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5ADay Works!

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



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
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For more information about 5 A Day programs, contact the individual 5 A Day coordinators listed in each program resume. This publication is available online at <http://www.cdc.gov/5aday>.

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Foreword healthy eating is one of the vital components of a lifestyle that contributes to our quality of life and to the prevention of many chronic diseases and conditions. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables has been associated with lower risks for many chronic diseases, including some cancers and cardiovascular disease. However, there are many competing forces in our society that urge people to choose high-fat, high-calorie foods. Sales of fast foods and restaurant fare have increased in the last decade, whereas consumption of fruits and vegetables in this country has remained unchanged.

Getting people to change their eating habits is very hard, but I have been impressed by the determination and creativity of those who work in 5 A Day programs across the country. Despite the barriers and limited support, people in these programs have been steadfast in their resolve to encourage people to increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The programs and strategies described in this publication testify to their hard work, creativity, and resourcefulness. Five A Day is changing the environment with programs that promote access to fruits and vegetables and that target people of all ages, schools, the community, industries, restaurants, churches, and work sites. There are cooking schools for children, cookbooks for children and adults, community gardens, 5 A Day restaurant programs, and a variety of innovative partnerships with farmers' markets. Other entries describe unique partnerships, environmental change, and media efforts.

We hope that the programs in this book will inspire others to adapt the ideas and strategies for their own communities. For most people, changing lifestyle patterns is easier when they have the support of their families, schools, and other institutions in the community where they live, work, and play. The stories in this book will provide many ideas on how to do just that.

William Dietz, MD, PhD

Director, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

## Preface

A diet that includes a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables helps people stay healthy and can help reduce their risk for many chronic diseases. It also can help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Unfortunately, many Americans are not heeding the call to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. To combat this problem, the national 5 A Day for Better Health Program was developed in 1991 by the National Cancer Institute and the Produce for Better Health Foundation. This program works to raise people’s awareness about the need to eat healthy foods, and it supports projects that help people achieve this goal.

Since its inception, the 5 A Day Program has become the largest public–private partnership for encouraging better nutrition. It brings together a broad coalition of educators, health care providers, food producers and retailers, researchers, and government agencies from all levels.

In 2001, CDC assumed leadership for the 5 A Day Program in the states—providing leadership resources, education, and technical assistance to 5 A Day coordinators. In 2005, CDC became the lead federal agency and health authority for 5 A Day. To promote current and past projects, we are offering this 5 A Day Works! publication. It is a collection of 54 success stories from 5 A Day coordinators who are passionate about making positive changes in the lives of people residing in their states.

5 A Day Works! captures a diversity of innovations, from books for preschoolers and incentive programs for employees, to community gardens and farmers’ markets, to special interventions in restaurants and churches. These stories show that 5 A Day Works! We hope this collection inspires you to adapt and adopt the ideas and strategies that others have used for your own programs. Join us, and we can work together to build a healthier future, one success at a time.

Mary Kay Solera, MS, CHES

Director, 5 A Day for Better Health Program

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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## Introduction

This 5 A Day Works! publication is a collection of program descriptions and success stories from the coordinators of 5 A Day programs in all 50 states, two U.S. cities, and two branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. We've also included two stories about exciting nutrition projects that are not part of 5 A Day.

For most of these programs, we present a descriptive resume and a story intended to bring to life a particular intervention. The resumes provide a variety of information, such as how 5 A Day programs are organized and funded, what their objectives are, how they accomplish these objectives, and what specific interventions have been launched.

The stories highlight innovative projects that could be adapted to other states. They offer a rich array of ideas, and they show what can be accomplished in a variety of settings, often with little money. Our hope is that these stories will allow 5 A Day coordinators across the country to learn from each other's successes.

This book also is intended to

- Recognize accomplishments. These stories highlight what is being done to change programs, organizations, and communities. Use these examples and your own success stories to show policy makers, legislators, and other stakeholders what 5 A Day programs can achieve.
- Show what works. These stories show how a particular project succeeded, and they provide information such as who was involved, where the money came from, and who benefited. Take these ideas and replicate or adapt them to your own programs.
- Create interest and build support. Educating more people about 5 A Day programs should help you attract new partners, generate more funding, and find new ways to collaborate on training and research needs.
- Support research. This book illustrates the promising strategies that 5 A Day programs are using to help people eat more fruits and vegetables. Research and evaluation activities conducted at state and community levels help us identify strategies that work and keep our programs on track.

## Using This Publication

The resumes and stories presented in this book are organized into six categories on the basis of the content of their stories. These categories are Environmental Innovations, Event & Media Innovations, Partnerships & Coalitions, Youth Innovations, Program Resumes, and Beyond 5 A Day. Because many different types of projects fit into the Environmental Innovations category, we divided these further into the following subcategories: Communities, Farmers' Markets, Food Access, Restaurants, and Work Sites.



For brevity, the following abbreviations are used throughout the book:

**CDC**                      Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

**HHS**                      U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

**PHHS Block Grant**   Preventive Health & Health Services Block Grant

**USDA**                    U.S. Department of Agriculture

**WIC**                      Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and  
Children

For more information about 5 A Day programs, contact the 5 A Day coordinators listed in the program resumes or visit CDC's 5 A Day Program Web site at <http://www.cdc.gov/5aday> and <http://www.5aday.gov>.

## Environmental Innovations

Communities • Farmers' Markets • Food Access • Restaurants • Work Sites

By making healthy food choices more available and creating environments where healthy eating is socially supported and easy to adopt, these projects are helping people add more fruits and vegetables to their diets.

## **Arkansas**

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### **Background**

The Arkansas 5 A Day Program began in September 1994 with a capacity building grant from CDC. Through the full-time efforts of the 5 A Day coordinator, the program is represented on numerous committees and integrated into several initiatives of the Arkansas Department of Health.

Increased fruit and vegetable consumption also is encouraged through population-based social marketing strategies.

### **Program Focus**

Improving the dietary habits of Arkansas residents by helping them eat more fruits and vegetables is a key strategy for reducing the state's chronic disease burden. It also is a primary objective of the state's Healthy Arkansas Initiative.

Arkansas is one of the least healthy states in the country. It has one of the highest heart disease death rates in the United States, and it ranks first in stroke incidence.<sup>1</sup>

In addition, in 2002, 37.2% of state adults were overweight and 23.7% were obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2001, 29.7% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Although a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to prevent overweight and obesity—and the chronic diseases they can cause—only 20.8% of state adults in 2003 and 19.9% of high school students in 2001 ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

The 5 A Day coordinator provides administrative support to the Arkansas 5 A Day Coalition, a public-private partnership that includes more than 50 members. Her salary is paid by the state WIC Program.

Coalition members represent state businesses, industries, government agencies, community and voluntary organizations, educational institutions, and concerned citizens.

The coalition recently obtained nonprofit status. Current activities include fund-raising and grant-writing to expand the coalition's ability to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and improve overall health among state residents.

The 5 A Day Program also is working with the Arkansas River Trail Headwaters Partnership to help promote and support a 24-mile walking trail that is being built through downtown Little Rock. The trail will link several parks and tourist attractions, making it easier for people who live and work in the area to be physically active.

In 2003, this collaboration was extended to include the Governor's Council on Fitness and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service–Pulaski County. One project to come out of this collaboration is a biannual Diabetes Cooking School in downtown Little Rock near the Arkansas River Trail.

The Arkansas River Trail Headwaters Partnership has been nominated for HHS's Innovation in Prevention Award, which recognizes groups that are leading efforts to promote healthy lifestyles in their communities. This honor may help to create future opportunities for studying how people are using the Arkansas River Trail and how it is helping them improve their health. Two related projects are planned for the next 2 years.

By linking messages about healthy eating with physical activity in a natural environment, the Arkansas River Trail has become a model for other cities and states.

## Out for Lunch on the Arkansas River Trail

On May 19, 2004, hundreds of people living and working in Little Rock participated in fun and educational activities designed to improve their health.

One of these activities was the seventh annual Out for Lunch event, which encourages people to reduce their risk for obesity and chronic diseases by being physically active and making healthy food choices.

Participants were treated to healthy snacks, including “salad on a stick,” prepared by staff members from the state’s 5 A Day Program. Colorful fruit and vegetable characters mingled with the crowd at the Little Rock River Market, which is home to the state’s largest farmers’ market.

