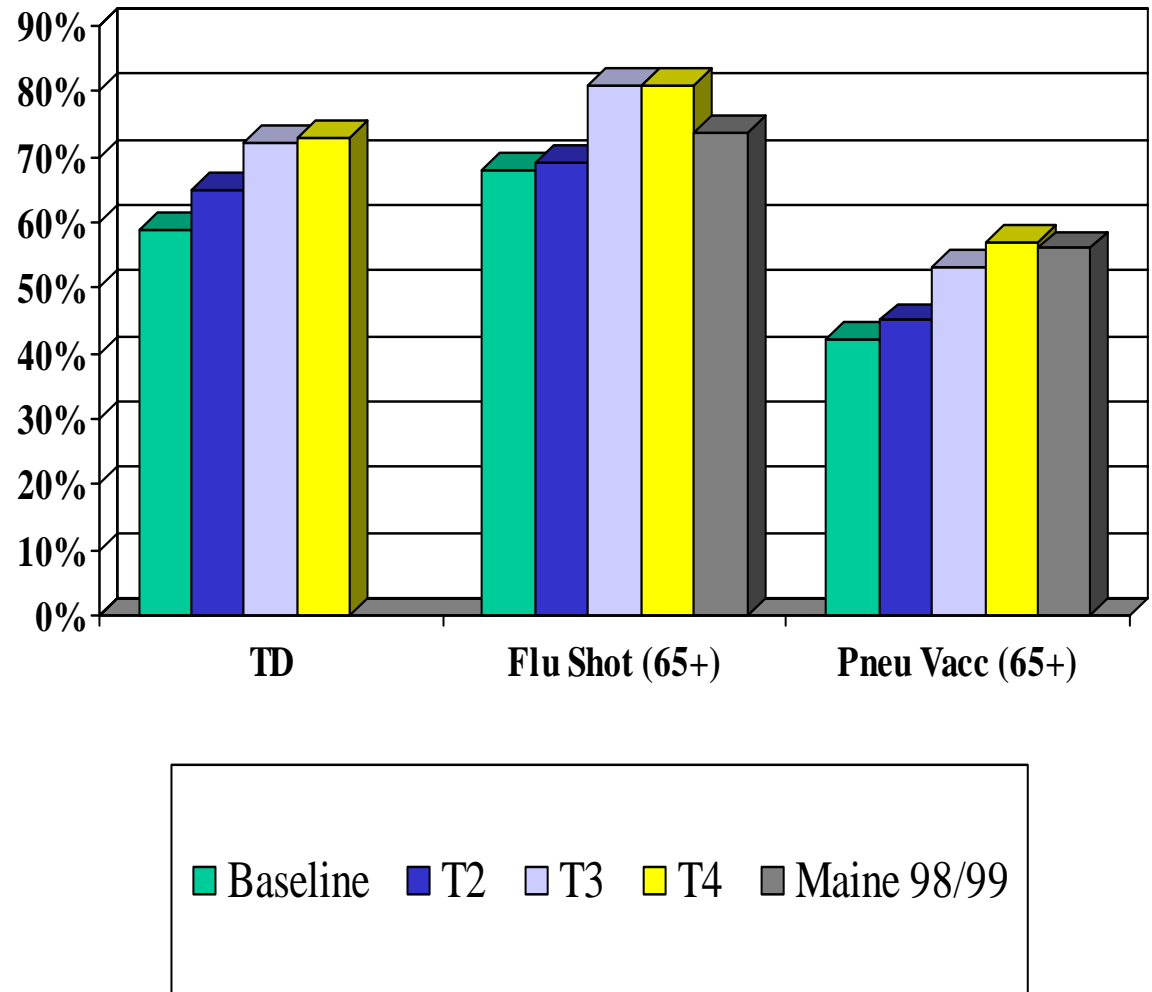
Health Assessment Findings: Cancer Screening

Screening rates for colorectal and breast cancers increased by 25% from Baseline to T4. Cervical cancer screening was fairly constant.



