

The Steps Program in Fayette County, Pennsylvania

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

Fayette County is located in Pennsylvania's Appalachian region, and its southern communities border West Virginia. The City of Pittsburgh is about 60 miles north of the county seat, Uniontown. Fayette County's population of 148,644 is more than 95% white and is highly stable; more than 90% reported in the 2000 census that they had lived in Fayette County during the 5 years prior to the census. Nearly 18% of residents lived below the federal poverty level in 2005, and the median household income was \$31,153.

Spotlight on Success

The Fayette County Steps Program partnered with Highmark BlueCross BlueShield to bring KidShape to the county. KidShape is an evidence-based weight management program that focuses on increasing awareness about good nutrition and healthy eating among overweight children aged 6–14, those who are at risk of becoming overweight, and their family members. The Fayette County Steps Program coordinates and manages the program, while Highmark BlueCross BlueShield pays all program costs, including those for materials and staff salaries (project coordinator, dietitian, and physical activity/mental health specialists). Families participating in at least 7 of the 9 sessions have their nominal registration fee returned. Participating families report eating more fruits and vegetables and spending more time being physically active, according to program evaluation data. Fayette County School districts, which regularly assess students' body weight, can now connect overweight children and their families with KidShape for help in reaching and maintaining a healthy weight. Read this success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/fayette.pdf.

Community Partnerships

The Fayette Community Health Improvement Partnership serves as the community consortium for the Fayette County Steps Program. The members, including the chairperson, are all volunteers. The membership represents a broad cross-section of the community. It includes health care providers and representatives from the public school systems, institutions of higher education, business and industry, nonprofit organizations, legislative staffs, health care insurance providers, and the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Additional sectors are also represented on each of four task forces created to address community health priorities.

Contact

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