

The Steps Program in DeKalb County, Georgia

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

The Steps Program in DeKalb County is building healthier communities through interventions in the southern and southeastern areas of the county, including the cities of Avondale Estates, Lithonia, Pine Lake, and Stone Mountain, by working with schools, health care providers, work sites, and community leaders. Programmatic efforts aim to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent tobacco use and exposure among DeKalb County residents; these efforts are focused on people most burdened by chronic diseases, including racial/ethnic minority groups, people living below the federal poverty level, and the elderly. A priority population is black or African-American adolescents and adults. In the intervention area, 86% of residents are black or African American, 41% of families are headed by single mothers, and 10% of residents live below the federal poverty level.

Spotlight on Success

- Two work-site wellness policies benefitting more than 500 employees were approved by the DeKalb County Board of Health. The first policy allows Board of Health employees to engage in 30 minutes of physical activity during work hours. The second policy established a work-site wellness committee that meets regularly to discuss health promotion opportunities. As a result of these policies, the board established a Healthy Business Council that aims to bring work-site wellness practitioners together to share resources and best practices and to learn from content experts in the field of work-site wellness.
- DeKalb Steps was successful in helping the City of Decatur School System adopt CDC's 100% Tobacco-Free Schools policy. DeKalb Steps also developed several program curricula, plans, and reports, including the Belvedere Line Neighborhood Active Living Plan, the Community Food Security Assessment Report, Safe Routes to Schools Action Plan, DeKalb County Health Disparities Report, Reaching Our Community Report, and Live Healthy in Faith curriculum.

Community Partnerships

The Live Healthy DeKalb coalition, whose vision is "healthy people living in healthy communities," is integral to the success of the DeKalb County Steps Program. This dynamic partnership includes several neighborhood associations, family and community service organizations, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce and other county government agencies, the DeKalb County Cooperative Extension Service, the DeKalb County School System, Emory University, Georgia Perimeter College, JoAnna Ward Fitness, Kaiser Permanente, L.I.V.E., Oakhurst Medical Centers, Segal Radio, the South DeKalb Business Association, Spiritual Visions for Wellness Ministries, United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta, Women Watch Afrika, World Relief, and the YMCA of Metro Atlanta.

Contact

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