To encourage people to walk at lunch, employees of Blue Cross Blue Shield and the Arkansas Department of Health walked from the state capitol to the River Market pavilion.

In addition, staff members from Heart Clinic Arkansas talked with people about how public-access trails can help them become more active and how an active lifestyle can help to reduce a person’s risk for cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases.

The day’s activities also included a groundbreaking ceremony to kick off construction of the downtown Little Rock section of the Arkansas River Trail. This 24-mile trail is designed to help walkers, cyclists, skaters, joggers, and strollers improve their health while enjoying the state’s natural beauty.

When completed, the Arkansas River Trail will reach from downtown Little Rock to Pinnacle Mountain State Park on the southern shore and from downtown North Little Rock to Cook’s Landing on the northern shore.

A 14-mile loop will be created by a pedestrian bridge across Murray Lock and Dam and a renovated railroad bridge near the William J. Clinton Presidential Center and Park. Signs posted along the trail remind people that they can get healthy by walking every day, not smoking, and eating 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

The trail is supported by the Headwaters Partnership, which is made up of representatives from more than 20 federal, state, county, and municipal public and private organizations. The group was formed after a CDC report that encouraged communities to build walking and biking trails as one way to increase physical activity among their residents and improve health.<sup>4</sup>



The partnership provides public education and outreach activities, as well as financial support of planning and construction projects associated with the Arkansas River Trail. It also hosted the Out for Lunch event along with the Arkansas 5 A Day Coalition, the Governor's Council on Fitness, and the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service–Pulaski County.

By linking messages about healthy eating with physical activity in a natural environment, the Arkansas River Trail has become a model for other cities and states.

It is supported at all levels of government and has succeeded in pulling together many nontraditional partners. Examples include the state's Department of Heritage, Department of Parks and Tourism, Game and Fish Commission, and Highway and Transportation Department, as well as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

For Little Rock residents, the trail will provide a “place for all people” to get out of their cars to get to work, visit local attractions, run errands, or just be active and healthy.

## **California**

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### **Background**

In 1988, California launched the California 5 A Day—for Better Health! Campaign. In 1991, the campaign became a national program that is now used in all 50 states. The campaign is a statewide social marketing initiative led by the California Department of Health Services and funded principally through the USDA Food Stamp Program.

### **Program Focus**

The California 5 A Day—for Better Health! Campaign works to empower Californians to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables and get at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day by creating environments where these behaviors are socially supported and easy to adopt. These efforts promote health and can help to reduce a person's risk for chronic diseases.

In 2003, only 26.9% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> Just one-fifth of children aged 9–11 met this recommendation, and one-third did not eat even one serving of either fruits or vegetables a day.<sup>5</sup> In 2001, 80% of fifth graders did not meet minimum physical fitness standards.<sup>6</sup>

### **Program Components**

The California 5 A Day—for Better Health! Campaign collaborates with national, state, regional, and local organizations and has more than 300 private, public, and nonprofit partners. To achieve its goals, campaign activities target specific populations. For example,

- The Children's 5 A Day—Power Play! Campaign targets low income children aged 9–11 through education, marketing, and promotional efforts. Activities include providing access to school gardens; safe places for children to play; and healthy food choices in school cafeterias, in vending machines, and through youth organizations. The campaign reaches about 230,000 children each year.
- The Latino 5 A Day Campaign operates through regional agencies and targets low-income adults at farmers' markets, flea markets, grocery stores, health care organizations, community clinics, and cultural gatherings. The campaign reaches nearly 800,000 people annually and is reinforced through radio, television, and other advertisements (Spanish and English); community events; and policies that increase access to healthy food and safe places for physical activity.

- The African American 5 A Day Campaign targets low-income, African American adults through 15 faith-based community projects. The campaign reaches more than 250,000 people annually. Activities include integrating nutrition education into church sermons, radio programs, and newsletters; making presentations at community health fairs, farmers' markets, and supermarkets; increasing access to fruits and vegetables at churches; and promoting farmers' markets, neighborhood grocery stores, and safe places for physical activity in African American communities.
- The 5 A Day Retail Program works with nearly 1,000 grocery stores to promote fruits and vegetables to low-income families. In-store merchandising, promotional activities, and advertisements encourage consumers to choose healthy foods. The program provides 5 A Day materials to stores.
- The 5 A Day—Be Active! Worksite Program collaborates with the public health community, employers, and policy makers to develop and test ways to improve access to fruits and vegetables in employee cafeterias, vending machines, and other workplace venues. It also promotes physical activity for employees throughout the day.

## **How 5 A Day Campaigns Affect People's Daily Lives**

Each day, “Aleta,” an African American single mother living in Oakland, wakes before dawn to get herself ready for work and her children, “Ashley,” 9, and “Jacob,” 11, ready for school.\*

For the past 3 years, Ashley and Jacob’s school has participated in state programs such as the Children’s 5 A Day—Power Play! Campaign, which helps to create an environment that encourages fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. During class, Ashley tastes a variety of fresh produce from the school garden, while Jacob’s class discusses the benefits of healthy eating and designs kid friendly advertisements.

The school cafeteria, which is decorated with colorful 5 A Day displays, features a salad bar with fresh produce from local farmers. After school, Ashley and Jacob head to the local Boys and Girls Club, which also participates in the Power Play! Campaign and offers healthy snacks and fun physical activities.

Meanwhile, Aleta starts her day with low-fat yogurt and an apple from the cafeteria of the garment factory where she works. For lunch, she grabs a salad with low-fat dressing and a cup of sliced fruit before joining her coworkers for a company-sponsored lunchtime walk. As a partner in California’s 5 A Day—Be Active! Worksite Program, Aleta’s employer offers healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity in an effort to reduce illness-related absenteeism and improve productivity and morale.

Before Aleta heads home, she stops at the corner grocery store and smiles at the results of her hard work. For years, Aleta and her community have worked with city officials, state policy makers, nutrition advocates, and business leaders to improve access to healthy foods in her neighborhood. This store recently expanded its produce selection because of those efforts. The store also partners with the 5 A Day Retail Program to offer samples, free recipe books, and colorful signs that promote fruits and vegetables.

When she arrives home, Aleta runs into her neighbor, Lupe, who works as a community health leader for the Latino 5 A Day Campaign. Lupe tells Aleta that she is helping with food demonstrations and taste testings at an exhibit this Saturday. Like Aleta, Lupe has worked hard to make her neighborhood a healthier and safer place for her family.

On Sunday, Aleta and her children walk to a nearby church that participates in the African American 5 A Day Campaign and boasts the only farmers’ market in the area. Aleta and other parishioners, church leaders, health advocates, and state and local policy makers worked for nearly 2 years to provide a place where community members had easy access to fresh, affordable produce and could use WIC vouchers.

During the service, the pastor talks about the importance of maintaining a healthy body and soul. After the service, the congregation enjoys a snack of fresh fruits and juice—a nice change from the coffee and pastries of previous gatherings.

Before Aleta retires that night, she reflects on how much healthier her community has become in recent years. She knows that more progress is needed and that many other low income communities do not have access to affordable healthy foods and safe places to be physically active. Aleta vows to continue to have a strong voice in making positive changes in her community and state.

\* Aleta and her children are composites who demonstrate how people can benefit from the California 5 A Day—for Better Health! Campaign every day.

## **Missouri**

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### **Background**

The Missouri 5 A Day Program is coordinated in the Section for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion of the Division of Community Health in the state's Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). This placement ensures continuity and coordination across community health programs.

### **Program Focus**

To increase fruit and vegetable consumption in Missouri, the 5 A Day Program integrates its message into nutrition interventions and educational campaigns throughout the state. The 5 A Day Strategic Planning Task Force also has worked with the Missouri Nutrition Network to help low-income families (especially those on food stamps) eat a healthier diet.

In 2003, only 20% of Missouri adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> In 2001, among Missouri youth aged 9–18 years, only 40% of girls and 38% of boys ate the 2–4 daily servings of fruit recommended by the Food Guide Pyramid, and only 21% of girls and 22% of boys ate the 3–5 daily servings of vegetables recommended.<sup>7</sup>

Overweight and obesity are major concerns in Missouri, where the prevalence of overweight children and adolescents has more than tripled in the past two decades. A study of data from the 2001-02 school year found that nearly 40% of students aged 9–18 were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>7</sup>

In 2002, 23.2% of Missouri adults were obese, and 26.5% were not physically active.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

When the Missouri 5 A Day Program began in the early 1990s, initiatives included cooking demonstrations in churches, celebration of 5 A Day Week, and nutrition interventions in schools and communities. In the late 1990s, additional activities were launched at work sites and in communities, state WIC clinics, and schools.

