

**New York**

**Increasing Tobacco Cessation Rates through Health Systems Changes**

**Producing Results**

The Steps Program in Chautauqua County, NY implemented a proven strategy in health systems to reduce tobacco use, leading to a quadrupling in the number of referrals given by health care providers to the NY state Smokers' Quitline and a decrease in smoking rates in Chautauqua County from almost 29% in 2004 to less than 24% in 2006.

**Public Health Problem**

Smoking rates continue to remain above New York state (NYS) levels in Chautauqua County. In 2004, nearly 28% of Chautauqua County residents reported being current smokers, compared with only 20% of NYS residents.

**Taking Action**

The Steps Program in Chautauqua County, NY collaborated with its local Tobacco Control Program and Women's Christian Association (WCA) Hospital to change hospital policy on asking patients about tobacco use. Health care providers from a variety of disciplines were trained by Wellness Coordinators and the Steps Community Program Facilitator to ask about tobacco use and to follow the 5A Model, a 2-minute tobacco cessation intervention that has been shown to be effective in helping smokers quit. The WCA Hospital implemented the 2-minute intervention strategy, revising the patient intake form to reflect the patient's tobacco use and providing tobacco cessation materials and referrals to the NYS Smokers' Quitline when applicable.

**Implications and Impact**

As of May 2006, more than 547 health care providers were trained to use the 5A Model, and the WCA Hospital changed its patient intake and education forms to reflect the new process. As a result of the new policy, total calls to the NYS Smokers' Quitline from referrals by health care providers quadrupled from 2005 to 2006 and resulted in a 50% increase in calls compared with a neighboring county that has similar demographics. In addition, data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System for Chautauqua County show that the percentage of adult smokers during 2005–2006 was 23.7%, which is a decrease from 28.8% in 2004–2005.

**New York**

**Implementing an Innovative Solution to Increase Healthier Options in School Cafeterias**

**Public Health Problem**

In 2005, almost 75% of Broome County, NY residents reported that they did not eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day. These rates were even higher among high school students; over 80% of high school students reported that they did not eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day in 2005.

**Taking Action**

“Rock on Café” is a community collaborative effort to provide healthier meals and food options in school districts within Broome and Tioga Counties in New York State. As part of this effort, 14 Broome and Tioga County school districts came together to create a consolidated bid and menu system. Broome and Tioga County school districts shared the services of a registered dietitian to analyze and standardize their breakfast and lunch menus. The dietitian, in partnership with the food service directors, created healthy breakfast and lunch entrees. These meals include fresh fruits and vegetables at an affordable price that are kid tasted and parent approved. Whenever possible, local produce and products are utilized as part of the Farm to School initiative, an initiative to increase the use of locally grown produce in school food service programs. A logo, brand and website were created to help students and parents make healthier choices. In addition, the Food Service Director in one of the Broome County school districts led the effort to purchase larger quantities of healthier foods, enabling all of the schools to obtain healthier products at lower costs. This same Food Service Director has recently been appointed to the New York State Governor’s Food Policy Council, which is charged with making recommendations to the Governor on state regulations, legislation and budget proposals in the area of food policy to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive inter-agency approach to state food policy issues. It is also tasked with identifying ways to increase the sale of New York agricultural products, with an emphasis on expanding the consumer market for locally-grown and organically-grown food to promote healthier communities.

“Rock on Café” is led by Broome-Tioga BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) and the regional school district food service directors in partnership with the Steps program in NY and in concert with all of Broome and Tioga County School Districts and a host of other partners (including the American Cancer Association, the American Heart Association, United Health Services-Stay Healthy Center, Lourdes Public Relations, News Channel 34, the Rural Health Network, the Family Enrichment Network, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Our Green Acres Farm, Cornell University, the Binghamton Mets, the Binghamton Senators, the Press & Sun Bulliton, NutriKids and the Child Nutrition Program). This community coalition was the catalyst that created a standard regional lunch menu system.

