

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



HAMILTON COUNTY, OHIO
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.

“THESE BROAD-BASED CHANGES WILL HAVE A GREAT IMPACT ON OUR RESIDENTS AS THE PROJECT ALLOWS US TO HAVE A TRUE COUNTY-WIDE REACH SO THAT HEALTHY LIVING WILL BE EASIER WHERE PEOPLE LIVE, WORK, LEARN, PLAY, AND WORSHIP. HAMILTON COUNTY IS MAKING GREAT STRIDES TO REDUCE THE BURDEN OF CHRONIC DISEASE AND OBESITY.”

— Timothy Ingram, Hamilton County Health Commissioner

Community Overview

Hamilton County, Ohio, home to approximately 802,374 residents, is tackling obesity throughout the community. In Hamilton County, which includes Cincinnati, 62% of adult residents are overweight or obese. Poor diet, an established risk factor for obesity, is a challenge in Hamilton County, with 75.8% of adults consuming fewer than the daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables. Among county youth, 31.7% of third graders are overweight or obese, putting their generation at increased risk for adverse health conditions as they get older.



Community Successes

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

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Hamilton County:

- Increased access to healthier foods and beverages through vending machines, à la carte lines, and school stores in eight of 22 targeted school districts. Launched in spring of 2011, this effort includes the Cincinnati Public Schools system, which alone encompasses more than 30,000 students in 50 schools. In total, this initiative will impact 50,865 elementary, middle, and high school students.
- Increased the number of community gardens to improve access to affordable and healthy food. To date, 20 church-based community gardens have been established throughout Hamilton County, a majority of which are located in food deserts. These gardens serve more than 60,000 residents whose mean household income is nearly 25% below the Federal poverty level.



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



Community Successes *(continued)*

- Encouraged primary care providers to improve preventive care, identification, and counseling for overweight and obese children. To date, 17 physicians' practices—that treat more than 60,000 children—have received customized tools and coaching to assist them with adopting these practices.
- Collaborated with 50 county schools to support the implementation of the Safe Routes to School program, which promotes walking and biking to school.
- Collected the first weighted data sample of Hamilton County high school students for the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. This effort not only provides a comprehensive picture of student health, but also establishes a baseline from which long-term health behaviors can be tracked.



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

YMCA Memberships Available to More Hamilton County Residents

Hamilton County is increasing residents' access to physical activity by offering low-cost memberships to the YMCA. To date, more than 6,000 subsidized memberships to the YMCA of Greater Cincinnati have been issued, providing more than 15,000 residents with access to a safe place to exercise. These memberships are largely successful because of outreach efforts associated with their promotion. Target populations, including individuals with the greatest health risk and burden, were engaged at community-based venues and educated about how to change their lifestyle.

"[YMCA STAFF AND MEMBERS] ENCOURAGED ME TO FOLLOW MY DOCTOR'S RECOMMENDATION TO EAT SMALL AND HEALTHY MEALS ... I SPENT TOO MUCH TIME AND YEARS PASSED MAKING POOR CHOICES, AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE ROLE THE Y HAS PLAYED IN MY ATTITUDE AND IN MY PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH."

—Dwayne, Hamilton County resident

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

- Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center
- Hamilton County Education Service Center
- Hamilton County Public Health
- Nutrition Council of Greater Cincinnati
- The Center for Closing the Health Gap in Greater Cincinnati
- University of Cincinnati
- YMCA of Greater Cincinnati

Additional Information

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