

The Steps Program in Tioga 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

Located in north-central Pennsylvania, Tioga County encompasses small towns, picturesque farms, and rugged forests. This northern Appalachian area has a population of 42,000 people within 1,145 square miles. The median household income is \$35,714; 14% of county residents live below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates). Many of the residents are uninsured and do not routinely seek preventive services, which is reflected in the high rates of obesity, diabetes, asthma, and tobacco use. Only one-third of Tioga County residents are at a healthy weight, and the incidence of overweight and obesity continues to rise.

Spotlight on Success

The Steps Program in Tioga County implemented Shape Up Tioga County, a flexible 10-week program that encourages people to be more active by asking them to set their own goals based on how active they are compared with how active they would like to be. Throughout the 10 weeks, the program offers community education sessions and group outdoor activity opportunities. Five hundred residents participated in Shape Up and gained knowledge about healthy eating and physical activity. More than half of participants were physically active for at least 30 minutes, five times a week, during the program.

Community Partnerships

Since 1993, a local coalition called the Tioga County Partnership for Community Health has offered a vision for healthy communities, a forum for collaboration of committed partners, grant resources for program implementation, and support for a range of programs designed to address the identified health and human service needs of all Tioga County citizens. This well-established local collaborative also serves as the Steps Community Consortium. Partnership members represent 15 work groups, each of which addresses a specific health or quality-of-life issue, including the Steps focus areas of obesity, diabetes, and asthma and their related risk factors.

Contact

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