

The Steps Program in Rochester, Minnesota

Funding Period: 2004–2009

CDC's Steps Program funds states, cities, and tribal groups to implement community-based chronic disease prevention programs to reduce the burden of obesity, diabetes, and asthma by addressing three related risk factors: physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and tobacco use. Steps-funded programs are showing what can be done locally in schools, work sites, communities, and health care settings to promote healthier lifestyles and help people make long-lasting and sustainable changes that can reduce their risk for chronic diseases.

Background

Rochester, a city of 85,806 people, is located in southeastern Minnesota's Olmsted County. Rochester has a significant international population that includes large numbers of Somali, Cambodian, Hispanic or Latino, Laotian, Bosnian, Vietnamese, and Hmong residents. Fifty-two languages are spoken in the homes of Rochester's nearly 18,000 school students. The median income of families in the metropolitan area is \$57,815, and less than 5% of the population lives below the federal poverty level (2006 American Community Survey).

Spotlight on Success

Focusing on Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition program participants, the Steps Program in Rochester–Olmsted County implemented the *Fit WIC* program to help low-income parents and children become more active. Steps produced a tool kit with information about physical activity and skill-building activities to improve preschoolers' physical development and learning. A DVD describing local recreational and play resources and tips for healthy eating was included. More than 230 children participated during the first 6 months of *FIT WIC*, increasing their play activities and reducing their television viewing time by half. In addition, 78% of the children either improved or maintained their weight. Read Rochester's success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/rochester.pdf.

Community Partnerships

The Steps to a Healthier Rochester Community Partnerships consortium is a network of local partners working together to design strategies, plan programs, and communicate messages to help local residents adopt healthier lifestyles. The consortium holds quarterly meetings to plan the implementation of chronic disease prevention efforts that meet the Steps objectives. Community partners include the Rochester Area Family YMCA, the Olmsted Medical Center, the Mayo Clinic, the Eliminating Health Disparities Initiative, Rochester's public and private schools, the *RNeighbors* program, Rochester's Downtown Farmer's Market, the Southeast Minnesota Tobacco Initiative, IBM, the *Cardiovision 2020* program, the Rochester Senior Center, the Midwest Dairy Council, Olmsted County Public Health Services, the Southeast Minnesota Asthma Coalition, and the local chapter of the American Heart Association.

Contact

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