

The Steps Program in Pinellas County, Florida

Funding Period: 2003–2008

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

The Steps Program in Florida's Pinellas County is helping build healthier communities in four contiguous cities in southern Pinellas County—St. Petersburg, Gulfport, Kenneth City, and Pinellas Park—by working with schools, health care providers, employers, and community and faith-based leaders. Programmatic efforts are focused on populations most burdened by chronic diseases, including racial and ethnic minority groups, people living below the federal poverty level, the uninsured and underinsured, disabled persons, and the elderly, with special emphasis on racial and ethnic minority and school populations. In 2005, more than 11% of Pinellas County residents lived below the federal poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau estimate).

Spotlight on Success

The Pinellas County Steps Program works with the area's 58 schools to offer a salad program with convenient prepackaged fruit and vegetable salads in school cafeterias. The program trains school administrators about the benefits of fruit and vegetable consumption and teaches food service staff how to prepare nutritious salads. Almost all (84%) of the schools participate in the salad program, and 90% of the students and staff members participate in the farmer's markets. As a result of the salad program, fruit and vegetable consumption has gone up—more than 3,750 elementary school students and staff members increased their intake of fruits and vegetables during the third year of the program. Read this success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/pinellas.pdf.

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships are important components of the Steps Program in Pinellas County. These partnerships consist of both traditional and nontraditional partners, including church groups, environmental health officials, Head Start programs, and several community-based coalitions. These diverse organizations guide the design and implementation of interventions in the Steps communities.

Contact

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