Physical Activity for Adults Aging with Multiple Disabilities
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Background/Objectives
Current research indicates the importance and impact of exercise for adults as they age. There is limited information available on the implication of exercise programs for adults aging with multiple disabilities. This pilot study examined the application of a National Center on Health, Physical Activity and Disability, NCHPAD, program with thirty-seven adults aging with multiple disabilities. NCHPAD focuses on improving the health, wellness, and quality of life of people with disabilities through increased participation in physical activity. The NCHPAD 14-week Program to a Healthier You is a personalized, web-based exercise and nutrition program primarily for individuals with disabilities. Our study took these components and modified them to meet the unique and complex needs of the individuals at the Center for Discovery.

RESULTS
There was a change in one or more vital statistics (BP, HR, WT) for 20/37 individuals (54%) in the study.

Of the 12 individuals who had specific passive range of motion measurements, 75% saw an increase in shoulder flexion of 10 degrees or more. 25% of individuals saw an increase of 20 degrees or more.

Four individuals with a diagnosis of ML4 saw an improvement of at least 15 degrees.

In three residences where sleep data was analyzed, 17/18 individuals saw an average increase of 30 minutes per night.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS
The subjective findings of the study were the most striking. Staff who participated in the study indicated that each individual had at least one breakthrough moment over the 14 week period. This was evidenced by a range of behaviors from increased level of arousal/participation, improved self-regulation to articulation about the benefits of the program on daily life (improved sleep, increased range of motion, self-confidence, motivation) from those who were able to do so. There was active participation by staff members in the program. Future directions include: continued analysis of long-term health benefits for the participants, development of a training component for staff and application of this program to other aging populations.

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