

SUSAN P. BYRNES HEALTH EDUCATION CENTER
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Susan P. Byrnes, R.N.'S Testimony

Thursday, May 14, 2009
House Sub-Committee for Healthy Families/Communities

SUSAN P. BYRNES HEALTH EDUCATON CENTER:

Mission: To educate and inspire people of all ages to make healthy choices

Vision: To be the leading resource of innovative, high quality, effective health education.

In 1988, I quit my job as an Emergency Department R.N. Professionally and personally I had witnessed physical and emotional suffering of patients and their families due to unhealthy lifestyle choices. I made a new life goal: keeping people WELL.

In 1989, with support from hundreds of dedicated business professionals, healthcare providers, educators, parents and organizations that sustain our communities every day, the Central PA Health Education Center was incorporated as 501(3)c.

In 1995, after six years of planning and preparation, the bright red doors of the newly dedicated and renamed, Susan P. Byrnes Health Education Center, were opened to the children and citizens of Central PA and Northern MD.

What began as two teaching theaters in a refurbished, downtown, historic car dealership site has blossomed into today's 20,000 sq. ft home with five teaching theaters, over 1.5 million dollars of interactive exhibits and over fifty specialized educational offerings that include regional outreach programs to seven counties. Children throughout the U. S. and over 168 countries around the world now utilize our health educational tools through our e-learning programs. The business community provides customized, educational programs to employees and their families through our corporate wellness works division.

All 50 Programs of the Byrnes Health Education Center meet state and national health education guidelines. Our Nutrition and Fitness programs are offered as an integrated series that empower students to adopt healthier lifestyles:

Pre-K/K: Inside Story
Grade 2: Fueling My Special Body
Grade 3: Let's Get Physical
Grade 4: Just Fueling Around
Grade 5: Healthy Hearts
Grade 6: Fat: What's Up With That
Grade 8: Extreme Makeover

Our enthusiastic educators teach using our dramatic, larger than life, interactive exhibits. They incorporate the WOW and FUN factors into every program. We believe that students learn by seeing, hearing and doing and they are very hands-on with our health education lessons. (demonstration of fat vest with Todd Platts)

When Dr. Oz participated in our heart healthy program with special after school scholars in Oct. '07, he asked: "Why doesn't every community have a health education center?"

There are 34 health education centers in 22 states that reach 10,000 schools and 3.7 million students every year!

We are organized as the National Association of Health Education Centers.

www.nahec.com

Our collective VISION as a national organization is that empowered children and adults building healthier communities result in decreased healthcare costs.

In 2009, the U. S. spent 2.9 trillion dollars on treatment of disease.

IT IS TIME TO SPEND BILLIONS ON HEALTH EDUCATION AND PREVENTION.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.