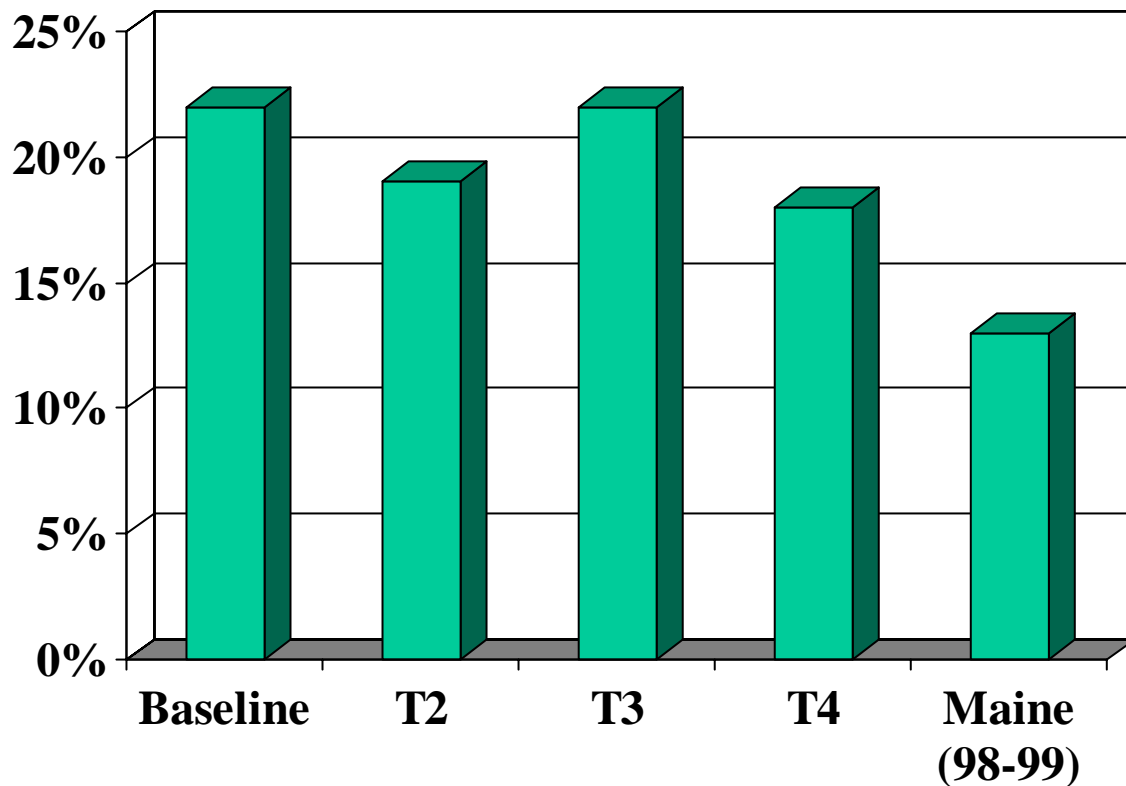
Health Assessment Findings: Immunization

Adult immunization rates were initially low in the program population, but increased throughout the follow-up period to levels that exceed or meet clinical standards.



