

The Steps Program in Yuma County, Arizona

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

Yuma County covers a large area (5,522 square miles) and has about 175,000 residents in 14 distinct communities. However, the size of the population fluctuates with the season. Because agriculture is a major industry, there is a large influx of migrant farm workers during the winter growing season, beginning in October. At the same time, many retirees arrive in the area during this season to enjoy the temperate winter climate. There are two military bases in the county, the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station and the U.S. Army Yuma Proving Ground. More than half (56%) of the county's residents are Hispanic or Latino, living mostly in the southern part of the county. Yuma County is also home to the Cocopah and Quechan Tribes. The annual median income in the county is \$35,739, and 19% of residents live below the federal poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005 estimates). Many of the county's census tracts are designated as Medically Underserved Areas.

Spotlight on Success

- The Yuma County Steps Program successfully piloted the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care Centers (NAP SACC) program throughout the county. Over a 3-year period since its inception in 2005, this program has been implemented in 32 child care centers and 15 home care provider settings in 5 communities, reaching more than 2,200 children and 345 staff members. The most common nutrition changes at centers were a reduction in sugary drinks and an increase in whole-grain foods. Read about this successful initiative in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/yuma.pdf.
- The Pasos Adelante nutrition and walking club program, initiated by the Border Health Strategic Initiative, continues to be a highlight of the Steps program. It is a 12-week program implemented by *promotoras* (Spanish-speaking community health workers), and more than 100 participants are recruited annually. Evaluation of the 2006 program showed significant improvements in participants' knowledge about nutrition and physical activity recommendations and the benefits of physical activity. Participants reported decreases in the consumption of soda and other sugary drinks, increases in the use of healthier cooking oils (olive and canola), and a significant increase in time spent walking.

Community Partnerships

Partnerships for the Yuma County Steps Program include the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension, Campesinos Sin Fronteras, the Yuma County Public Health Services District, and the Regional Center for Border Health, Inc. Together, these agencies plan and implement strategies and interventions that lead to many successful health promotion programs.

Contact

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