

Maine

Measuring the Impact of School Health Coordinators

Problem Overview

For high school students in Maine, the 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey results indicated that

- 13% were obese.
- 80% ate fruits and vegetables less than five times per day.
- 57% did not meet recommended levels of physical activity.
- 21% currently used cigarettes, or cigars, or used smokeless tobacco.

Program/Activity Description

Maine's Coordinated School Health initiative, supported in part by CDC's Division of Adolescent and School Health, is a collaboration between the Maine Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. Healthy Maine Partnerships, a statewide network of school and community partnerships, funded 54 full- or part-time school health coordinators (SHCs) across the state. SHCs were tasked with implementing a coordinated approach to school health that organizes health-related programs, policies, and services. To measure the impact of SHCs, researchers from the Maine-Harvard Prevention Research Center evaluated possible differences in policy and behavior changes between local education agencies (LEAs) with and without funded SHCs.

Program/Activity Outcomes

During the first 5 years of the Healthy Maine Partnerships initiative (2001–2006), among districts with SHCs:

- 75% increased time for regular physical activity for K–8 students and offered walking and fitness programs for school staff and community members.
- 100% implemented policy changes improving more than one aspect of school nutrition.
- 100% passed a tobacco-free school campus policy that included banning tobacco use on school grounds and at school functions away from school property.

In 2006, LEAs *with* SHCs were more likely than LEAs *without* SHCs to offer more intramural physical activity opportunities, improved nutritional options, and tobacco cessation programs. These successes in establishing new and stronger health-related policies and improving student health behaviors underscore the added value that SHCs provide for districts implementing coordinated school health and for the students they serve.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Adolescent and School Health
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