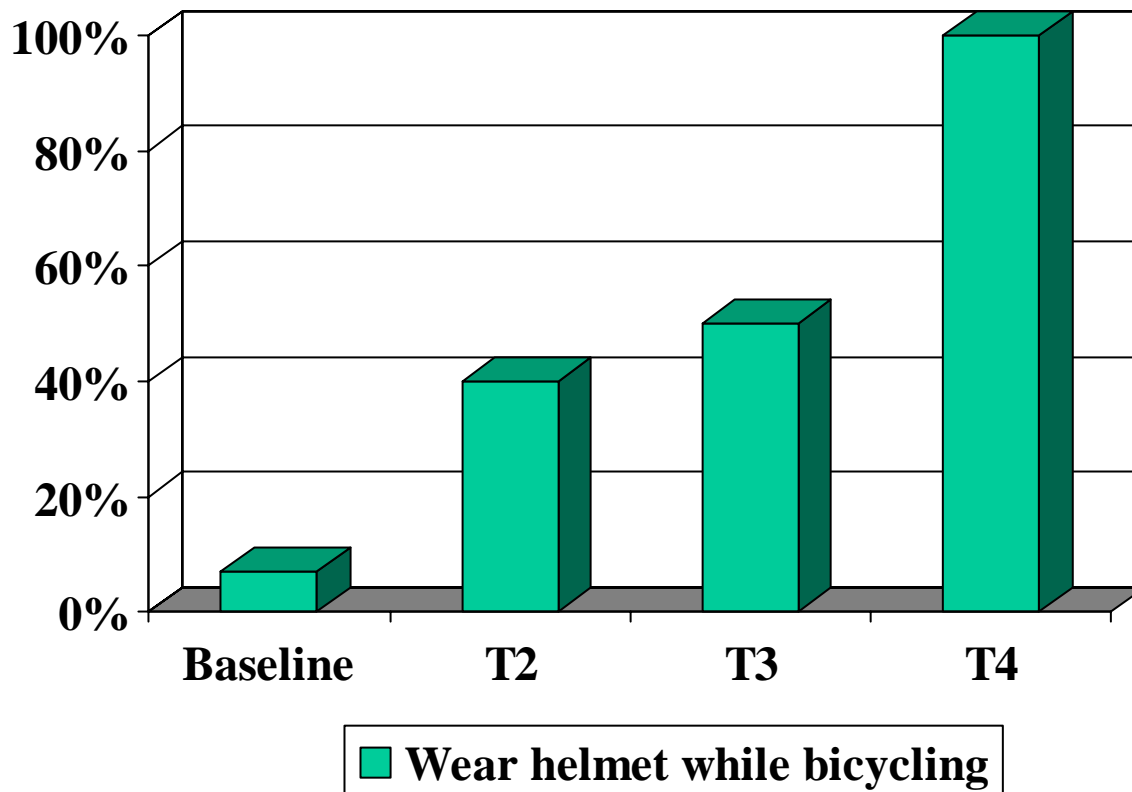
Health Assessment Findings: General Health

The prevalence of fair to poor health decreased slightly in the program population (from 22% at baseline to 18% at T4). However, the T4 prevalence was 40% higher than the Statewide rate.