Examples of these activities included 5 A Day Challenges that encouraged employees to eat more fruits and vegetables, programs in elementary schools that used the Give Me 5 A Day! book, and a correctional institution program in which inmates grew tomatoes and donated them to state food pantries. Local WIC agencies also have used 5 A Day materials to teach nutrition to their clients at clinics and through the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

As the 5 A Day Program has grown, monitoring and evaluation have become important. A form was developed to track local activities, and the Give Me 5 A Day! school intervention was evaluated through observation and a student survey.

In addition, Missouri has developed a 5 A Day Strategic Plan and added 5 A Day messages to its DHSS Strategic Plan. Five A Day strategies also have been incorporated into the outreach and educational efforts of state chronic disease programs that target cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer.

In February 2004, a program manager was hired to coordinate 5 A Day activities. A full-time nutritionist also devotes 25% of her time to daily operations.

## **A Day in the Life of a 5 A Day Coordinator**

As experience often teaches us, the simplest messages are often the most effective. I was reminded of this truth recently while speaking to a group of St. Louis residents.

As coordinator of Missouri's 5 A Day Program, I was asked to speak at a local church following Sunday services about how eating more fruits and vegetables can improve a person's health. Community residents and designated community health advocates were invited to attend.

The event was one of several organized by the Missouri Nutrition Network, which is working to spread 5 A Day messages in innovative ways, including at faith-based community sites. These efforts offer ideal opportunities to bring new partners into the network and to help local communities assess their needs and resources.

As I drove to the church, I noticed that the neighborhood, like many older ones in St. Louis, had winding streets and no corner grocery stores in sight. Pulling into the overcrowded parking lot, I wondered if I had brought enough materials. I chided myself for not bringing an extension cord, in case one was not available for my video presentation.

But when I walked into the dimly lit social hall to find low ceilings and no electronic outlets or video equipment, I suddenly wondered if my planned 1-hour presentation could even last 20 minutes.

As I laid out my pamphlets and printouts, a handful of middle-aged, African American women took seats at the long folding tables that had been arranged into a horseshoe shape. They spoke in low tones, eyeing me with puzzled anticipation.

I was worried at first by the low attendance, but more people—including children and teenagers—trickled in as they wrapped up their after-services socializing. Following a brief introduction by the church health advocate, I stepped to the podium and broke the uneasy silence.

All eyes were trained on me, and I could tell that many people were already sizing me up as the “food police”—a dreaded authority figure coming to take away their fries, diet sodas, Sunday dinners laden with fat, and midnight ice cream.

I caught them off-guard when I told them that I too like ice cream, soul food, and fast food. But then I explained how a diet based on too much fat and not enough fruits and vegetables will eventually cause health problems such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as physical limitations that can make life miserable.

Once I had their attention, I described ways to limit fats and sweets to moderate levels. We read food labels to see exactly what types of “nutrients” were in packaged foods. The residents began to understand that the 5 A Day principles provide a useful guide for eating a healthy diet and that taking small steps today can lead to a healthier life.



To my surprise, one hour stretched into two. I watched the puzzled stares turn into smiles and nods as the participants began to understand the inner workings of their bodies. Eating lots of unhealthy foods can mean more work for your heart, lungs, arteries, and kidneys. By contrast, fresh fruits and vegetables offer healthy combinations of vitamins, minerals, and fiber that can help your body operate more efficiently.

As I packed to leave, I realized how differently the session had turned out—and how a simple message can sometimes be more effective than all the video equipment and extension cords in the world.

"All eyes were trained on me, and I could tell that many people were already sizing me up as the 'food police'—a dreaded authority figure coming to take away their fries, diet sodas, Sunday dinners laden with fat, and midnight ice cream."

## **New York City**

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### **Background**

New York City began promoting its 5 A Day Program in earnest during the summer of 2002. Although the state had a comprehensive program, it was not being fully used in New York City. To address this problem, a 5 A Day coordinator was added to the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, in addition to the coordinator working in the state health department.

This new coordinator initiated 5 A Day projects throughout the city on top of her regular duties in the Wellness at Work Program of the city health department's Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention. The position changed hands in July 2004, and the new coordinator serves as Health Promotion Program Coordinator in the Wellness at Work Program.

### **Program Focus**

The mission of the New York City 5 A Day Program is to increase access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables for all city residents. In 2002, 14% of adults surveyed had not eaten any fruits and vegetables on the previous day.<sup>8</sup>

In some parts of the city, the figure was as low as 9%. These data indicate that programs are needed to address barriers to healthy eating—such as the availability and cost of fresh produce—in large metropolitan cities like New York.

Although New York City residents are living longer than ever, they face significant health problems, including chronic diseases such as heart disease, which is the leading cause of death in New York and the nation.

Many of these problems result from people being less physically active and more overweight. One in 4 New Yorkers does not exercise, and 1 in 6 is obese.<sup>8</sup> Obesity is more common among men (41%) than women (29%), and levels are higher among African Americans (26%) and Hispanics (23%) than among whites (14%). Neighborhoods that report less physical activity and less fruit and vegetable consumption also report higher obesity levels among their residents.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, overweight is a growing problem among children. Twenty-four percent of elementary school children in New York City have a body mass index (BMI) for their age that is at or above the 95th percentile.<sup>9</sup> Another 19% have a BMI for their age that is between the 85th and 95th percentiles.<sup>9</sup>

### **Program Components**

To address these concerns, the Wellness at Work Program launched a 5 A Day promotional campaign in the summer of 2003. This campaign was aimed at recruiting the city's hundreds of mobile food vendors to sell fresh fruits and vegetables and to spread the 5 A Day message.

Health officials also partnered with Greenmarket, a local program that supports regional agriculture and manages outdoor farmers' markets throughout the city, to further promote the 5 A Day Program.

## **Recruiting Street Vendors to Promote 5 A Day**

New York City is unique in many ways, including its sidewalk carts that sell a wide variety of food items—from ice cream, soft pretzels, peanuts, and hot dogs to ethnic foods from places like Greece, India, and the Caribbean.

But what is particularly novel about these mobile vendors is that many of them sell fresh fruits and vegetables—making it easier for urban dwellers to eat a healthier diet. Walking down the streets of New York, you're likely to see masses of people clustered around a cart buying bananas, grapes, oranges, tomatoes, and green beans. And prices are low—10 apricots or 5 peaches for \$1 is common in the summer.

Because the New York City health department is charged with licensing produce vendors, those of us working in health promotion decided that it would be a natural partnership for these vendors to help spread the 5 A Day message.

We imagined that as people walked down the streets of New York, they would see mobile vendors wearing 5 A Day aprons or distributing recipe cards. With this vision in mind, the health department's Wellness at Work Program launched its 5 A Day promotional campaign in the summer of 2003.

The first step was to identify the vendors that sell produce and send them a letter asking for their support. Although this task sounded easy, the database of vendors was not categorized by the types of food they sold, so targeting produce vendors specifically was impossible.

Although the health department estimated that there were about 500 produce vendors throughout New York, our only option was to send letters to all of the city's 3,500 vendors asking those who sold produce to respond.

To our surprise, responses poured in. Vendors were eager to promote the 5 A Day message and participate in a health promotion program. About 175 vendors representing nearly 200 carts responded—a 40% response rate on the first try! One vendor even stopped by our office to personally thank us for the opportunity.

After the vendors filled out an information form to let us know they were interested, we sent them a promotional kit that resembled a pizza box and included an apron and produce bags bearing the 5 A Day logo, as well as recipe cards and information sheets about fruits and vegetables.

In addition, summer interns and program staff members canvassed the city to distribute another 200 boxes of materials. This experience proved to be quite interesting because many of the vendors did not speak English and were suspicious of our offers of free materials. They were sure there was a catch, and some would not participate.

