

The Steps Program in Salinas, California

Funding Period: 2003–2008

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 is helping build healthier communities in the city of Salinas—located in Monterey County—by working with schools, health care providers, work sites, and community leaders. Programmatic efforts are focused on people most burdened by chronic diseases, including racial and ethnic minority groups, with a special emphasis on Hispanics or Latinos, low-income populations, farm workers, school-age children, and groups at high risk for diabetes, asthma, and obesity. In 2005, just over 14% of residents in Monterey County lived below the federal poverty level. Salinas has been federally designated as both a Health Professional Shortage Area and a Medically Underserved Area, further supporting the need for health interventions in this area.

Spotlight on Success

- The Steps Program in Salinas is working with seven local Federally Qualified Health Centers and community-based health care providers to implement the Patient Electronic Care System, which is designed to improve care and disease self-management skills for patients with diabetes. Participating clinics have shown significant progress in helping patients manage their diabetes. From September 2003 to April 2006, the percentage of patients who had controlled blood pressure increased from 32% to 40%, and increases were also recorded for those who had dilated eye exams (from 24% to 48%) and foot exams (from 25% to 32%). Read this success story in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/salinas.pdf.
- With assistance from the Salinas Steps program, 18 faith-based groups and 3 programs for seniors have begun walking groups, improved food options, and developed health screenings or health promotion messages. Thirty health promoters were trained to give neighborhood presentations, and 22 local restaurants offer healthier meal options and health information.

Community Partnerships

With approximately 200 partners contributing to the overall effort, community partnerships are integral to the success of the Steps Program in Salinas. The Council for a Healthier Salinas is made up of 130 of these partners, including nonprofit organizations, government agencies, businesses, faith-based groups, health providers, schools, and media outlets. The executive committee—which includes local leaders such as the mayor, the police chief, a school board trustee, and a county supervisor—has identified the following four key policy focus areas: built environment modifications, locally grown food access, school wellness, and work-site wellness.

Contact

Steps to a Healthier Salinas
Monterey County Health Department
Telephone: 831-755-4541
www.stepstohealthiersalinas.org