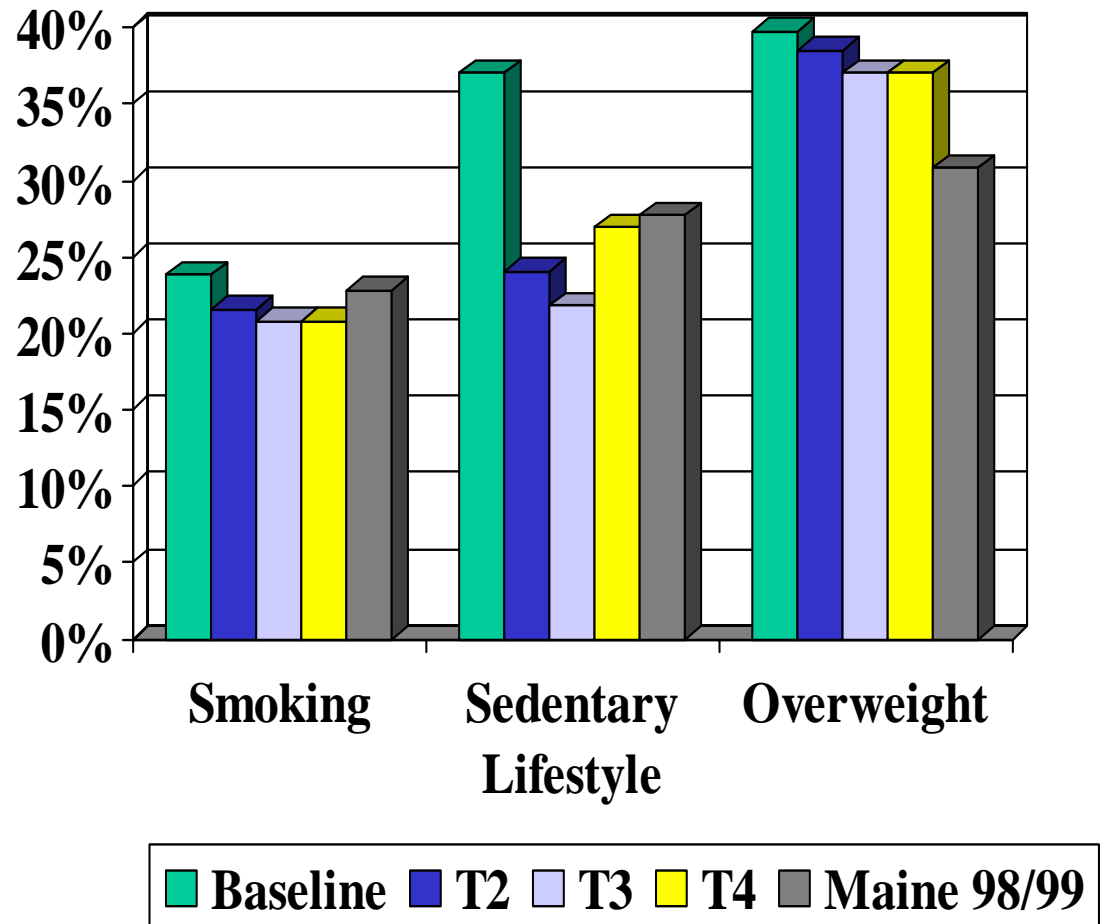
Health Assessment Findings: Injury Prevention

The proportion of participants who reported wearing a helmet when riding a bike increased from 6% at Baseline to 100% at T4.



Health Assessment Findings: Behavioral Risks for Cardiovascular Disease

The prevalence of smoking and sedentary lifestyles decreased over the follow-up period to levels slightly lower than, or comparable to, those in the State. Overweight prevalence remained fairly constant and elevated over the State.



