

# Implementing a Native American Elder Exercise Program in Tribal Communities

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March 2010 Pilot Site Training Class and Staff

## Background

Falling is the most common and serious risk facing the elderly. A fall can lead to illness and disease, decreased body function, early admission to a nursing home, and sometimes death. Even the fear of falling can cause people to limit their activities, which can lead to a decrease in functional abilities.

WELL-Balanced (Wise Elders Living Longer) is a health promotion program designed to improve movement, encourage exercise, and help elders reduce their risk of falling. Focus areas were derived from *Identifying our Needs: A Survey of Elders*. The 16 session (8 week) course includes a home safety check, fall risk screening, and a home program for use after the course is completed.

WELL-Balanced was developed by the NRCNAA in conjunction with the University of North Dakota Wellness Center. The educational materials are based on experimental evidence for fall prevention and cognitive behavioral approaches to motivation and adherence to exercise programs. It includes evidence based education, health promotion activities, and group movement (with adaptation for individuals with diabetes, arthritis, and high blood pressure).

WELL-Balanced is designed to help Native elders:

- Prevent falls
- Increase their level of regular exercise
- Engage in social activity
- Manage diabetes, arthritis, and high blood pressure
- Develop strategies for independent living
- And most important, have fun

## Method

The WELL-Balanced curriculum was tested through the use of 4 tribal communities that served as pilot sites.

- ❖Received 9 WELL-Balanced pilot site applications from organizations and tribal communities throughout 6 states
- ❖Three tribal communities and one organization participated in the WELL-Balanced training held at the University of North Dakota Wellness Center from March 8-10, 2010
  - Blackfeet Reservation (Browning, MT)
  - Kenaitze Indian Tribe (Kenai, AK)
  - Otoe-Missouria Tribe (Red Rock, OK)
  - SEAHRC (Sitka, AK)

