



# Mesa County's Steps Program

Promoting healthy living

## What is the public health problem?

High rates of obesity and diabetes in Mesa County cause serious health problems among residents and cost the state millions of dollars annually in medical expenditures, lost work, and premature deaths. Poor nutrition and physical inactivity are significant factors in the development of chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes. According to 2006\* Steps Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data,

- More than 57% of adults in Mesa County are overweight or obese.
- Almost 7% of county residents have diabetes.

## How Steps is responding

Mesa County's Steps Program created LiveWell, a free, year-round health promotion program based on community recommendations for ways to improve residents' health through workplaces, health care providers, and private-sector companies.

- The program kicked off with a 13-week health challenge, which will be repeated annually. LiveWell resources and activities include nutrition and exercise classes, a smoking quit line, and an "activity wheel"—an online tool that estimates the number of calories a person uses when walking or running.

- Participants receive incentives and motivational prizes such as discount cards for healthy entrees at restaurants, reduced-fee gym memberships, newsletters, and recipes.

## What is the impact?

- Through LiveWell, the Steps Program has served approximately 6,700 adults and young people.
- Health care providers at 30 sites refer patients to LiveWell; 11 work-site wellness programs used the LiveWell @ Work Challenge, and many community residents formed walking groups to support each other in making health behavior changes.
- Participants lost an average of two pounds during the challenge.
- Federal funds have leveraged in-kind donations worth more than \$280,000 from about 80 sponsoring organizations.

## Why this program is working

According to *The Guide to Community Preventive Services*,<sup>†</sup> interventions that focus on changing physical activity behavior by building supportive social networks are effective in increasing physical activity, which can help control weight. Recent studies have demonstrated that weight loss and regular physical activity can delay the onset of diabetes among people at high risk of developing the disease.<sup>‡</sup>

\* Most recent data available

† <http://www.thecommunityguide.org>

‡ [http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe\\_whoisatrisk.html](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/dci/Diseases/obe/obe_whoisatrisk.html)