

Program Highlights

North Dakota

North Dakota's Roughrider Health Promotion Conference Leads to School-Level Success

Each year the North Dakota Departments of Health, Public Instruction, and Human Services sponsor the Roughrider Health Promotion Conference. Established in 1986, the conference provides professional development to schools on healthy school environments, health, and wellness as well as policy and environmental supports. The 2006 conference was held in June and schools attended in teams comprised of educators, principals, counselors, nurses, school board members and parents. A total of 326 participants representing 65 school teams attended. The conference requires teams to complete the School Health Index, which provides the framework for developing a data-driven action plan that addresses the eight components of coordinated school health.

In the year since the conference, the participating schools have implemented the activities outlined in their implementation plan reaching about 13,500 students and more than 2,600 staff and 43,000 community members. Nearly three quarters of the teams developed action plans with activities centered on policy and/or environmental supports. Examples include the following:

- Almost 30 percent of the teams developed activities for nutrition services with 16 schools implementing activities relating to healthier vending machine and cafeteria offerings; adoption of healthier snack guidelines and snack programs; and change in lunch schedules (additional periods and recess before lunch). These policy activities directly impacted 5,361 students, 656 teachers and 29,315 community members.
- Twenty-nine percent of the teams implemented activities directed towards creating a healthy school environment. More than 1,600 students, staff and community members were impacted with the adoption of a comprehensive tobacco-free policy that includes extra curricular activities. Three teams acquired automated external defibrillators (AEDs) for placement in multiple buildings and gymnasiums. Placement of these AEDs have the potential of saving the lives of almost 1,300 students, 745 staff and over 4,000 local community members.