

Communities Putting Prevention to Work

TRI-COUNTY REGION (ADAMS, ARAPAHOE AND DOUGLAS COUNTIES), COLORADO

Obesity Prevention

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy living easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through funding awarded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.

“THE IMPACT OF THE CPPW GRANT IN OUR SCHOOLS HAS GONE BEYOND OUR EXPECTATIONS ... THE CHANGES AND INITIATIVES WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE THROUGH THE CPPW GRANT ARE PROVIDING ALL OF OUR STUDENTS MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTH AND WELLNESS.”

— Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, PhD,
Executive Director, Learning Support
Services, Douglas County School
District

Community Overview

Colorado's Tri-County Health Department (TCHD), which serves residents in Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas counties, is tackling obesity throughout the community of 1,299,071 people. In recent years, the proportion of obese adults in the region has risen to 23.8% in Adams County, 19.8% in Arapahoe County, and 17% in Douglas County. Additionally, the prevalence of obese children is 18.6% in Adams County, 11.7% in Arapahoe County, and 10.4% in Douglas County.



The prevalence of obesity varies among racial and ethnic groups in Colorado. While 20% of white adults in the state are obese, the obesity rates for Hispanic adults and black adults in Colorado are 26.5% and 26.2%, respectively. Further, Hispanic children aged 2-14 in Colorado are more likely than their white peers to be overweight. In addition to obesity-prevention efforts aimed at the region's entire population, certain initiatives target high-risk groups.

Community Successes

If healthy options are not available, then healthy living is not possible. With the support of the CPPW initiative, the Tri-County region has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, the Tri-County region:

- Assembled a team of city planners with backgrounds in urban design, landscape architecture, policy development, and community outreach. The team is providing technical assistance to 29 local governments to promote healthy community design through numerous infrastructure improvements including bike lanes, trail connections, and lighted walking paths.
- Obtained consensus from the superintendents of all 15 school districts, representing 232,750 students, to pursue three obesity-prevention strategies designed to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. To date, five school districts have approved new wellness policies, and seven school districts have established wellness committees.





“IT’S GOOD THAT THEY ARE
PUTTING IN MORE TRAILS...
NOT JUST FOR ME, FOR
EVERYONE!”

— Victor, Bennett resident

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Created the Built Environment and Health Handbook, which provides city planners and elected officials with best practices for changing the built environment to support healthy eating and active living. This handbook was distributed to the mayors and planners of all 29 jurisdictions in the Tri-County region and community leaders at a regional environmental health meeting and a national American Planning Association webinar. It also was made available to graduate students focused on city planning.
- Established the Flat 14ers program, which is named after the more than 50 peaks in Colorado with altitudes of 14,000 feet or higher. The program encourages individuals, schools, and work sites to increase physical activity by using a combination of a treadmill or pedometer and an online log to climb virtual mountain peaks (14ers). This program has already benefitted an estimated 232,000 individuals, and its reach continues to grow.



(The list above is a sample of all activities completed by the community.)

Educational Videos Encourage Healthy Meals and Physical Activity

The Tri-County region is increasing awareness of the role of nutrition and physical activity in a healthy lifestyle. The TCHD partnered with Children’s Hospital Colorado to produce 10 educational videos that teach children and families how to eat healthy meals and be physically active. These 30-second videos were produced in both English and Spanish. They are available on a number of websites and air across the region and state on television stations, many of which target Hispanic viewers. Additionally, these videos are featured in elementary school classrooms and in Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) clinics that serve more than 31,000 racially and ethnically diverse families. Since these videos were produced, they have garnered approximately 1.55 million impressions.

Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors, who have the combined resources and capacity to make healthy living easier. Members of the Tri-County region’s leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- City of Glendale, Office of the Mayor
- Commerce City, Office of the Mayor
- Town of Bennett, Office of the Mayor
- Aurora Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department
- Colorado Department of Agriculture
- Colorado Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
- Douglas County School District
- LiveWell Colorado
- Mapleton Public Schools
- Sheridan School District
- Tri-County Health Department

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.tchd.org.