

The Steps Program in Alabama's Southeast Region

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 Southeast Alabama Steps Program's intervention area includes Barbour and Pike counties, which have a combined population of about 56,640. The median household income in the area averages about \$28,558, and from 22% to almost 29% of area residents live below the federal poverty level (2005 U.S. Census Bureau estimates). In these counties, the Steps Program focuses its efforts on racial and ethnic minority populations, rural residents, school-age children, and other groups at high risk for diabetes, asthma, and obesity.

Spotlight on Success

- As a result of the "Asthma 101" training supported by the Southeast Alabama's Steps Program, students and staff members greatly increased their competence in managing asthma symptoms that occur during the school day. The percentage of students who could identify symptoms of an asthma attack increased by about 13%. The percentage of students who knew what to do when they begin coughing or sneezing increased by about 24%, and the percentage of students who could tell someone when they needed to go to the hospital increased by nearly 40%. Southeast Alabama's Steps Program also assisted local physicians in developing asthma action plans and distributing them to other local physicians. More than 1,500 individual asthma action plans were prepared and shared with the appropriate school staff members and caregivers. These action plans summarize asthma treatment protocols in the event that children need medical care. Read about these successes and others in *The Steps Program in Action*, available at www.cdc.gov/steps/success_stories/pdf/se_alabama.pdf.
- The Southeast Alabama Steps Program trained 24 teachers, community leaders, and the Alabama Department of Public Health's Tobacco Area Coordinators in the *LifeSkills* program (an evidence-based substance abuse prevention program). More than 500 students are participating in this program, which is supported in schools by the Southeast Alabama Steps Program.

Community Partnerships

Community partnerships were established based on participants' willingness to promote healthy lifestyles in their communities. Members include representatives from faith-based organizations and businesses, the Medical Center Barbour, Charles Henderson Child Health Center, Boyd Brothers, and Troy State University; elected officials; private physicians; and school staff members.

Contact

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