

The Steps Program in St. Paul, Minnesota

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

St. Paul is a city with a diverse population of approximately 287,000 people, including a large number of refugees, especially Hmong and Somali. Four neighborhoods where residents are at greatest risk for chronic diseases were identified as the focus of Steps community initiatives—the Dayton Bluff, Payne–Phalen, Thomas–Dale, and Summit–University neighborhoods. In these areas, population ranges from 17,000 to 31,000 people, and the proportion of those who do not speak English at home ranges from 18% to 50%. Many people in these neighborhoods live below the federal poverty level, with proportions ranging from 19% to 31% of residents. Approximately 73% of children enrolled in St. Paul Public Schools (SPPS) are members of racial or ethnic minority groups. Almost 11% of SPPS children have asthma, and the smoking rate among area students is another major health concern.

Spotlight on Success

Get Fit Twin Cities, a physical activity program supported by St. Paul's Steps Program, successfully overcame barriers to people's participation in physical activity during the Minnesota winter of 2007; 226 work sites and 138 community teams (with 1,556 and 563 registrants, respectively) participated in St. Paul. During January and February, participants reported a mean of 29 minutes of physical activity per day. In addition, the SPPS district actively promoted work-site wellness initiatives. Teachers and other staff members in 23 schools "walked to Italy" as part of the third annual walking tour; 79 school employee teams with a combined membership of 497 people participated in Get Fit Twin Cities. Current wellness initiatives include programs on balance and nutrition, a holiday weight control challenge, another walking tour, and participation in Get Fit Twin Cities 2008.

Community Partnerships

St. Paul's community partnerships include local representatives from a wide variety of organizations such as libraries, the YMCA, the Cooperative Extension Service, Ramsey County Board of Commissioners, clinics, health plans, hospitals, Parks and Recreation departments, the University of Minnesota, national health associations (e.g., American Heart Association, American Cancer Society), and ethnic organizations.

Contact

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