

The Steps Program in Seattle–King County, Washington

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

In Washington State, the Steps Program in Seattle–King County works to build healthier communities in six contiguous cities in southwestern King County, including the southern portion of Seattle. Programmatic efforts in schools, health care settings, work sites, and communities are focused on people most burdened by chronic diseases, including racial and ethnic minority groups and people living below the federal poverty level. The Vietnamese and Spanish-speaking communities are a special focus. The racially and ethnically diverse intervention area includes 352,836 people, with many residents more likely than those in other parts of the county to live below the federal poverty level, to face language barriers, and to experience adverse health conditions.

Spotlight on Success

The Steps Program in Seattle partners with a local medical center to provide case management services to emergency room patients with asthma or diabetes who do not already have a primary care provider. The Steps Nurse Case Management program receives about 40 referrals per month from the medical center's emergency room, and nearly half (48%) of these patients are connected with a primary care provider. Patients with diabetes who received case management services showed significant improvement in their blood sugar levels. Additionally, emergency room use declined among patients who received case management services and were connected with a primary care provider.

Community Partnerships

The community partnerships are integral to the success of the Seattle–King County Steps Program. The consortium is open to all organizations, agencies, and individuals interested in the Steps initiative. It currently has more than 75 members, including community-based organizations, health care providers, hospitals, health insurance plans, clinics, universities, faith-based groups, government agencies, and school districts. These diverse organizations guide the design and implementation of interventions used in the Steps Program.

Contact

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