

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



APPALACHIAN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA 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.

“CPPW APPALACHIAN IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON CREATING HEALTHIER PLACES FOR OUR CHILDREN, BUILDING HEALTHFUL WORKSITES IN OUR COMMUNITY, CREATING A LOCAL FOOD ENVIRONMENT AND ADVANCING THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE TO BENEFIT THE CITIZENS OF OUR REGION.”

***— Jennifer Greene, Director, CPPW
Appalachian District***

Community Overview

The Appalachian District of North Carolina is tackling obesity in its three rural counties: Alleghany, Ashe, and Watauga. Approximately 64% of the 89,515 residents living in these three counties are overweight or obese, and only 24.1% of adults in this region meet the Federal government’s guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption. Contributing to this problem is limited access to fresh, healthy food and lack of physical activity, as the Appalachian District is geographically large and experiences severe weather for much of the year.

The issue of obesity is a challenge statewide. North Carolina was ranked 21st in the nation for adult obesity as well as 14th in the nation for overweight or obese children. Additionally, only 46.4% of the state’s adults get the recommended amount of daily physical activity.

Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, the Appalachian District:

- Supported the Watauga County Farmers’ Market’s acceptance of Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards for participants in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and coupons for seniors and participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). This effort has made it possible for the 21.2% of county residents who live below the Federal poverty level to purchase healthy, local food.
- Increased the availability of healthy produce at a local homeless shelter and at two local elementary schools by creating eight garden beds and two new garden sites, respectively.





“THE SCHOOLS ARE INCORPORATING FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES THAT THE STAFF AND STUDENTS WOULDN’T NORMALLY GET. IT HAS BEEN GREAT TO SEE MY KIDS AND THE STAFF ENJOYING EATING THEM DAILY.”

— Anne Marie Erhardt, Social Worker, Allegheny County Schools

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Created a farmers’ market in Allegheny County to increase access to fresh produce among all county residents, including the 19.3% of people who live below the Federal poverty level.
- Initiated efforts to establish joint-use agreements, or formal agreements for the shared use of facilities, throughout the community to increase residents’ access to facilities for physical activity. Efforts are also underway to create joint-use garden sites at schools and community centers to increase access to healthy foods and support local farm production.
- Encouraged local farmers to obtain Good Agricultural Practices certification, which will allow them to sell fresh, local produce to district schools.

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

Childcare Facilities Promote Healthy Environments

The Appalachian District is working with Partnerships for Children to award mini-grants to licensed childcare facilities. Childcare programs will use these monies to develop environments that encourage increased physical activity and healthy eating for preschool-aged children. Through a competitive application process, 32 licensed childcare centers have been awarded mini-grants to help make healthy living easier for participating children.

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

- Allegheny County
- Allegheny County Schools
- Allegheny Memorial Hospital
- Allegheny Partnership for Children
- Appalachian District Board of Health
- Appalachian District Health Department
- Appalachian Regional Healthcare System
- Appalachian State University
- Ashe County Board of Education
- Ashe County Cooperative Extension: 4-H
- Ashe Memorial Hospital
- Ashe Partnership for Children
- Be-Active Appalachian Partnership
- Children’s Council of Watauga, Inc.
- Town of Boone
- Town of Sparta
- Town of West Jefferson
- Watauga County Cooperative Extension
- Watauga County Parks and Recreation
- Watauga County Schools
- Watauga County Tourism Development Authority
- Western Youth Network

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.apphealth.com.