**Implications and Impact**

As a result, all elementary schools in Broome and Tioga Counties now offer the same healthier breakfast and lunch entrees. Based on a survey conducted in 2006, the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables over canned and frozen increased by 14%. This regional community collaboration has forged system and environmental changes in Broome and Tioga County cafeterias and enabled them to leverage their purchasing power to allow for increased fresh fruits and vegetables to be purchased at a lower cost.

**Ohio**

**Organizing Life-Changing Community Gardens in Underserved Local Communities**

**Producing Results**

The Steps Program in Cleveland, OH partnered with the Ohio State University Extension to create 31 new community gardens with 1,085 new gardeners. Hundreds of families have increased access to fresh fruits and vegetables, thousands of pounds of fresh produce have been donated to food pantries, and a new farmers' market was created.

**Public Health Problem**

Fresh fruit and vegetable consumption and physical inactivity rates are important public health issues in Cleveland. In 2005, approximately 70% of adults in Cleveland did not eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day, and over 50% did not meet the recommended levels of physical activity.

**Taking Action**

The Steps Program in Cleveland, OH partnered with the Community Gardening Program (CGP) at The Ohio State University Extension to provide outreach and training to residents interested in starting community gardens. Since 2005, the CGP has been working in Steps intervention neighborhoods to increase the reach and spread of community gardens in order to provide access to fresh produce and to increase physical activity. CGP offers "Starting a Community Garden" workshops in each Steps intervention neighborhood, meets with block and street clubs, and partners with social service agencies to provide tools and resources to start new community gardens in Cleveland. Gardens empower community residents to make further impacts on health challenges facing their communities. CGP's creation of new community gardens also leads to sustainable changes in the built environment.

**Implications and Impact**

The program partnership surpassed its goal of starting eight new gardens in 2006 by forming 13 new gardens, which engaged 624 new gardeners. Another 18 new gardens are being cultivated this year in additional neighborhoods. Thousands of pounds of fresh produce have been donated to food pantries, and one new farmers' market, Veggie Fresh Spot, was created in Cleveland's Central neighborhood. At the Veggie Fresh Spot, youth sell produce they grow at a local Steps community garden through an employment program in partnership with St. Vincent's Charity Hospital. This new program employs young men from the neighborhood and is sustained through sales at the market, as well as grants and donations from the Greater Cleveland community. An additional seven gardens have also received grants totaling over \$30,000 from local foundations and businesses to build infrastructure and create programming for their gardens. Furthermore, two Steps community gardens have also been rezoned by Cleveland City Council as Urban Gardens, protecting them from immediate development. The words of Monroe Cuff, community gardener, speak to the power of community gardens: "This garden changed my life."

Texas

**Austin, TX: Saving Health Care Dollars and Reducing Employee Absences through a Worksite Wellness Program**

**Producing Results**

The Steps Program in Austin, TX helped to implement a worksite wellness program for Capital Metro, the Austin transit authority. The program's remarkable success led to decreases in health care costs and employee absences and improvements in participants' health and engagement in healthy behaviors. Total health costs increased only 9.6% from 2004 to 2005, compared with 26.8% from 2003 to 2004; the company predicted that costs would increase only 6% from 2005 to 2006. Employee absenteeism rates decreased more than 44%, from a high of 12.4% in March 2004 to 6.9% in June 2006. Program participants reported significant improvements in physical activity, healthy food consumption, weight loss, blood pressure management, stress levels, and overall general health.

**Public Health Problem**

According to data from the 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), half of all adults in the Steps intervention area do not engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate physical activity, 5 or more days a week. Additionally, 75% of adults reported eating fruits and vegetables less than five or more times a day, 37% said they were overweight, and 17% said they were obese. Obesity results in significant increases in medical expenditures and absenteeism among full-time employees. The costs of obesity (excluding overweight) at a firm with 1,000 employees are estimated to be \$285,000 per year. Approximately 30% of this total results from increased absenteeism (*American Journal of Health Promotion*; 2005; 20:45–51).

