

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



LA CROSSE COUNTY, WISCONSIN 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 CITY OF LA CROSSE HAS MOVED FROM THE BRONZE TO SILVER DESIGNATION AS A BIKE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITY BY THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN BICYCLISTS. THIS HAS BEEN A TEAM EFFORT AND I WANT TO THANK YOU ALL FOR THIS SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT.”

— Larry Kirch, Director of Planning,
City of La Crosse

Community Overview

La Crosse County, Wisconsin, which is home to 114,638 residents, is tackling obesity throughout the community. Approximately 26% of adults in La Crosse County are obese, which is comparable to the adult obesity rate for the state of Wisconsin. Approximately one-third of children aged 2-4 years in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) in La Crosse County are overweight or obese. Poor diet and physical inactivity contribute to the obesity problem. Only 21.8% of La Crosse County adults meet the Federal government's guidelines for fruit and vegetable consumption, and 15.9% of adults report no physical activity in the last 30 days.



Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, La Crosse County:

- Encouraged 21 Kwik Trip convenience stores to become members of La Crosse County's 500 Club and provide healthier meal and snack options, including salads and fresh fruits. The 500 Club is a free, healthy eating program coordinated by registered dietitians that encourages the availability of convenient, healthy food options.
- Implemented the Wellness Warriors healthy vending program, which ensures that select vending machines offer healthy snack options at subsidized prices and limit unhealthy options.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

“I HAVE BEEN ASKING FOR THAT PROGRAM FOR A LONG TIME ... I AM HAPPY TO SEE HEALTHIER ITEMS IN VENDING MACHINES.”

— *Dave, La Crosse County resident*

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Began the development of new bike lanes. When completed, this project will quadruple the amount of bike lanes available to community members in the city of La Crosse.
- Worked with the La Crosse Area Family YMCA to adopt and implement a physical-fitness policy. This policy, which affects 22 sites serving 2,000 children, requires 60 minutes of daily instructor-led physical activity.
- Collaborated with the Boys & Girls Club of Greater La Crosse to develop and implement a policy whereby 500 youth who participate in club programs receive at least 30 minutes of daily, structured physical activity.
- Coordinated with five school districts to implement farm-to-school programs that provide more than 5,000 students with access to locally grown farm-fresh foods.



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

Complete Streets Encourage Active Transportation

La Crosse County is encouraging active transportation by implementing a countywide policy that makes roads safer for pedestrians and cyclists. Known as Complete Streets, this policy will enable safe street access for all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders. The policy will create more bike lanes, sidewalks, and streets friendlier to all modes of transportation, and has the potential to affect La Crosse County's 114,638 residents.

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

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse
- City of La Crosse Planning Department
- City of La Crosse Police Department
- Cooperative Educational Service Agency #4
- Coulee Community Action Program
- Courtesy Corporation
- Downtown Mainstreet, Inc.
- Gundersen Lutheran Health System
- Health & Human Services Board, La Crosse County
- La Crosse Area Family YMCA
- La Crosse Community Foundation
- La Crosse County Health Department
- La Crosse County Metropolitan Planning Association
- La Crosse School District
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Onalaska School District
- The Parenting Place
- University of Wisconsin-La Crosse
- University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Health Science Consortium
- Western Technical College Wellness Center

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.getactivewisconsin.org/lacrosse/.