We also found that many of the male vendors were not willing to wear aprons—they wanted baseball caps instead. But overall, the responses to the program were overwhelmingly positive. Many vendors wanted additional materials, and we distributed more than 500 promotional kits in all, 100 of them in Spanish.

We also established a partnership with Greenmarket, a local program that promotes regional agriculture and manages more than 30 outdoor farmers' markets throughout New York City's five boroughs. Farmers who are part of this program also received our promotional kits.

We are proud of the success of this program—and we hope it continues—because we believe that the simple promotion of fresh fruits and vegetables may encourage residents to eat a healthier diet.

"We imagined that as people walked down the streets of New York, they would see mobile vendors wearing 5 A Day aprons or distributing recipe cards. With this vision in mind, the health department's Wellness at Work Program launched its 5 A Day promotional campaign in the summer of 2003."

## **Alabama**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Alabama 5 A Day Program began in 1996. At the time, the program was funded by intervention and evaluation cooperative agreements with CDC. These funds paid 50% of the salary of a full-time nutritionist in the Nutrition Section of the Office of Professional and Support Services of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Alabama's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program also provided salary support for an additional staff member from the health department's Nutrition Section, and the two worked together to promote 5 A Day messages to people with or at risk for diabetes.

In 1997, CDC funded the Alabama Cardiovascular Health Program, supporting a full-time nutritionist and a physical activity specialist. This program embraced 5 A Day messages as part of its focus on environmental and policy interventions designed to reduce cardiovascular disease in the state. In particular, these messages are integrated into physical activity initiatives.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, 77.4% of Alabama adults and 85.5% of high school students did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

To combat these low consumption rates and to improve access to fresh fruits and vegetables among state residents, four community farmers' markets have been established in isolated communities in the western part of the state. Community health advisors were integral to setting up these markets, and they provide ongoing 5 A Day health education to customers.

In 2001, the health department's Nutrition Section was renamed the Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit to reflect a greater emphasis on linking nutrition and physical activity.

The unit's mission is "to implement nutrition and physical activity interventions and promote policy and environmental initiatives to increase the number of Alabamians who maintain a healthy weight, lead physically active lifestyles, and follow a balanced meal pattern with at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day."

The USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) supports the state 5 A Day Program by funding a full-time nutritionist and making it possible for 5 A Day messages to be promoted to low-income residents statewide.

The FSNEP and the Auburn University Cooperative Extension System also funded a 5-year social marketing campaign called the Integrated Nutrition Education Program, which includes 5 A Day principles.

State partners created the campaign so that all USDA programs in Alabama can use the same consistent, positive messages about nutrition and physical activity in their health promotion and disease prevention activities.

The overarching theme of the campaign is “Take Charge of Your Health,” and it includes three supporting messages: “Take Action,” “Take 5–9 Fruits and Veggies a Day,” and “Take Down Fat.” These messages are being promoted statewide through billboards, public service announcements on television and radio, and printed materials.

The Alabama 5 A Day Program also drafted 2-year goals and objectives during a 2003 strategic planning meeting that was attended by approximately 30 partners.

The unit’s mission is “to implement nutrition and physical activity interventions and promote policy and environmental initiatives to increase the number of Alabamians who maintain a healthy weight, lead physically active lifestyles, and follow a balanced meal pattern with at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.”

## **How Community Leaders Make a Difference**

For residents of rural Wilcox County, Alabama, staying healthy has always been a challenge. This Black Belt county has a high unemployment rate and limited options for health care, education, and transportation. Chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, heart disease, and diabetes are prevalent.

The traditional Southern diet—high in fat and salt—is entrenched in the area’s culture. Needless to say, most people find it hard to eat a heart-healthy diet to prevent chronic disease.

Fortunately, Wilcox County also has Doris Smith, a community leader dedicated to helping bring about positive change to this severely depressed area. Born and raised in the tiny community of Furman, Doris worked for 25 years in a sewing factory and helped establish its first labor union.

In 1980, she began training as a community organizer, thanks to a Kellogg Foundation grant. She helped establish the area’s first volunteer fire department, as well as a home assistance program for the elderly and several programs for children.

In 1991, Doris became a Vista Volunteer with the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), working with others to establish a group called Partners in Progress that advocates for local initiatives. With support from the Catholic church, the group also set up a health center.

Since 1997, Doris has been project coordinator of the Wilcox County Health Project, which is funded by CDC as part of the Prevention Research Center network and by UAB’s School of Public Health. Through this project, Doris continues to help her community better understand the health problems it faces, and she makes sure residents know what health resources are available in their area.

One of her latest projects was to work with a cadre of trained community health advisors to establish an outdoor farmers’ market in the city of Pine Apple in 2001. Now, residents have better access to fresh, locally grown produce.

Doris and her team worked tirelessly to promote this project, bringing together local growers, cooperative extension agents, community leaders, and local residents. In addition, they helped coordinate involvement of other partners, including the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, the Alabama Farmers’ Market Authority, and the Alabama Department of Public Health.

They also used materials contributed by the Alabama Cardiovascular Health Program to promote 5 A Day messages, which they hoped would educate county residents about the health benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables and encourage them to shop at the new market.

Thanks to the hard work of Doris and her team, the market flourished— despite problems with drought and an exploding deer population that threatened the crops of local growers.



In 2002, a second market opened, and both were made part of the Alabama Senior Farmers' Market Program, which allows low-income seniors to redeem coupons for fresh produce.

In addition, the Alabama Farmers' Market Authority received a grant from the Delta Regional Authority to build permanent structures for the markets so growers and shoppers are shielded from the hot summer sun.

The success of these markets represents strong, positive change for Wilcox County, and much of the credit goes to community leaders like Doris—a woman who is always smiling and who knows how to make things happen.

## **Maine**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Maine 5 A Day Program began in 1995 when a statewide 5 A Day Coalition was formed. This coalition included representatives from the state Bureau of Health, the state Department of Education, the state Department of Agriculture, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Maine Nutrition Network (MNN), Area Agencies on Aging, Hannaford Bros. Co. Supermarkets, state farmers' markets, and private community groups.

During its 5 years of existence, the coalition awarded mini-grants to communities and used media events, presentations, and exhibits to promote and evaluate the consumption of fruits and vegetables in communities, schools, and work sites. It also produced an educational video.

### **Program Focus**

The mission of Maine's 5 A Day Program is to increase residents' access to and consumption of high-quality fruits and vegetables, particularly locally grown produce. This goal is a key strategy to reduce Maine's high chronic disease and premature death rates.

Maine reports some of the highest percentages of people who die prematurely of the country's leading causes of preventable death—heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and diabetes.<sup>1</sup>

Although a healthy diet can help to reduce a person's risk for these diseases, 73% of Maine adults and 77.4% of high school students did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times of a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

Obesity increases a person's risk for many chronic diseases, and 58.6% of Maine adults were overweight or obese in 2002.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 36% of state kindergartners, 30.1% of middle school students, and 29.4% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight in 2003.<sup>10</sup>

### **Program Components**

Today, the 5 A Day Program works with several other state chronic disease prevention and control programs, including the MNN, the Cardiovascular Health Program, and the Maternal and Child Health Nutrition Program.

MNN distributes educational materials and provides nutrition programs through funding from the USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. With support from the state agriculture

department, MNN provides 5 A Day information and locally grown produce to seniors through the Farm Share program.

MNN also awards mini-grants to communities to increase residents' access to and consumption of locally grown produce.

Community-level interventions with 5 A Day components have been conducted through the Healthy Maine Partnerships program, which supports efforts by 31 local partnerships to reduce tobacco use in the state. Local partnerships nurture broad coalitions of members of local communities and schools, who work together to implement policy and environmental changes that support healthy lifestyles.

Healthy Maine Partnerships has developed state and regional networks to facilitate collaboration for health promotion programs, including the 5 A Day Program.

Maine's 5 A Day coordinator conducts 5 A Day activities as part of her other duties. These duties include implementing obesity prevention programs that are funded through cooperative agreements with CDC and providing technical assistance and support to the Healthy Maine Partnerships program.

## **Bringing Fresh Produce to Seniors**

Helen lives in a rural community in Maine where she and her husband once farmed. Now, Helen is a widow at 78 and no longer has access to the fresh produce she once grew herself. Fortunately, she has just been approved for her state's Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

Each summer and fall, Helen will be able to buy \$100 worth of fresh fruits and vegetables from her local farm stand—and have it delivered if necessary. Helen was one of 7,600 seniors in Maine who received this benefit in 2004.

