

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



DOUGLAS COUNTY, NEBRASKA 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.

“MORE THAN 300 ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SIGNED UP TO BECOME PARTNERS FOR A HEALTHY CITY BY IMPLEMENTING POLICIES TO INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD OPTIONS AND SUPPORT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE PAST 18 MONTHS. IT IS GRATIFYING TO SEE THE COLLABORATION OF SO MANY ORGANIZATIONS THAT DESIRE TO IMPROVE THE HEALTH OF OUR COMMUNITY.”

— *Laura Feyerherm, MS, Manager,
Partners for a Healthy City Project*

Community Overview

Douglas County, Nebraska, is tackling obesity throughout the community. In this county of 517,110 residents, approximately 61% of adults are overweight or obese. Additionally, 28.4% of Douglas County youth are obese. Limited fruit and vegetable consumption and physical inactivity contribute to the problem, as 96.6% of youth do not meet the Federal government’s guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption and nearly 60% of youth do not participate in the recommended daily amounts of physical activity. In addition to obesity-prevention efforts aimed at Douglas County’s entire population, some initiatives target youth and at-risk populations, including low-income residents and certain racial and ethnic groups.



Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Douglas County:

- Created Partners for a Healthy City (PHC), a program that supports local organizations’ efforts to develop policies that foster healthy environments. Trainers have helped more than 335 organizations implement changes, including making fresh, local produce available to employees, installing bike racks, increasing access to drinking water, and ensuring healthy options are available at meetings. PHC also has developed a website and an e-newsletter to help organizations share success stories.
- Expanded the Safe Routes to School program, which encourages communities to make walking and bicycling to school a safe and routine activity. This program is now in 11 new schools; posted signs indicate appropriate routes to encourage approximately 1,400 students to safely walk or bike to school.
- Collaborated with four of the five colleges and universities in the county to make it easier for students to engage in active transportation through initiatives such as increasing bike parking, developing bike share programs, and conducting bike safety education classes.



“THE HEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD STORE PROJECT HAS REVITALIZED JND GROCERY WITH A NEW LOOK, NEW PRODUCTS AND HAS ENCOURAGED THE NEIGHBORHOOD TO START EATING HEALTHIER. THE PRODUCE SALES IN MY STORE HAVE INCREASED GREATLY, ESPECIALLY WITH ITEMS I’VE NEVER CARRIED IN THE PAST. THE PROGRAM HAS DEFINITELY INCREASED THE TRAFFIC COMING INTO THE STORE, WHICH HAS RESULTED IN HIGHER SALES EACH MONTH. THE NEW SIGNAGE ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE STORE REALLY GRABS PEOPLE’S ATTENTION.”

— Dave Adams, Owner of JND Grocery and Douglas County resident

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Increased physical activity and eliminated unhealthy beverages in before- and afterschool programs through the *Movin’ After School* initiative, which was adopted in all 36 programs in Millard Public Schools—the second-largest district in Douglas County. This initiative will affect approximately 1,500 students.
- Published an article, “Movin’ After School: A Community-Based Support for Policy Change in the After-School Environment,” in the peer-reviewed journal *Childhood Obesity* to serve as a model for afterschool programs throughout the country.



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

Healthier Meals for Douglas County Students

Through a partnership with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition, Omaha Public Schools recently made a commitment to serving healthier meals to the more than 49,000 students the school system feeds each day. Douglas County schools will increase the availability of locally produced foods, including fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, cheese, whole wheat tortillas, and bread. Meals also will have lower amounts of sodium and sugar. Additionally, Omaha Public Schools are currently installing six school gardens that will teach students about fresh produce and increase access to nutritious meal options.

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

- Alegent Health
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Nebraska
- Catholic Charities
- City of Omaha
- Con Agra
- Douglas County Board of Commissioners
- Douglas County Health Department
- Greater Omaha Chamber of Commerce
- Live Well Omaha
- Mutual of Omaha
- Nonprofit Association of the Midlands
- Union Pacific
- University of Nebraska at Omaha
- University of Nebraska Medical Center
- Valmont Industries
- Visiting Nurse Association
- Wellness Council of the Midlands
- YMCA of Greater Omaha

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.douglascountyhealth.com/ or www.livewellomaha.org.