**Taking Action**

The Steps Program in Austin, TX is partnering with Capital Metro, the Austin transit authority, to implement a worksite wellness program. The Steps Program works closely with Capital Metro's health and wellness vendor, which provides consultations with dietitians and personal trainers, a 24-hour company fitness center, and personalized health assessments. Through the wellness program, transit operators have unlimited access to Capital Metro's newly developed fitness center and can enroll in a myriad of weight and nutritional management programs. The company-sponsored Healthy Cafeteria pilot program provides discounts and incentives to purchase healthier selections at the lunch café. For example, with a coupon, a whole wheat breakfast taco with turkey bacon, turkey sausage, or egg whites will cost less than a regular taco with regular sausage, bacon, or eggs with yolks. Cash incentives reward employees for joining weight-loss programs, quitting tobacco use, using the on-site gym, and achieving other health-related goals such as lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

**Implications and Impact**

Since launching the program in 2003, Capital Metro has experienced substantial reductions in its health care costs. Total costs increased only 9.6% from 2004 to 2005, compared with 26.8% from 2003 to 2004, and the company predicted that health care costs would increase only 6% from 2005 to 2006. Program participants continue to report significant improvements in physical activity, healthy food consumption, weight loss, blood pressure management, stress levels, and overall general health. Employee absenteeism rates—an indicator of worker job satisfaction and health—also decreased more than 44%, from a high of 12.4% in March 2004 to 6.9% in June 2006.

## Washington State

### Creating a More Walkable Community for Low-Income Residents

#### Public Health Problem

Obesity and physical inactivity are major public health issues in Clark County, Washington. In 2005, 25% of Clark County adults were obese, a 56% increase over the 1996 rate of 16%. Also, in 2005, only 55% of Clark County adults met the recommendations for moderate physical activity. Physical inactivity is a risk factor for obesity, which can lead to heart disease, cancer, diabetes, hypertension, and other diseases and disabilities.

#### Taking Action

The Steps Program in Clark County, WA took action by building political will and raising awareness about the importance of physical activity, the availability of trails and bikeways, and the need for walking and biking trails. The Steps Active Community Environment workgroup revised the Clark County Trails & Bikeway Plan (not updated since 1994) by gathering community input on the needs for trails and bikeways. Steps also worked with community partners to develop, design and distribute *Clark County, WA Walkaround Guide: 10 Great Walks in Our Community*, a portable, user-friendly publication that provides detailed information about 25 different walking routes in the Clark County area along with health information, activity logs, maps, and personal success stories. Organizations that use the guides incorporate them into their programs. Individuals using the guides fill out a user survey, and organizations promote the guides to people who are in greatest need of physical activity. They reach these individuals through worksite wellness programs, primary care visits, health education group visits, and community-organized activities. The development of this guide was coupled with a public media campaign, which provided Clark County residences information about the walking trails available to them in the area and encouraged them to utilize the trails to become more physically active. The kick off for this event coincided with the Lewis and Clark Expedition Centennial event, which celebrated the arrival of Lewis and Clark over 100 years ago to the Vancouver Washington area (where they walked along the Columbia River on the Discovery Walk trail).

#### Implications and Impact

*Clark County, WA Walkaround Guide: 10 Great Walks in Our Community* has been a great success. One of the major health system partners that supports healthy livable communities provided the funding to print 50,000 maps, one for every Clark County household. As of August 1, 2007, over 25,000 have been distributed to individuals in Clark County via 87 organizations representing businesses, non-profits, health systems, community centers, schools, organizations assisting the disabled, athletic clubs, churches, clinics, and the government.

More importantly, the Steps Program in Clark County, WA was able to influence the Clark County Trails & Bikeway Plan to include expansion of trails and bikeways over the next 20 years. This provides long-term sustainability for the importance of maintaining and continuing trails and bikeways for all residents of Clark County. Trail usage on the riverfront trail has increased 36% since the Walkaround Guide has been in use by residents, and users of the Walkaround Guide have indicated they have walked the trails 3-5 times since receiving the Guide. As one resident said, "I wasn't really physically active until I received the Walkaround guide. It inspired me to try out new places all over the county. Thanks for supplying this great guide. I feel great about my accomplishments. You have made me proud to be a citizen of this community".