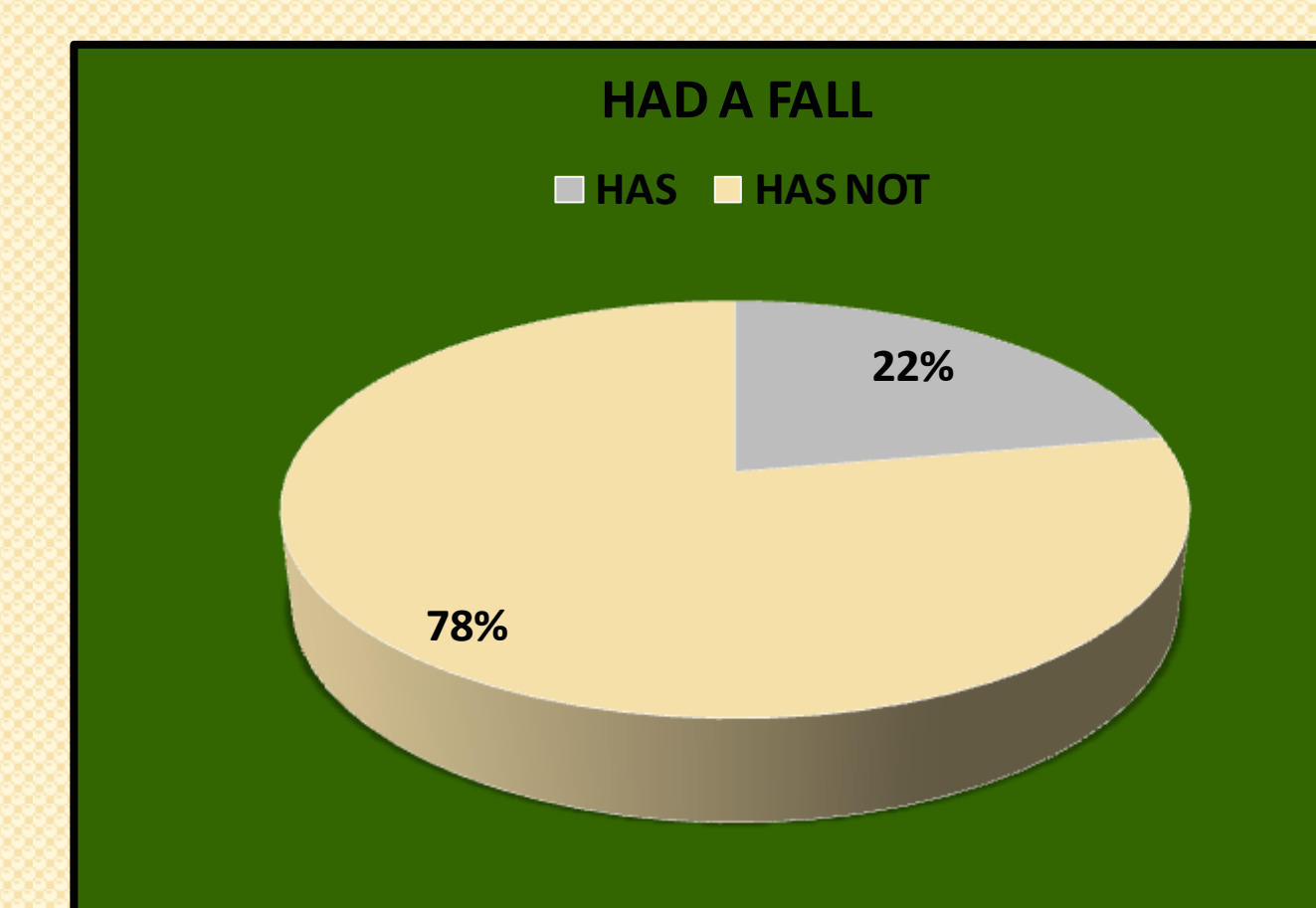
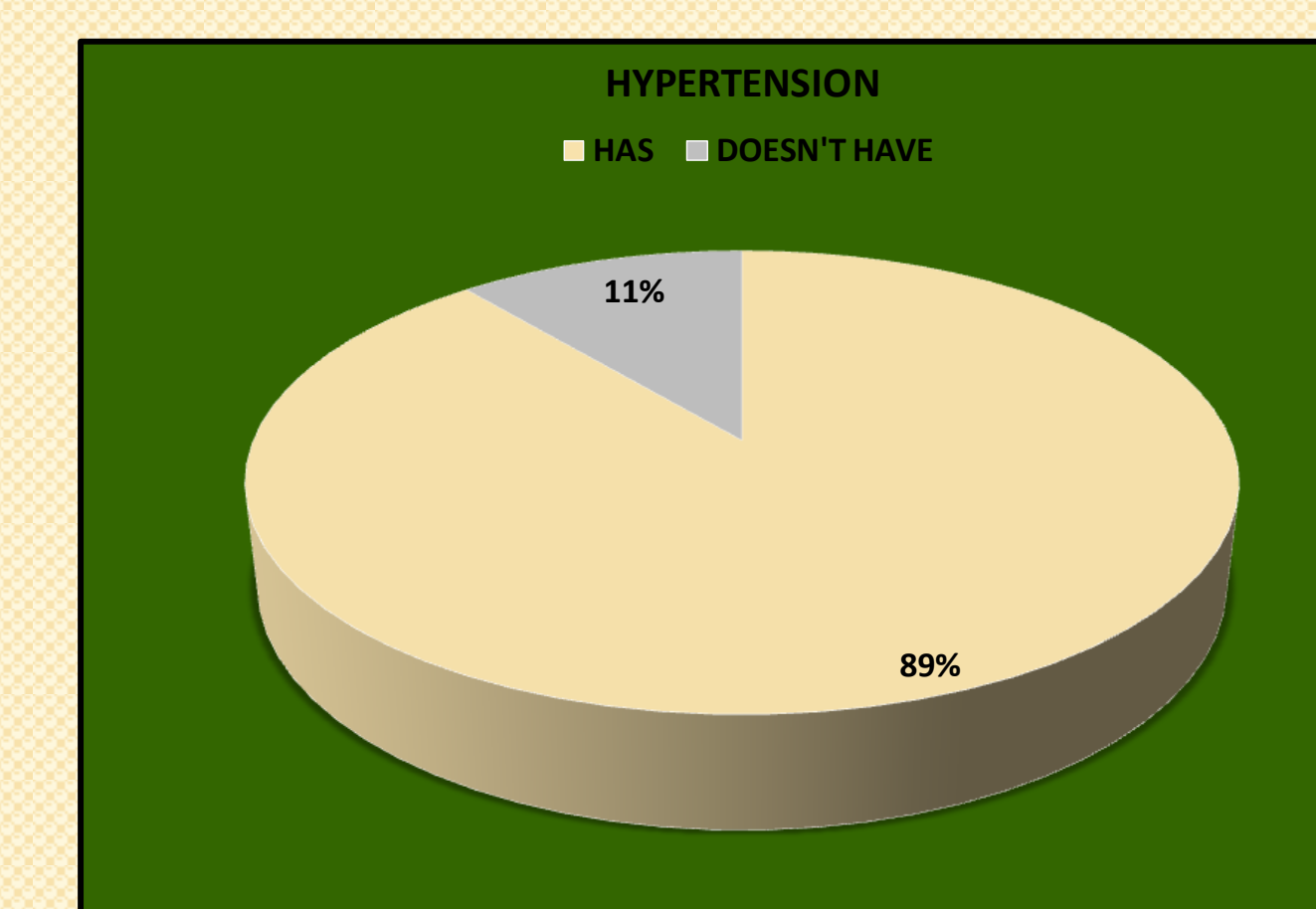
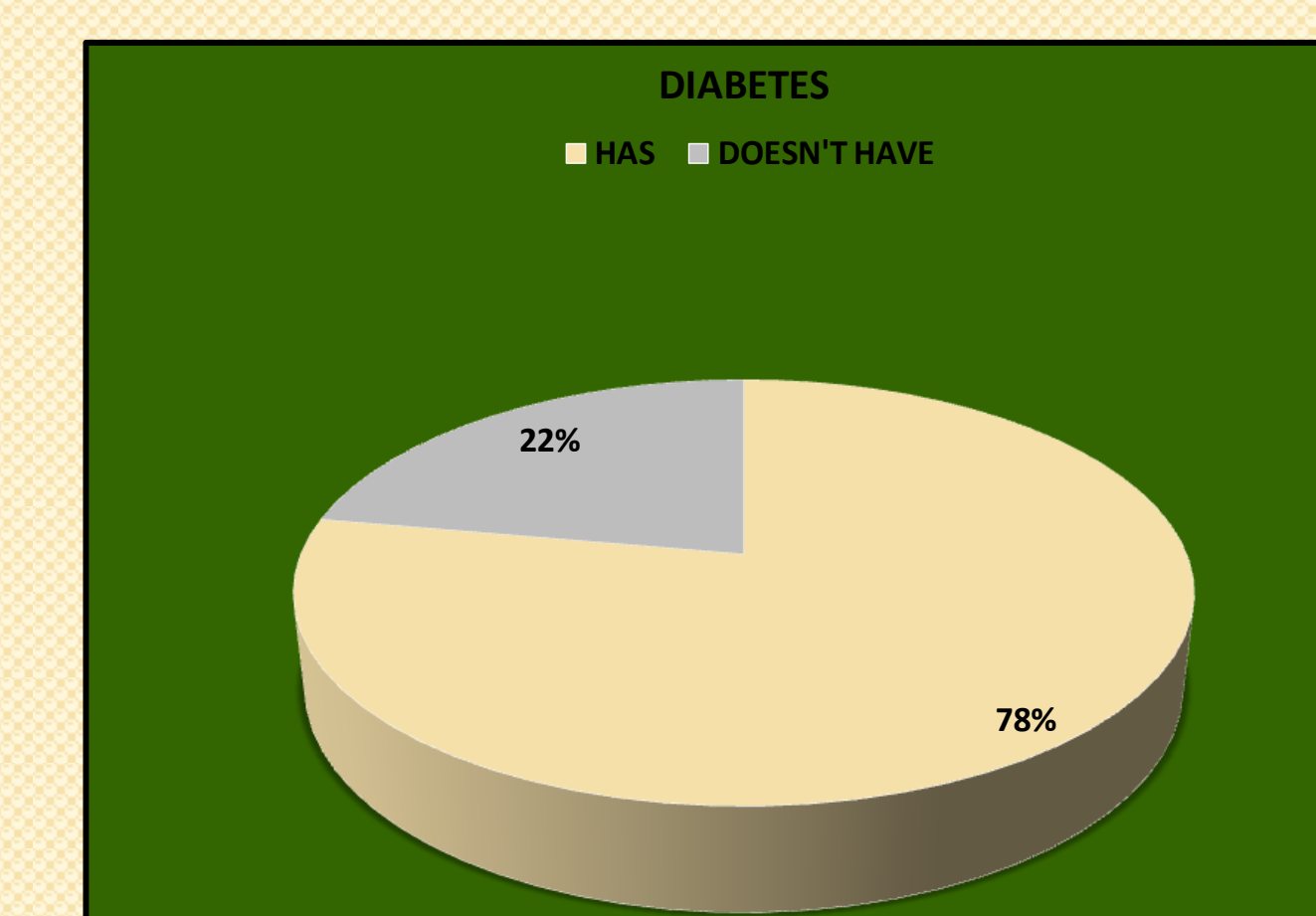
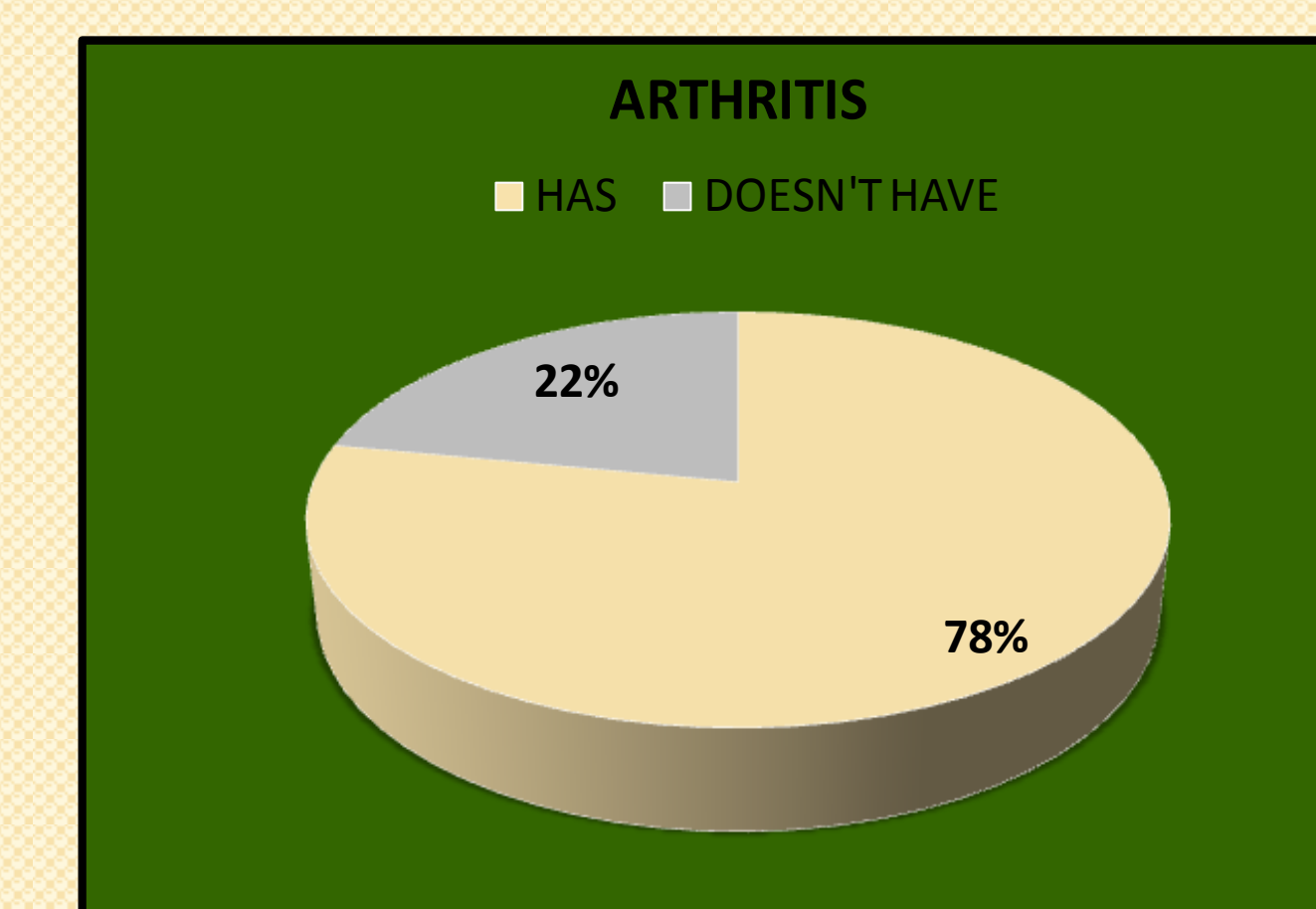
- ❖The Kenaitze Indian Tribe has completed the 8 week program; the remaining pilot sites are currently in progress
- ❖WELL-Balanced pilot site data collected include an Attendance Sheet, the Coaches Weekly Review Record, the Pre-Assessment, the In-Class Assignment, the Home Safety Checklist, the Score Sheet for WELL-Balanced Assessment, the Activity Log, the Post-Assessment, and the Focus Group Questionnaire.