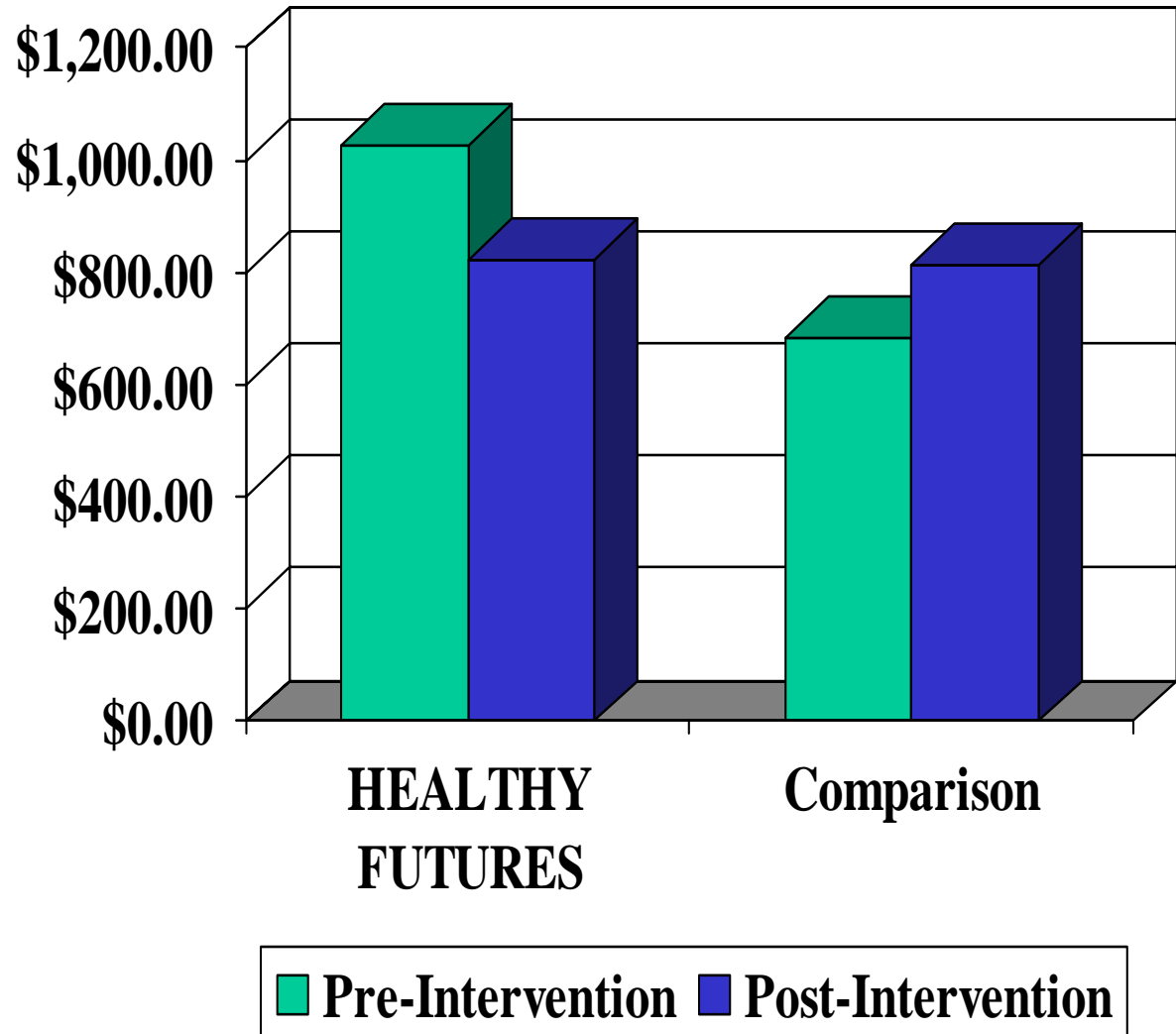
Evaluation Methodology:

Utilization and Expenditure Component

- **Claims data on 300 participants insured by either HS or BC/BS and on 400 participants insured by Medicaid.**
- **Claims data on a comparison group of 1550+ randomly selected non-participant (continuously enrolled) HS members.**
- **Pre-intervention health care claims were those processed during the 12 months prior to the program (1/1/97 – 12/31/97) and post-intervention claims were those processed during a 12 month period after program implementation (7/1/98 - 6/30/99).**
- **Health care utilization rates and PMPY expenditures for inpatient admissions, outpatient visits, emergency care and both preventive and non-preventive office-based physician services.**

