



VERMONT

The **Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant** provides funding for health problems in Vermont that range from community water fluoridation to chronic health conditions. PHHS Block Grant dollars fund five different Vermont health programs.

PHHS Block Grant funds allow Vermont to use dollars **where** we need them, **when** we need them to protect the public's health. The Vermont Department of Health uses Block Grant funds to address priority health issues for which there are no other available resources. Program areas funded include nutrition, oral health, sexual assault prevention, and minority health. The funds also allow Vermont to focus on a coordinated statewide effort to improve health and healthcare in Vermont. Programs that serve our state's unique health needs through the PHHS Block Grant include the following:



The Vermont Blueprint for Health: Refocusing Healthcare from Reactive to Proactive

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to support the Vermont Blueprint for Health, a new collaborative approach to improving health and healthcare for people living with life-long illnesses. It involves implementing major changes in the healthcare system based around the needs of patients through developing information systems, effective patient self-management tools and community supports. Blueprint partners include representatives from healthcare; businesses; consumers; health plans; community and non-profit groups; and government. Pilot efforts aided by Block Grant funding were successful to the extent that the Vermont General Assembly saw fit to provide general fund support to the Blueprint ensuring that the Blueprint will have sustainable financial support. Without Block Grant start-up involvement, this would have been impossible.



Sexual Assault Prevention: The Rape Aggression Defense Training Program (RAD) and Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program (SANE)

The RAD program is safety awareness, education, and self-defense training designed to prevent rape and other forms of interpersonal aggression and violence against women. In 2005, 50 women completed the training as did 75 families through the state's RADKids program. During 2005, SANE provided training to medical professionals, law enforcement personnel, social workers and victim advocates across the state. Educational seminars were also provided to high school and college students in Vermont. This component of the SANE Program is extremely valuable in teaching children and adults how to avoid high-risk situations as well as reporting the incident of sexual assault and seeking appropriate care.



Community Water Fluoridation—Oral Health

PHHS Block Grant funds are used to provide financial and technical assistance to all communities with fluoridated water systems. Services include monitoring daily testing data and weekly fluoride sampling results. In 2005 and 2006, the state's Office of Oral Health was able to collaborate with community-based organizations and individual oral health professionals to provide extensive technical assistance to communities whose municipal fluoridation systems were up for review by select boards, city councils, and public referendum. Through panels, town meetings, and public hearings, sound, science-based information was necessary to ensure that population-based fluoridation continues to be a central tool in protecting the health of Vermonters.

Vermont Department of Health

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Taking Charge—Vermont's Blueprint for Health Self Management Program

Issue:

Do you know someone who is overweight, has diabetes, heart disease, lung disease, or arthritis? We all do, and some of these folks are very dear to us. Those conditions as well as depression, high blood pressure, and emphysema are all categorized as chronic conditions.

- 51% of Vermonters over 18 years of age are living with ongoing chronic conditions.
- 88% of Vermonters over age 65 have at least two chronic conditions.

Studies show that, on average, people with chronic conditions receive the regular care they need only half of the time and not enough take the personal action needed to achieve the best outcomes. Treating these illnesses consumes more than three quarters of the state's healthcare budget, and these costs are projected to skyrocket as the age of baby boomers continues to rise.

Intervention:

Vermont decided that it had to create fundamental changes in the state's health system at every level to better manage chronic conditions. As a result, Vermont implemented the *Blueprint for Health* approach, which encompasses everything from patient self-management to provider practice to health system design. The Preventive Health and Health Services (PHHS) Block Grant funded staff support to implement the Healthier Living Workshop, developed by Stanford University and adopted by Vermont's Blueprint for Health.



Two Vermont communities, Bennington and St. Johnsbury, were chosen to pilot the Healthier Living Workshop in 2005. After being trained in a 4-day, intensive program by Stanford-certified master trainers, lay leaders with chronic conditions facilitated the workshops. Some of the topics covered in the free 6-week, 2 ½-hour Healthy Living Workshops include:

- Techniques to deal with problems such as frustration, fatigue, pain, and isolation.
- Breathing techniques and guided imagery to reduce stress.
- Exercises for improving and maintaining strength, flexibility, and endurance.
- Appropriate use of medications.
- How to better communicate with family, friends, and health professionals.
- Healthy eating habits.
- How to evaluate new health treatments.

Impact:

Vermont is on its way to making the Blueprint for Health a statewide initiative. Vermont has a statewide coordinator for the Healthier Living Workshop program and nine regional coordinators throughout the state. Three master trainers were trained at Stanford initially, and four more master trainers completed the Stanford program in April 2006. Sixty workshop leaders have been trained by the master trainers. By the end of the 2006, we anticipate that—

- 100 leaders will be trained to lead workshops,
- 20, 6-week workshops will have been completed, and
- 200 participants will attend 4 or more sessions of the 6-week workshops.

The program is new, so overall program effectiveness was not yet been evaluated. However, participants report greater confidence in managing their symptoms, increased physical activity and energy, weight loss, better breathing, and less stress. Healthier Living Workshop plans to expand statewide in the next year.

The Vermont Department of Health is moving forward with the Blueprint for Health, and PHHS Block Grant funds helped the state pave the way for a healthier Vermont in the future.

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