Helen, like many older Americans, faces financial challenges because of her need for costly prescription drugs. Because fresh produce tends to cost more than processed foods, she often does not buy it. Her limited transportation options also mean fewer trips to the grocery store or farm stand.

In 2001, the USDA developed the pilot SFMNP to provide fresh, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs to adults 60 or older with low incomes. Maine was one of 25 states to receive funding the first year.

To reduce the stigma that many seniors attach to food stamp coupons or vouchers, Maine developed a Farm Share program that allows low-income seniors and organizations that provide food for them to contract for “shares” of fresh produce during local growing seasons. Farmers distribute the produce at farm stands, farmers' markets, housing sites, meal distribution sites, and food pantries.

A key to the program's success is the partnership between organizations and individuals representing farmers, seniors, and nutrition experts. The Maine Department of Agriculture is the lead agency, but the larger partnership ensures that all interests are represented when programs are developed. Partners include local Area Agencies on Aging, the Maine Bureau of Elder and Adult Services, the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Maine Nutrition Network, local farmers, and volunteer organizations that serve seniors.

Through focus group discussions with seniors and farmers, Farm Share partners found that seniors wanted to learn how to cook for 1–2 people and how to select, prepare, and store fresh produce. Now, seasonal mailings that highlight recipes, storage hints, and nutrition tips are sent to seniors, and mini-grants are offered to local groups for educational activities.

One farmer developed recipes specific to the produce he grows and demonstrated these recipes to seniors living in housing units. Another minigrant recipient developed a CD-ROM on the health benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables and participating in a community garden.

As the Farm Share program approaches its fourth year, the number of participating farms has increased 25%, and the number of seniors who apply has outgrown the shares available. A 2003 survey found that 93% of participating seniors had increased their fruit and vegetable

consumption. Organizers have presented the program to policy makers around the country as a model that maximizes benefits to multiple groups.

The program also receives rave reviews from seniors and farmers. Laura, an 81- year-old participant, noted that she had recently used her remaining credit “to get a good supply of cabbage, squash, and potatoes—things that would keep for a while.”

“Before moving to a senior apartment, my husband and I had a garden,” she said. “It’s the thing we miss most about leaving our home. God bless whoever is responsible for this program.”

## **Maryland**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Maryland's 5 A Day Program began in 1993 in the state's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. The program currently operates in the Center for Preventive Health Services as part of the Chronic Disease Prevention Team.

### **Program Focus**

Making the 5 A Day Program part of the state's Center for Preventive Health Services encourages local health departments to incorporate messages on healthy eating into their own prevention programs.

Recent research emphasizes fruit and vegetable consumption as part of the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet aimed at lowering high blood pressure. This approach supports the 5 A Day message and clearly demonstrates how eating more fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for cardiovascular disease and other chronic diseases.

Such messages also will be included in Maryland's new Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, which will work to prevent obesity among state residents.

The percentage of Maryland adults who eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day has increased steadily from 21% in 1990 to 28.9% in 2003.<sup>2</sup> The numbers vary by race, with 32.4% of Hispanics, 28.6% of whites, and 27.5% of African Americans meeting this goal.

In addition, death rates from cardiovascular disease and the prevalence of their risk factors are considerably higher among certain racial and ethnic groups in Maryland. For example, African American men and women die more often of cardiovascular disease, and African American women have higher prevalences of high blood pressure, diabetes, and obesity.<sup>11</sup>

Because Maryland has a large African American population (27.9%),<sup>12</sup> interventions that promote healthy diets must target this population.

### **Program Components**

In 2002, the Maryland Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyle Coalition was established to promote increased fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity among all Maryland residents.

The coalition committees address advocacy, communications, and education and also include the Maryland Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Workgroup. Currently, there are over 70

coalition partners, including the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, the state departments of health, education, and agriculture, and local agencies and organizations.

Maryland 5 A Day Program partners include the Maryland Action for Healthy Kids Team, the Maryland Folic Acid Council, the state departments of agriculture and education, and other members of the coalition.

Federal PHHS Block Grants have allowed grant coordinators in local health departments to target 5 A Day interventions to schools, day care centers, faith-based groups, work sites, and communities throughout Maryland.

A state 5 A Day coordinator provides technical assistance to local coordinators on evidenced-based interventions, assessment tools, and surveillance of fruit and vegetable consumption. Local coordinators also are working to make farmers' markets in their communities more convenient and accessible.

In 2003, the 5 A Day Program distributed more than 82,000 educational materials to cardiovascular health coordinators, teachers, health professionals, and farmers' market programs aimed at helping low-income residents buy fresh produce. Since 1997, Maryland has received five USDA Team Nutrition grants to train school food service workers how to promote a healthy school environment and increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

## **Fruits and Vegetables Galore for State Employees**

Jane is a state employee with a strong interest in physical fitness. She is healthy and active, but she didn't think much about her diet until the Preston Street Farmers' Market opened at the state office complex in Baltimore where she works. Now, every week from May to October, Jane can buy fresh, reasonably priced produce.\* Although the juicy, red tomatoes are her favorite, she recently tried eggplant because of the tempting promotional display.

Shopping for produce during the workday in downtown Baltimore once meant searching for one of the few markets large enough to have a substantial produce section and then using your entire lunch hour to get there and back—an effort few people were willing to make.

After working with the Maryland Department of Aging on the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, staff members in the state health department decided in 2002 to set up a farmers' market at the state office complex. This project allowed 5,000 state employees to reap the health benefits of greater access to fresh produce.

Now, instead of going home to a dinner pulled from the freezer, employees can make a tasty vegetable dish with fresh ingredients or complement prepared foods with a fresh salad or fruit.

“I can't wait for the market to return,” Jane said last winter. “I look at the front of the building where the banner used to hang, and I remember corn picked on the day of sale or tomatoes right off the vine, and I think about what I'm missing.”

The Preston Street market was established through the cooperative efforts of the state departments of health, general services, and agriculture. The general services department gets permission to use the wide sidewalk in front of the state office building on Preston Street and hangs a large promotional banner. A portico provides shelter and shade for vendors, so weather conditions are rarely a problem.

The agriculture department recruits farmers from surrounding counties who faithfully set up produce displays and enjoy a steady stream of shoppers from three nearby office buildings, a hospital, and the surrounding neighborhood. The health department organizes the partners' efforts, educates state employee wellness coordinators about the market, and hangs posters in area offices and around the neighborhood.

The market also is promoted throughout the 5 A Day Program and at events such as the Tri-City Challenge Kickoff and Smart Step Forward (a statewide walking campaign).

The variety of produce—strawberries, raspberries, eggplant, tomatoes, cauliflower, hot peppers, chard, potatoes, broccoli, watermelon, and the famous Eastern Shore cantaloupes—enticed Chris, a single mother who lives in a nearby neighborhood, to stop by the market as she exited the subway a few yards away.

“This is really convenient for me,” she said. “But the best part is how much food I can get for my money. Ten dollars goes a long way here.”



In addition to offering state employees greater access to fresh produce, market organizers work to increase employees' awareness of the health benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables every day. And they hope this knowledge will translate into action when employees provide food for office meetings.

According to Jane, it does. "When I have a meeting where food is provided, I try to include more fruits and vegetables. People really like it when they can munch on an apple or vegetable sticks instead of heavy pastries or doughnuts. They like having a healthier choice."

\*An increased level of security at the state office complex resulted in the closing of this market.

## **Vermont**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

In 1991, Vermont was one of the first states to implement the 5 A Day Program through its state health department. Initial projects included working with grocery stores to encourage fruit and vegetable consumption with eye-catching displays and taste testings.

Grocery stores also paired with elementary schools as part of a program called Show the Way to 5 A Day. Stores provided fruits and vegetables to students, and 5 A Day Program staff members developed an interdisciplinary curriculum that promoted better nutrition in music, art, math, and social studies classes.

Although funding for the program has not continued, Vermont grocery stores still promote the 5 A Day Program. In addition, the Vermont Department of Health continues to incorporate 5 A Day messages into new and ongoing programs whenever possible.

