

Healthy Communities Program

Pennsylvania

Afterschool with Activate Pittsburgh - Evidence-Based Curriculum and Program to Develop Lifelong Healthy Habits

The goal of the Activate Pittsburgh Team is to dramatically impact the community by providing health and wellness programs and health education, particularly to minority and low-income neighborhoods. One strategy used to achieve this goal is to increase physical activity and improve nutrition. Through *Good Apples*—the world's first full-scale online produce retailers, where people can access the Virtual Farmers Market—high quality fresh fruits and vegetables can be purchased for up to 40% less than supermarket prices. Fruits and vegetables ordered from *Good Apples* have been used to establish markets in five YMCAs located in under-resourced communities, and five worksites are also taking advantage of this resource. On a weekly basis, 5,500 children from diverse backgrounds and over 1,000 low-income teens benefit from the healthy snack program. Activate Pittsburgh has served more than 200,000 pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables and provided nutrition education to thousands of kids and teens. They also offer whole grain crackers and reduced and low-fat milk.

After School with Activate Pittsburgh (ASAP), a physical activity and health literacy program developed for children, is being implemented in 10 sites. ASAP has two main goals: 1) to increase opportunities for physical activity for children by requiring at least 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity; and, 2) to improve health literacy by providing nutrition education designed to help participants learn how to make healthy food selections, understand the food pyramid, and provide fresh fruits and vegetables. Pre- and post- tests in four sites revealed that: 76% of the participating kids increased their muscle strength; 56% increased muscular endurance; 69% increased flexibility; and participants increased their understanding of good nutrition and the importance of physical activity to maintain their health.

Modeled after ASAP, Teen Activate Pittsburgh (TAP) is offered in collaboration with YouthPlaces, an organization that provides a safe, stimulating environment for 12-18 year-old, at-risk under-served youth in afterschool settings. After piloting the program in two sites, 90% of the teens improved their muscle strength, and 80% improved muscular endurance. Due to the program's success, it is now being offered in four sites. Included as part of the curriculum, dieticians from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center teach teens about the food pyramid, healthy meal planning, and healthy snacking. Interactive cooking components give teens a chance to learn first hand how to prepare new meals themselves.

Pennsylvania

Promoting Science-Based Approaches to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV, and STDs In Pennsylvania: State Organization works with Departments of the Commonwealth to broaden impact.

Public Health Problem

About one-third of girls in the United States get pregnant before age 20. In 2006, 435,427 infants were born to mothers aged 15–19 years, a birth rate of 41.9 live births per 1,000 women in this age group. Although pregnancy and birth rates among girls aged 15–19 years have declined 34% since 1991, birth rates increased for the first time in 2006 (from 40.5 per 1,000 women in this age group in 2005 to 41.9 in 2006). It is too early to tell whether this increase is a trend or a one-time fluctuation in teen birth rates.

- In Pennsylvania, 9.05% of all births are to teens aged 15-19; 40.7 out of every 1,000 15-19 year old girls reported a pregnancy in 2005.
- Pennsylvania costs of teen childbearing cost taxpayers \$389 million in 2004.
- There is no state-wide policy regarding the sex education students receive in public schools.
- The majority of funding for teen pregnancy prevention is abstinence-only-until-marriage, which is funded through federal earmarks.
- The need to provide students with medically accurate, effective sex education.

Program

To provide students with medically accurate, effective sex education, to increase funding dedicated to sex education and the development of guidelines for use in providing effective sex education.

- As part of the cooperative agreement, Promoting Science-based Approaches to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, HIV and STDs, the Pennsylvania Coalition to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (PCPTP) began working to increase the capacity of local coalitions and community-based organizations to apply science-based approaches to teen pregnancy prevention; therefore, increasing the number of teens in Pennsylvania who receive education and services using science-based approaches.
- The “Promoting Science-Based Approaches” project has provided intensive training and technical assistance to five local youth-serving coalitions/organizations.
- PCPTP in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Department of Education is working to increase funding earmarked for implementing science-based approaches to teaching sex education

Implications

PCPTP benefits the state of Pennsylvania by providing intensive and customized training, technical assistance and resources to schools and youth-serving community based organizations, and the Department of Health on:

- Needs assessment

Safe Motherhood

Pennsylvania (continued)

- Developing program goals and desired outcomes
- Identifying best practices to address priority risk and protective factors among target youth
- Selecting a program that best fits the community and its youth
- Implementation planning
- Program evaluation
- Sustainability, and
- Continuous quality improvement.

Successful Impact

Five local partners are in the process of creating or improving teen pregnancy prevention programs; two of which have implemented teen pregnancy prevention programs that are science-based.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health has issued new guidelines to funded providers of teen pregnancy prevention to increase/strengthen the use of science-based approaches.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Education is issuing a Request for Proposal to school districts to implement science-based programs.