

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



VANDERBURGH COUNTY, INDIANA
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 COMMUNITY IS REALIZING THAT IT HAS TO BE MORE PEDESTRIAN- AND BIKE-FRIENDLY ... WE WANT TO CREATE CHANGE AND MAKE EVANSVILLE A HEALTHIER PLACE TO LIVE.”

— Andrea Hays, Director, *move-ment Initiative*

Community Overview

Vanderburgh County, Indiana, is tackling obesity throughout the community. Child and adult obesity was identified by this community of 179,703 residents as an issue of high importance, but one that was not being addressed adequately. Now, obesity is considered one of Vanderburgh County’s priority health challenges, as 28% of Vanderburgh County adults are obese. Further, nearly 30% of youth aged 10-17 in Indiana are obese or overweight, and less than 20% of county adults eat the recommended daily amount of fruits and vegetables. These factors can contribute to the prevalence of obesity-related diseases. For example, Vanderburgh County adults exceed the national averages for those affected by hypertension and type 2 diabetes.



Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Vanderburgh County:

- Expanded the Healthy, Energetic, Ready, Outstanding, Enthusiastic, Schools (HEROES) initiative, based on CDC’s Coordinated School Health Model, to include six additional K-8 schools. HEROES aims to prevent obesity among children by building a healthy culture and environment in schools throughout the county.
- Launched *Reality Bites*, a new campaign designed for high schools that includes nutritional labeling of all à la carte items and signage to promote healthy lunch options in schools. This campaign is part of the HEROES initiative and will impact approximately 8,000 high school students.





“BREASTFEEDING HAS BEEN EVERYTHING TO ME BECAUSE IT SAVES ME MONEY BY NOT HAVING TO BUY FORMULA.”

— Vanderburgh County mother

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Further developed the *Upgrade* campaign, which conveys the message that small changes in daily routines can lead to substantial improvements in health and well-being.
- Increased promotion of the *move-ment* initiative through a monthly column about community efforts in a local media outlet. The *move-ment* initiative seeks to improve overall community health through supportive physical and social environments.
- Increased the availability of physical activity opportunities by providing safe, secure bicycle parking throughout the community.
- Supported The Women’s Hospital to encourage breastfeeding among its employees. The Women’s Hospital now provides an employee benefit package that includes breastfeeding classes, a dietitian visit, a fitness consult, and access to breast pumps. Approximately 420 employees qualify for this benefit. The Women’s Hospital also expanded outreach efforts, which resulted in a 75% breastfeeding initiation rate among new mothers.



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

Health Care Providers Increase Access to Healthy Foods

Vanderburgh County is collaborating with health care providers to increase clients’ and employees’ access to healthy foods. In January 2011, the county launched a hospital entree project. As part of this initiative, Deaconess Hospital and St. Mary’s Hospital offer a discount on healthy meals called “Upgrade of the Day” entrees, which follow dietary guidelines for caloric value, fat, carbohydrates, and sodium as determined by hospital dietitians. Both hospitals have seen dramatic increases in the sale of these discounted healthy meals. Deaconess Hospital’s sales of healthy meals jumped from 413 in January 2011 to 661 in February 2011, and St. Mary’s from 248 to 699 during the same period. One St. Mary’s employee reportedly has lost 15 pounds by consistently choosing the “Upgrade of the Day” entree.

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 Vanderburgh County’s leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- Office of the Mayor, Evansville, Indiana
- Catholic Diocese of Evansville
- College of Education and Health Science, University of Evansville
- Community Foundation Alliance
- Deaconess Health System
- Evansville Courier & Press
- Evansville Department of Parks and Recreation
- Evansville Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Evansville Regional Business Committee
- Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation
- Habitat for Humanity
- Ivy Tech Community College, Evansville Campus
- Old National Bank
- St. Mary’s Medical Center
- The Chamber of Commerce of Southwest Indiana
- The Women’s Hospital
- Tri-State Business Group on Health
- University of Southern Indiana
- Vanderburgh County Health Department
- Vectren Corporation
- Welborn Baptist Foundation
- YMCA of SW Indiana

Additional Information

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