### **Program Focus**

Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in Vermont is a key strategy for reducing the state's prevalence of obesity and chronic disease. In 2002, 54.5% of state adults were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 14.1% of high school students were overweight, and 10.8% were at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Yet only 32.5% of adults and 26.5% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

In 1995, Vermont used CDC funding to hire a part-time nutritionist to create a 5 A Day Coalition. Through a partnership with the University of Vermont's Cooperative Extension System and the state's department of agriculture, the coalition created exhibits and materials for distribution at state farmers' markets and health fairs.

Vermont also received funding from the USDA for a Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program, which helped support the 5 A Day message by providing teacher training, nutrition curricula, and other resources.

The NET Program also produced and distributed a preschool program— called Count to 5; Count to 6—that encouraged students to eat more grains as well as fruits and vegetables. Unfortunately, funding for the NET Program is no longer available.

Although funding and staffing levels have been limited in recent years, Vermont remains committed to the 5 A Day Program. For example, low-income women aged 40–64 who participate in CDC’s WISEWOMAN preventive health services program are taught the benefits of increased fruit and vegetable consumption through the New Leaf nutrition education program.

In 2003, this program enabled more than 100 women to work with a health department nutritionist to set goals for healthy eating to reduce their risk for cardiovascular disease.

Also in 2003, approximately 4,000 low-income residents enrolled in the state WIC Program received Farm to Family coupons that allowed them to buy fresh produce at local farmers’ markets.

In 2004, Vermont launched the Fit and Healthy Kids Daylight Savings Challenge to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity. This weeklong event is celebrated throughout Vermont every spring and fall, with children of all ages asked to “move more, turn off the TV, and eat more colors.”

Event prizes included a walk with the governor followed by a fruit and vegetable snack and tickets to a Vermont Voltage soccer game.

## **Farm to Family Program Makes Everyone a Winner**

Thanks to the Vermont Farm to Family Program, families in Vermont are eating more fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables than ever before. The program allows low-income families who are nutritionally at risk to receive coupons through their local WIC office or Community Action Agencies. The coupons can be redeemed for fresh produce from participating farmers' markets from June through October.

To receive coupons, families are first asked to participate in a nutrition education session about fruits and vegetables. In addition, the WIC Growing Healthy Families quarterly newsletter provides information on how to select and prepare fresh produce, as well as recipes that use locally grown fruits and vegetables. Some of these recipes are from the national 5 A Day Web site.

When surveyed, 75% of participants said they had eaten more fresh fruits and vegetables during the summer than usual and that they planned to continue doing so throughout the year. They also reporting buying a fruit or vegetable that they'd never tried before, and more than half said they had learned a new way to prepare or cook fresh produce.

Participants had many positive things to say about the Farm to Family Program. One mother said her 4-yearold daughter had previously turned down most vegetables. "Now that she helps pick them out and pay for them with coupons, she eats them. Thank you so much, not just for the food, but also for the learning and family experience."

Another mother said, "My son, age 6, would not eat a vegetable. I gave him \$4 in coupons to spend at the farmers' market. He bought zucchini, and when we got home, he helped me make zucchini bread. From then on, when we went to the market, he would get a different vegetable to try. It worked!"

Everyone is a winner with this program—the families who are eating healthier foods and the local farmers who are selling more produce. According to a survey of Farm to Family participants, nearly two-thirds reported that they take another adult with them when they go to a farmers' market, and 77% said they spend their own money in addition to the WIC coupons.

"Hooray for Farm to Family! My husband isn't a big veggie eater, but even he has tried new things from the market—and enjoyed them too! We really appreciate it, especially me because I LOVE fruits and vegetables, and the program helps me provide the 5 A Day that my family and I need."

## **Alaska**

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### **Background**

Alaska's 5 A Day Program began in 1993, and it is one of several programs coordinated by a community nutritionist working in the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

### **Program Focus**

Increasing the number of people who eat a healthy diet is important to reducing Alaska's chronic disease burden. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains can help to reduce a person's risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and certain types of cancer, which are among the state's leading causes of death.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, 77.4% of Alaska adults and 83.9% of high school students did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup> In addition, 61.1% of adults were overweight or obese in 2002,<sup>2</sup> and 25.4% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight in 2003.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

Alaska is unique because of its vast land with few roads; airplanes and ferries are the most common modes of transportation. Most of the state's food is brought in by airplane or barge. Fruits and vegetables are often expensive and in poor condition by the time they reach the supermarket, especially in more remote areas.

Realizing this challenge, the 5 A Day coordinator obtained funding from the National Cancer Institute and CDC in the late 1990s for a campaign called the Alaskan Way to 5 A Day. The campaign was intended to educate residents about the health benefits of eating canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables when they cannot get fresh produce. The 2-year project cost approximately \$95,000.

Although money is an ongoing challenge for the 5 A Day Program, other state agencies and partners sometimes fund special projects, such as 5 A Day recipes designed specifically for Alaska, displays and brochures, buying guides for fruits and vegetables, and focus groups to gauge how often people eat fruits and vegetables.

Free 5 A Day materials are available from the state and can be used to promote 5 A Day messages in local communities through health fairs and community events, in classrooms, and through youth programs.

These materials also are used by other state programs, such as the state WIC Program, the WIC Farmers' Market Program, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and the Commodity Supplemental Foods Program.

In addition, the 5 A Day Program is promoted statewide by a coalition of health professionals, state agencies, and community groups called Eat Smart Alaska. The coalition's mission is "to shape food consumption in a positive way to promote health and reduce the burden of disease among all Alaskans."

Its long-term objectives include increasing the percentage of adults and children who eat at least 5 daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Eat Smart Alaska is the perfect forum for promoting 5 A Day messages in Alaska, and in 2004, it added a 5 A Day subcommittee for this purpose.

## **The Alaskan Way to 5 A Day**

Have you ever heard the legend of Jack Thomas? People say that Jack lived alone in a cabin somewhere above the Arctic Circle in Alaska—no one knows exactly where. He kept to himself, coming into town only occasionally to get supplies.

Jack was an intimidating man, 6' 5" tall, with a scowl that could make even a large man quiver. But despite his rough exterior, he was a gentle man with a good heart.

When Jack came to town, many people stopped to talk with him, and when they did, they would always hear about Jack's battle with colon cancer. He was a lucky man—he'd made a full recovery, and he wanted everyone to know about it.

More importantly, he wanted to tell people what his doctor had said—that to prevent a recurrence of his cancer, he should take care of himself and eat more fruits and vegetables. Jack worried about other people getting sick like him, so he encouraged them to eat healthier foods too.

But people's responses were always the same: "Fruits and vegetables cost too much! And the lettuce and other vegetables are always wilted."

Unfortunately, this was true. Fruits and vegetables are very expensive in Alaska. Even a wilted head of lettuce costs \$7! So Jack's concerns are real, even if Jack himself is not. The truth is, the legend of Jack Thomas is just that—a legend. But it illustrates the real obstacles to healthy eating that many people face in our state.

In many rural and remote villages throughout Alaska, fresh fruits and vegetables are too expensive, not available at all, or of poor quality because of long shipping times.

To combat these problems, the state's 5 A Day Program launched a pilot campaign called the Alaskan Way to 5 A Day. The campaign was designed to educate residents about the health benefits of eating canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables when fresh produce is not available.

For the first phase of the campaign, the coordinator of our 5 A Day Program trained several community health representatives to conduct food demonstrations and focus group surveys in 6 rural grocery stores across the state.

Each trainee received a demonstration kit that included a training manual and video, an electric skillet, cooking utensils, and simple recipes adapted or developed especially for canned, frozen, or fresh fruits and vegetables. Everything fit into a large plastic container that could be easily mailed.

People responded well to the pilot campaign, and we used the survey responses to develop Alaska-specific educational materials, including a poster, a flyer, and recipes. All of the

materials featured and strongly encouraged Alaskan subsistence foods such as berries and wild greens.

These materials were distributed in grocery stores, schools, clinics, and at health fairs and other community events. To reinforce the campaign, we created six 1-minute public service announcements, each of which demonstrated a different fast and easy recipe using canned and frozen fruits and vegetables.

One of the biggest obstacles for the community health representatives was finding time in their already busy schedules to conduct the campaign. In addition, they sometimes had trouble transmitting their data to the state office over remote phone lines.