## The Current Status

### Data Collection

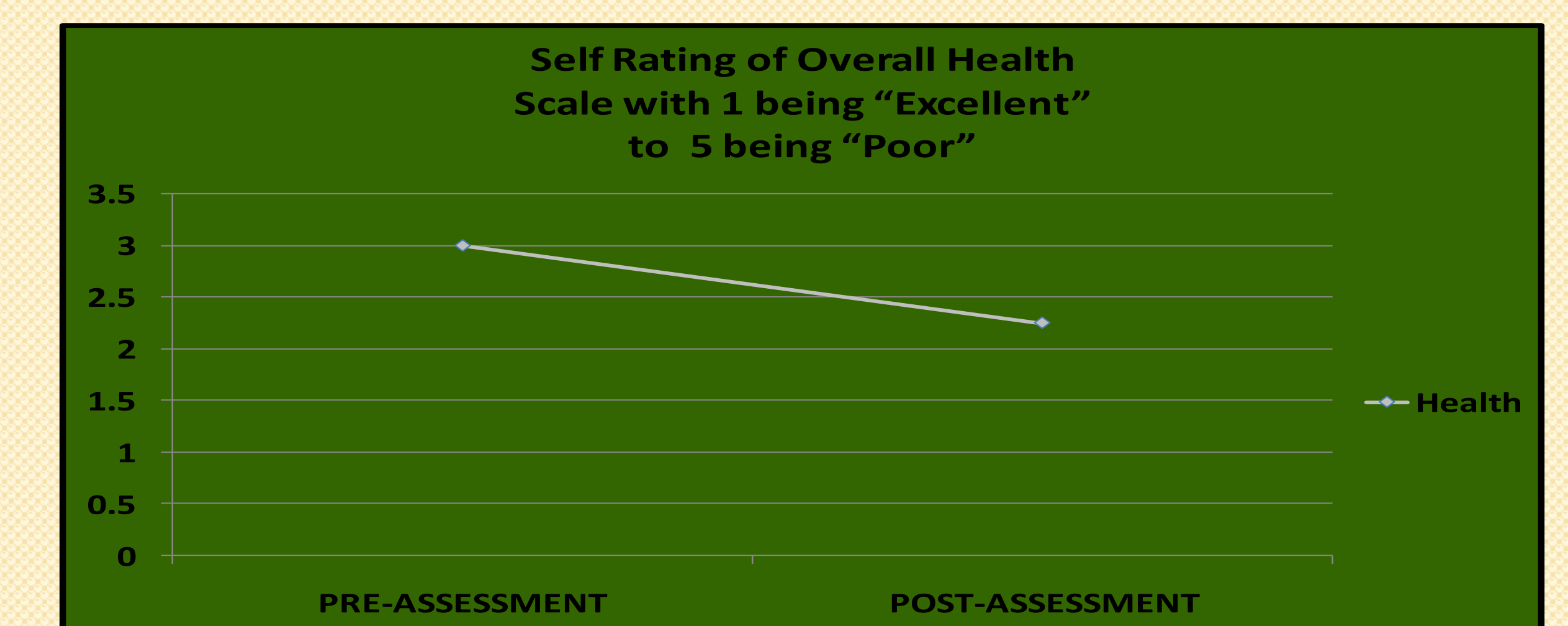
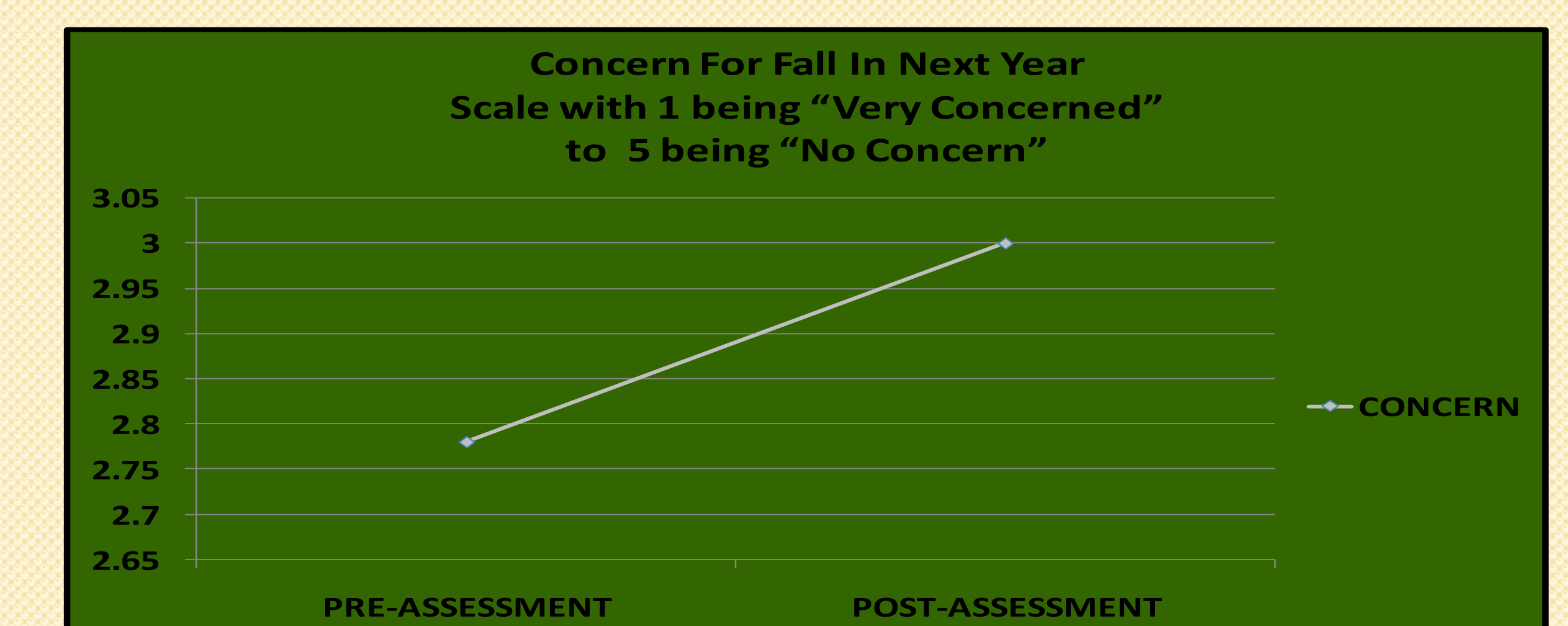
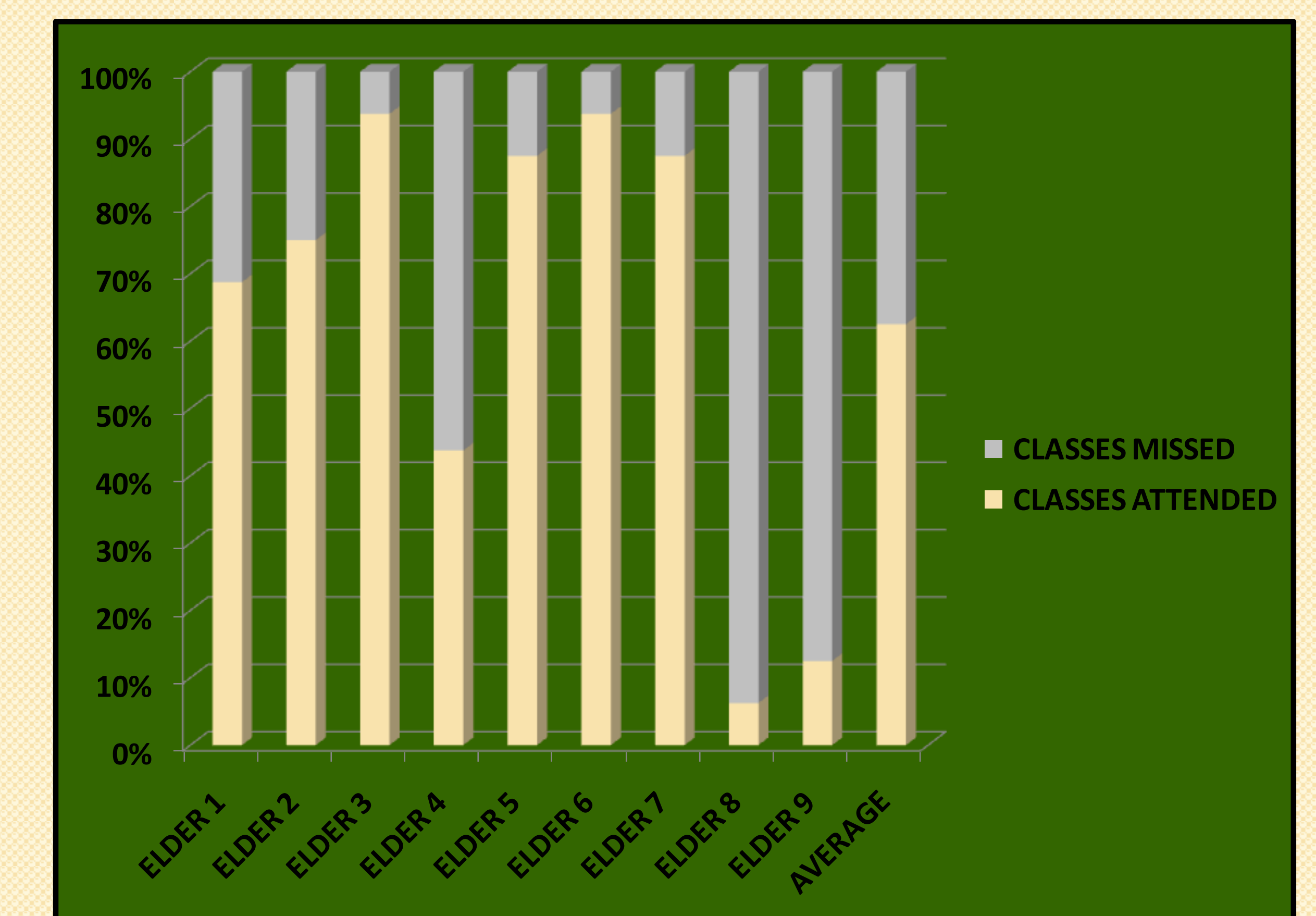
- ❖Kenaitze Indian Tribe
  - ❖Start Date 04/26/2010
  - ❖End Date 06/18/2010
- ❖Blackfeet Reservation
  - ❖Start Date 07/05/2010
- ❖SEAHRC
  - ❖Start Date 09/06/2010
- ❖Otoe-Missouria Tribe
  - ❖No Scheduled Start Date

## Demographics of Kenai Data



## Preliminary Results of Kenai Data

### ATTENDANCE



## Conclusion

The WELL-Balanced curriculum has been successfully implemented in one of the four pilot sites. Data from the remaining three sites will be obtained by the end of December 2010.

Based on the preliminary data the WELL-Balanced program has shown that a Native Elder Exercise program can be accepted and adopted into a tribal community.

*"I really don't think I need buns of steel. I'd be happy with buns of cinnamon."*

Ellen DeGeneres