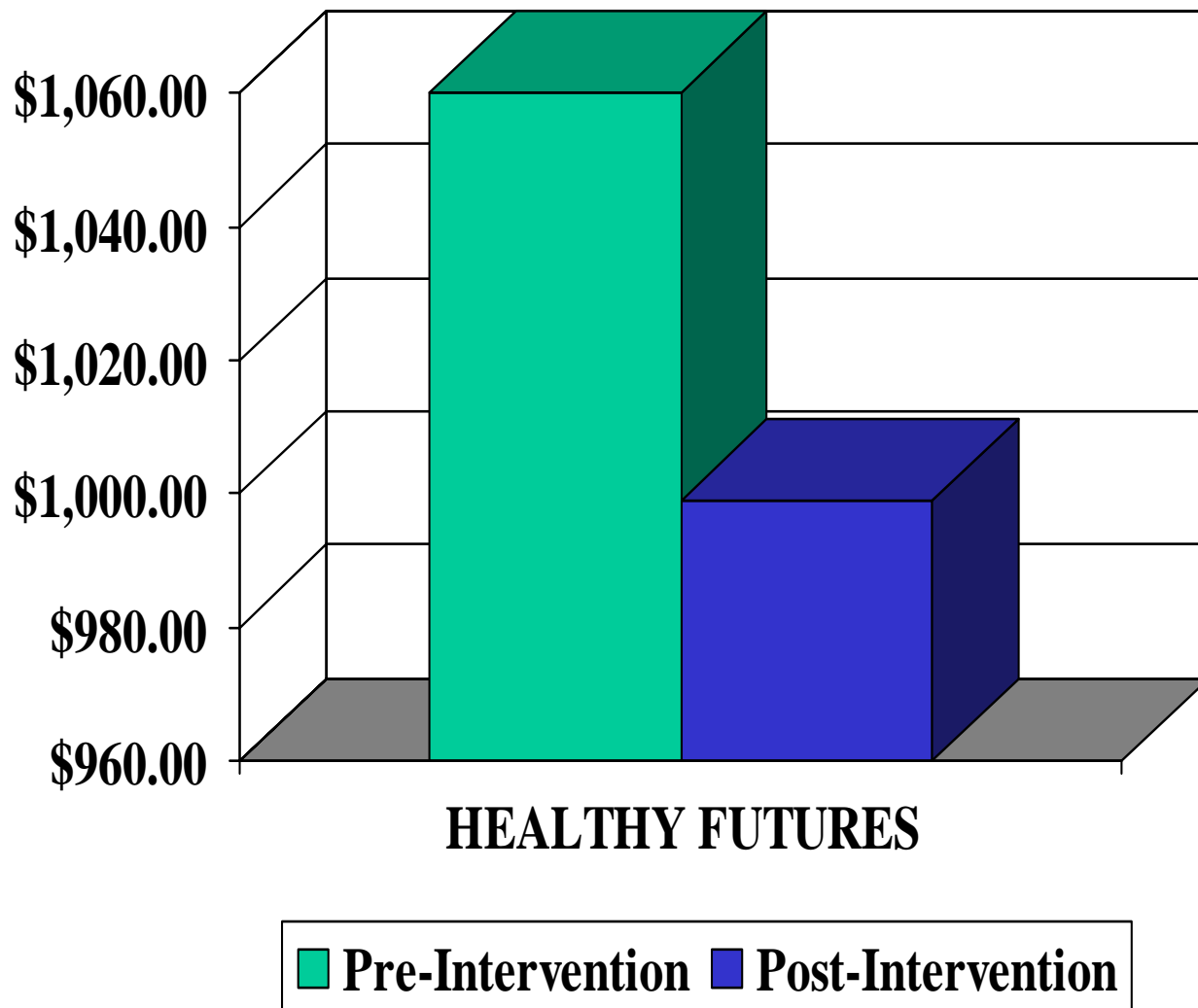
Utilization/Expenditure Findings: Privately Insured

Total PMPY expenditures for all health care services except OB were \$205.00 (20%) lower during the post-intervention among privately insured program participants.



Utilization/Expenditure Findings: Publicly Insured

Total PMPY expenditures for all health care services except OB were \$61.00 (6%) lower during the post-intervention among program participants insured by Medicaid.



Conclusions

- **Evaluation results from the pilot implementation of the HEALTHY FUTURES program were generally favorable.**

- **Health assessment findings showed improvements in:**
 - **the use of primary care and preventive screenings**
 - **rates of adult immunizations**
 - **injury prevention behaviors**
 - **behavioral risks for cardiovascular disease**

- **Utilization/Expenditure findings showed reductions in PMPY health care costs for both privately and publicly insured participants.**