Despite these problems, the campaign was very popular among nutrition educators, and requests for food demonstration kits are still coming in. Fortunately, the state health department was able to distribute kits to all 18 of the state's WIC agencies, and we're looking for funding to assemble more.

The Alaska Way to 5 A Day campaign educates residents about the health benefits of eating canned, frozen, and dried fruits and vegetables when fresh produce is not available.



## **Michigan**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Michigan 5 A Day Program, which began in 1993, sublicenses local health, academic, and wellness organizations throughout the state to conduct specific projects. At the state level, activities are integrated throughout the Department of Community Health in program areas such as nutrition, cardiovascular health, physical activity, diabetes, arthritis, and cancer.

Activities also are conducted through the state WIC Program and through WISEWOMAN, a CDC program that provides preventive health services to low-income, underinsured and uninsured women aged 40–64. Funding comes from the state's general fund and from CDC and the National Cancer Institute. Until 2003, the Healthy Michigan Fund also provided financial support.

### **Program Focus**

The 5 A Day Program works to help state residents eat more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy lifestyle. Only 22.6% of Michigan adults and 18% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

In addition, state rates of chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and obesity are higher than the national average.<sup>1</sup> Rates are even higher among certain minority populations, in part because of demographic challenges.

For example, people living in the remote, rural Upper Peninsula are cut off from the rest of Michigan by the Great Lakes. Poor, minority populations in urban areas such as Detroit suffer a range of health problems, as do many immigrants (Michigan is home to the country's largest Middle Eastern population).

### **Program Components**

Objectives of the 5 A Day Program include the following:

- Promoting fruits and vegetables as a way to improve overall health and to help reduce risk for heart disease and some cancers.
- Reaching residents through local health jurisdictions and other health organizations and professionals.

- Providing materials, support, and technical assistance to local agencies and health professionals.

Nearly 200 groups—including the state department of education, local health departments, Michigan State University Extension county offices, hospitals, and employee wellness programs—conduct local 5 A Day programs. The state’s largest partner is a coalition of private industry representatives.

Over the years, the 5 A Day Program has conducted projects with several grocery stores, including Meijer, Kroger, and Spartan Stores. Highlights include the following:

- Promotion of 5 A Day messages through 5 Fast Ways to 5 A Day kits, which were purchased by 425 grocery stores and distributed to nearly 4 million residents.
- Distribution and demonstration of healthy recipes, distribution of calendars that list seasonal produce, and publication of healthy hints in store newsletters.
- Distribution of educational materials and guidelines for preparing easy, nutritious snacks to grade school students.
- Distribution of guidelines for working with grocery stores to community health educators.
- Development of Healthy Eating Made Easy magazine, which encourages women to challenge their families to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. A cardiovascular health grant funded this project.

## **Bringing Fresh Produce to the Inner City**

The far-flung suburbs around Detroit may be prospering, but the inner city has a shrinking population and thousands of abandoned and decaying buildings—the result of economic disinvestment, destructive riots, and suburban migration.

Those residents left in the city deal daily with poor transportation, social isolation, and streets that are unsafe because of crime and heavy traffic. The inner city has lost much of the social and physical infrastructure needed to support urban life, including many grocery stores. As a result, many people don't eat enough fresh fruits and vegetables.

To address this problem, health officials knew that they needed specifics—what exactly prevents people from being able to eat a healthy diet? To find out, they turned to the REACH Detroit Partnership, which works to prevent diabetes and improve quality of life in African American and Hispanic communities in Detroit.

Members of the REACH Detroit Partnership conducted focus group interviews with inner-city residents and community groups. They found that people lacked access to fresh produce, whole grains, and low-fat food in stores and restaurants.

Neighborhood stores were described as dirty and stocked largely with alcohol, cigarettes, poor quality and outdated foods, and junk food. Residents also said they didn't know how to prepare healthy foods. Social and cultural support for developing healthy eating habits was lacking, as were the personal knowledge and motivation needed to make these changes.

As a clearer picture of the problem began to emerge, it was time to work on solutions. Fortunately, the REACH Detroit Partnership could draw on support from its many partners. In 2000, under the leadership of the University of Michigan School of Public Health, the Promoting Healthy Eating in Detroit project was born.

Funding and support also came from the Cardiovascular Health, Nutrition, and Physical Activity Section of the Michigan Department of Community Health.

The goal of the project is to increase access to and demand for healthy foods among residents of two Detroit neighborhoods. Together, these areas are home to about 250,000 people— 66% of them non-Hispanic black, 24% Hispanic, and 14% non-Hispanic white.<sup>13</sup> Nearly half of the residents live below the poverty level and didn't finish high school. Unemployment rates are as high as 36%.<sup>13</sup>

Project organizers focused on two strategies to increase access to healthy food. The first was encouraging community stores to sell more and better produce and other healthy foods. The second was bringing produce to trusted community settings—such as community centers—within walking distance of residents.

Because neighborhood “mini-markets” had proven successful in the past, four new ones were added at other sites. They currently open once a month and are being evaluated for opening twice a month.

But increasing the supply of healthy food is only half the solution. To increase demand, project organizers conducted shopping and cooking demonstrations and classes, recipe exchanges, coupon give-aways and food samplings, and breakfast and lunch clubs.

Events were advertised through neighborhood newsletters and the local newspaper. Educational materials printed in English and Spanish were distributed through culturally appropriate channels.

So far, results have been positive. Access to fresh fruits and vegetables that are cheaper and of better quality has increased in the project areas. Innercity communities are actively working to improve the eating habits of their residents. Meanwhile, health officials are working hard to sustain, expand, and evaluate these initial successes.

So far, results have been positive. Access to fresh fruits and vegetables that are cheaper and of better quality has increased in the project areas. Inner-city communities are actively working to improve the eating habits of their residents.

## **Montana**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Montana's 5 A Day Program began in 1992 with the formation of Eat Right Montana, a statewide coalition that promotes 5 A Day messages and other issues related to nutrition and physical activity.

The 5 A Day coordinator chairs the coalition, which includes representatives from the nutrition and physical activity communities, as well as from governmental, educational, and nonprofit organizations.

The coordinator position began in the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program of the Chronic Disease Section of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services. However, this program has evolved into the Cardiovascular Health Program, leaving the coordinator less time to spend on 5 A Day activities.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, only 21.9% of Montana adults and 16.7% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup> To address this problem, state public health nutritionists are working to improve residents' access to fruits and vegetables in hopes of increasing their consumption.

### **Program Components**

For the past 10 years, Eat Right Montana has conducted several activities to promote the 5 A Day Program. These include developing a 5 A Day bingo game and a booklet called Eat Montana Foods that features recipes for state produce.

Through its Healthy Families nutrition and physical activity campaign, Eat Right Montana continues to stress the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy diet.

Other 5 A Day activities have been conducted through Head Start and the state WIC Program. For example, a Getting a Head Start with 5 A Day Fun Kit was created for Head Start children and their parents. The kit includes a video and educational materials. It was paid for with funding from CDC and the National Cancer Institute.

CDC funding also allowed state officials to adapt the kit for families participating in the state WIC Program. An evaluation of this intervention indicated that a statistically significant number of parents and children were eating more fruit and vegetables compared with a control group that did not receive the intervention.

Because Montana lacks specific funding for the 5 A Day Program, several state groups have integrated 5 A Day messages into their activities. For example, the Cardiovascular Health Program included 5 A Day strategies in its state plan for preventing heart disease and stroke, and it provided start-up funding for a community garden on the Flathead Indian Reservation.

In 2003, the Cardiovascular Health Program and Eat Right Montana awarded nearly \$10,000 in 5 A Day mini-grants to 20 community groups, including those working in schools, WIC clinics, and county extension service offices.

Applicants were encouraged to develop sustainable activities, such as increasing the variety of produce offered in school meals.

The State Advisory Council on Food and Nutrition created a public service announcement in which the governor promoted state farmers' markets. It also distributed charts to WIC clinics that listed which produce items were "best buys" at certain times of the year.

In addition, the state dietetic association supported passage of a law that provided one-time matching funds from the state for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

State public health nutritionists are working to improve residents' access to fruits and vegetables in hopes of increasing their consumption.

## **Seeds of Health**

What can bring young people and older adults together, build a sense of community, and help people improve their health? Community gardens.

Community gardens are a great way to help people eat more fruits and vegetables. With that in mind, Montana's Cardiovascular Health Program awarded a \$5,000 mini-grant to the Flathead Indian Reservation for a Community Gardens Project.

