

Subject: The Square Scoop: Health Care, Marketing and Your Y
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The YMCA: A Key Component of the Health Care Debate

Health Care reform is one of the most hotly contested issues facing our country today. And as such, it is the perfect time for the YMCA to promote their leadership role in this area. One thing unanimous among different opinions is preventative care. Many YMCAs have been providing much needed health and wellness services to the community for years. [Learn](#) what programs are most popular and how your Y can capitalize on this hot topic and attract more members by providing these services.

Stay Top of Mind without Spending a Dime

Easy, effective and economical ways to market your YMCA

During tough economic times many organizations make the mistake of cutting back on all marketing initiatives. Expensive, unproven marketing tactics definitely aren't the way to go, but there are plenty inexpensive and effective strategies out there that will help keep your Y top of mind. [Read](#) the top ways to save money while still marketing your YMCA.

YMCA and it's Pivotal Role in our Country's Health

While Congress and the country debate the merits of various health care programs, there is one initiative that is hard to argue with: preventative care, taking proactive steps to keep yourself healthy, and not in need of a doctor. And regardless of what health care plan is voted in, preventative care is going to be a central component. Fortunately, the YMCA is already ahead of the game being one of the Nation's leader in preventative health and wellness programs. For years the YMCAs have teamed up with hospitals, recreational centers and rehab clinics to offer a plethora of health and wellness programs to it's members.

Now is the perfect time to get into or expand your wellness program. Play up your current health and wellness programs; institute "healthy Saturdays" and throw mini-health fairs with free screenings; place blood pressure machines in your lobby; add additional health and wellness classes (see suggestions below) to your list of program offerings.

FourSquare's research consistently shows that health and wellness programs are always popular with current and potential members. The top programs include:

- Classes that combine exercise and weight management
- A teaching kitchen with classes in nutrition, diet, and low-fat cooking
- Classes on herbs, vitamins, and dietary supplements
- Free fitness assessment such as body fat measurement and cardiovascular fitness

- Health classes for women, such as nutrition for menopause and preventing osteoporosis
- Prenatal health classes for pregnant women
- Health classes for men, such as detecting cancer and assessing health risks at different ages
- On-site screening and testing for conditions such as cancer, high blood pressure, and diabetes
- Referral service to doctors and health care providers in a variety of specialties
- Support groups for adults with similar medical conditions or similar weight loss goals
- A mini-clinic that treats minor conditions and illnesses such as common cold and muscle strains
- Smoking cessation classes
- Comprehensive assessment that screens your physical and social habits for a complete wellness analysis
- First Aid and CPR classes
- Non-traditional medical services such as acupuncture and aroma therapy

People often associate the YMCAs with children. But preventative care -- whether it be through health and wellness classes, fitness equipment, health screenings or even healthy cooking classes -- is another area where the YMCA could stand out. With over 2500 YMCAs in this country and millions members, the YMCA has the unique ability to make a huge difference in this country's health.

Our research consistently shows that if you provide these services, the community will notice and the people will come (and join). To find out what health and wellness needs your community wants, [contact](#) FourSquare today.

Penniless Promotion: Market your YMCA for Free!

Marketing spend shouldn't be seen as a loss leader. There are many low-cost, high-success tactics you can implement that will result in smart, strategic marketing decisions and get the most out of your marketing dollars.

Use the web

- Launch a blog on your website and update it daily.

This is a great way to consistently "touch" your members. You can use the blog to introduce people to your staff. You can highlight new instructors, programs, facilities, etc. Run contests and give away YMCA goodies. Announce specials and upcoming programs. Establish a "customer-of-the-month" tradition and do regular write-ups.

- Use Facebook.

Having a Facebook page may not get you any new members but again, it's a good way to be "out there" and top of mind with your current and future members. You can also start a "fan" page which will generate interest in your Y.



Use your members

- Offer referral bonuses: give away one free month for every new member someone gets to join.
- Highlight a different member each month: put up a bulletin board with their picture and a bio and why they were chosen as member of the month.
- Take member surveys to see what your members like and don't like about certain classes and then make changes accordingly. People appreciate being asked for their opinions and

appreciate it even more when their suggestions are implemented.

Use your community

- Partner with local schools, hospitals, rehab centers, etc. to offer health fairs.
- Work with local coffee shops to provide free coffee to your members. Give credit for the shop's donation with a sign and ask the coffee shop to reciprocate with a YMCA sign.

These are just a few creative, out of the box marketing ideas. [Contact](#) FourSquare today for more innovative ideas on how to market your YMCA without breaking the bank.

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