

Communities Putting Prevention to Work



OLMSTED COUNTY, MINNESOTA
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.

"OLMSTED COUNTY HAS HAD A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF SUCCESS OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS IN ... ADDING NEW FARMERS' MARKETS, IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS, AND INCREASING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR SCHOOLS. COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE COMMITTED TO MAKING OLMSTED COUNTY A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, WORK, AND PLAY!"

— Jim Pittenger, School Board Member, Rochester Public Schools

Community Overview

Olmsted County, Minnesota, is tackling obesity, which is prevalent throughout the community of 144,248 residents. Nearly 27% of adults in Olmsted County are obese. Additionally, 23% of children in Minnesota are overweight or obese. Limited physical activity and poor nutrition choices contribute to these rates. Approximately 70% of Olmsted County adults do not consume recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables, and 14.1% of adults reported 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, Olmsted County has implemented a variety of changes throughout the community to make healthy living easier.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, Olmsted County:

- Secured participation of three Olmsted County school districts to incorporate pedestrian and bike education into their physical education curriculum. Teachers received training on the new content and, when fully implemented, this effort will reach approximately 4,600 students.
- Increased the number of farmers' markets in the county from one to five, increasing access to fresh and local produce for residents and visitors.
- Launched an initiative at the University Center Rochester campus aimed at encouraging more than 10,000 students and staff to make healthy choices at vending machines. This effort includes the placement of healthy eating prompts on more than 50 vending machines. The university plans to expand this healthy food initiative to include campus cafeterias and cafes.



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



“WONDERFUL IDEA! I HAVE MADE MANY MEALS PREPARED COMPLETELY WITH FOOD FROM THE FARMERS’ MARKET AND PURCHASED WITH EBT. I FEEL GREAT ABOUT FEEDING MY FAMILY THIS WAY!”

— *Olmsted County resident and Rochester Farmers’ Market patron*

Community Successes *(continued)*

- Drafted a Bicycle Master Plan, which will be incorporated into the county’s long-term transportation plan. Informed by focus groups, public input sessions, and the Bicycle-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, this plan includes best practices for creating a more “bicycle-friendly” Olmsted.
- Designed new trail signs in collaboration with the Rochester Park and Recreation Department to make trails easier to navigate and use. Signs have been placed throughout the City of Rochester’s more than 90 miles of trails.

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

Farmers’ Markets Make Healthy Food More Accessible to Low-income Residents

Olmsted County is increasing low-income residents’ access to affordable, healthy food through collaboration with local farmers’ markets. The county helped establish a new weekday farmers’ market and doubled the number of markets that enable participants in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to use Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) to purchase fresh produce. The county also helped a farmers’ market develop and promote the *Market Bucks* program, through which EBT and WIC users receive an additional \$5 in “*Market Bucks*” each time they use their benefits. This incentivizes shopping at the farmers’ market and decreases the price of local fruits and vegetables. *Market Bucks* have a nearly 100% redemption rate, and EBT sales from May 2011 through July 2011 were more than double the sales for the same months in 2010.

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

- Breastfeeding Coalition
- Byron City Council
- Byron Public Schools
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- City of Eyota
- City of Stewartville
- IBM
- Mayo Clinic
- Minnesota House of Representatives
- Olmsted Board of Commissioners
- Olmsted Community
- Olmsted Medical Center
- Public Health Services Advisory Board
- Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce
- Rochester City Council
- Rochester Community and Technical College
- Rochester Park and Recreation
- Rochester Police Department
- Rochester Public Works
- Rochester School Board
- Rochester-Olmsted Planning Department
- United Way of Olmsted County
- University of Minnesota

Additional Information

For more information, please visit www.co.olmsted.mn.us/OCPHS/programs/community/cppw/Pages/default.aspx.