Located in western Montana, the reservation is home to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes. Because reservations typically have few grocery stores and are located in remote areas, access to a variety of fresh produce is limited.

The Community Gardens Project can counter this problem by helping people grow their own food. The project was launched in June 2003 in five towns, with \$1,000 contributed from the Catholic diocese and plants donated from several area greenhouses.

But before the project coordinators could even get started, they were put to the test. Because the project was funded with money leftover at the end of the fiscal year, the coordinators had only 2 days to buy everything they needed— seeds, seedlings, fruit trees, and garden supplies. And they did it!

The next step was to challenge residents in each town to come up with unique ways to get as many community members as possible involved in the project. In the town of Arlee, for example, a garden was planted at a local church, and community members adopted a row to tend throughout the summer. Church members were encouraged to help themselves to the bounty, and excess produce was donated to area farmers' markets, local food pantries, and senior centers.

In Hot Springs, three gardens were planted, one of which included fall crops such as leafy greens, cherry tomatoes, peppers, and several herbs. One of the gardens was placed in the middle of town for easy access.

In Big Arm and Polson, volunteers augmented their personal gardens with seeds from the Community Gardens Project, and then donated part of their crops to programs that serve senior citizens and homebound residents with diabetes. Volunteers also created container gardens that included salsa pots (peppers and cherry tomatoes), pesto gardens (chives, basil, and green onions), and window boxes with lettuce. The containers were then placed on the porches of local families.

Despite withering heat, ravenous grasshoppers, and endless river rocks mixed in the soil, project participants couldn't be stopped. In Arlee, the garden benefited more than 140 residents, including 90 seniors and 78 tribal members.

"It's very satisfying to see other people gain from the garden," said gardener Glenna Nelson.

In addition to providing people with fresh produce, the Community Gardens Project can teach them about the importance of eating healthy foods every day. It also brings together the diverse groups that live on the Flathead Reservation, which include members of several different American Indian tribes as well as many non-Native Americans.

In the future, project coordinators hope to expand one of the gardens to include traditional plants and berries indigenous to the Salish and Kootenai tribes.

For now, thanks to the many volunteers involved, the dream of turning “seed money” into real seeds and plants to help people eat a healthier diet is a reality.



## **New York**

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### **Background**

Because the New York State 5 A Day Program does not receive dedicated state funding, its activities are integrated into several areas of the New York State Department of Health. These include the Nutrition and Physical Activity Program and several programs in the Division of Chronic Disease and the Division of Nutrition.

The state 5 A Day coordinator works in the Nutrition Policy and Health Promotion Unit of the Division of Nutrition and spends about 25% of her time on 5 A Day activities.

### **Program Focus**

The goal of the 5 A Day Program is to help residents eat more fruits and vegetables in order to help them reduce their risk for chronic disease and achieve a healthy weight. In 2003, only 25.8% of adults and 24.3% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

To promote the 5 A Day Program in New York, a work group inventoried existing programs and promotions, identified valuable partners, and noted gaps in existing efforts. The work group also helped develop and implement the New York State Strategic Plan for Overweight and Obesity Prevention, which is funded through a cooperative agreement with CDC.

Several 5 A Day projects have been conducted as part of the Division of Chronic Disease's Healthy Heart Program, including interventions at work sites—for example, promoting fruit and vegetable consumption through health fairs, community events, and newsletters. Interventions such as school vegetable gardens, cooking clubs, and food policy changes also have been conducted in elementary schools.

Other efforts include community gardens funded by faith-based grants, promotions at farmers' markets, and a Fruit Power campaign in one county in which grocery stores offered free fruit to children.

Examples of Division of Nutrition programs that conduct 5 A Day activities include the following:

- Eat Well Play Hard, a public health intervention to prevent childhood obesity that distributed mini-grants to schools and day cares for gardens and greenhouses and supported an apple club at a local supermarket. The program also partnered with a local McDonald's to add low-fat milk and a choice of salad or fruit cup to its Happy Meals.
- The state WIC Program, which promotes fruits and vegetables at its clinics and helps inner-city residents buy fresh produce at farmers' markets. It also partnered with Cornell University and the state Department of Agriculture and Markets to create Farm Fresh videos that highlight and offer recipes using locally grown produce.
- The Child and Adult Care Food Program, which received copies of the Farm Fresh videos and training to help staff members promote fruit and vegetable consumption in child and adult care facilities throughout the state.

Other state partners include the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program, the Cancer Services Program, the Diabetes Control Program, the Office of Minority Health, the Office of Local Health Services, and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

Other efforts include community gardens funded by faith-based grants, promotions at farmers' markets, and a Fruit Power campaign in one county in which grocery stores offered free fruit to children.

## **Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables**

People with limited resources often make poor food choices, which can lead to chronic health problems such as obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

To address this problem, New York health officials launched the Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Project in 1996. The project aims to help low-income people eat healthier foods by removing some of the barriers that prevent them from including fruits and vegetables in their daily diets. Specifically, it targets families on food stamps who use the state's nearly 1,600 food pantries.

The project is operated by the New York State Department of Health in collaboration with organizations that serve the hungry. It is funded by a grant from the USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

To make sure they were spending their money wisely, state officials conducted focus groups with food pantry operators and clients throughout the state. They found that operators were reluctant to distribute fresh produce because it spoils so quickly. Clients said they wanted more fresh fruits and vegetables, but they needed to know how to store and prepare them.

On the basis of this feedback, the Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Project was born. Community leaders in local social service departments, church groups, and community action agencies were contacted for advice on planning and implementation.

Four nutritionists were hired to provide nutrition education, as well as food demonstrations and tastings that highlighted fresh produce, to food pantry clients. Several counties participated in pilot activities, and the nutritionists found that many clients "were eager and ready" to improve their families' diets. Food pantry operators praised the project for adding "a wonderful new dimension to our community services."

As word spread about the project's acceptance, other food pantries wanted to participate. An administrative coordinator and four more nutritionists were hired, and in 2003, the staff conducted 274 food demonstrations, reaching 20,000 clients.

Conducting these activities at the food pantries gave state health officials immediate access to low-income residents—and the residents received more than handouts. They learned about shopping, food safety, and healthy eating, and they received free produce to take home.

To standardize the project and train food pantry operators, a handbook with healthy recipes, preparation and storage information, and an emphasis on the importance of buying local produce was developed. More information also is available on the Internet at <http://www.jsyfruitveggies.org>.

But the real story behind the project is the community and government partnerships that have developed to enhance it. Through these partnerships, project nutritionists work to provide support beyond their limited funding. For example, in early 2004, the state began operating a mobile van that brings the program to food pantries that cannot accommodate it in-house. The van also will bring fruits and vegetables to other people in need throughout the state.

More importantly, the van demonstrates how the Just Say Yes to Fruits and Vegetables Project can help to overcome the many challenges that can prevent New Yorkers from eating a healthy diet and improving their lives.

## **Wisconsin**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Wisconsin 5 A Day Program began in September 1994. It promotes fruit and vegetable consumption by incorporating 5 A Day strategies into existing chronic disease and nutrition programs within the Wisconsin Division of Public Health. A 5 A Day Coalition was formed as a public-private partnership to communicate the message that eating 5–9 servings of fruit and vegetables a day can improve the health of Wisconsin citizens.

### **Program Focus**

Wisconsin is using 5 A Day strategies to support its efforts to prevent overweight and obesity and associated chronic diseases (e.g., diabetes, some cancers, heart disease) throughout the life span of its residents. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for these health problems.

In 2002, 57.9% of Wisconsin adults were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 24.1% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Yet in 2003, only 21.5% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> In addition, only 34% of high school students had eaten 3 or more servings of fruit on the previous day, and only 18% had eaten 3 or more servings of vegetables.<sup>14</sup>

For both adults and young people, these percentages are likely to be even lower during the winter when fresh produce is less available.

### **Program Components**

The Wisconsin 5 A Day Coalition is a voluntary coalition that meets quarterly. Partners include the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, the Department of Public Instruction, the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension, the American Cancer Society, citizen advocates, food retailers, and other industry representatives.

In 2002, the coalition began working with the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program of the state WIC Program to incorporate 5 A Day strategies into existing projects. The result was the Vegin' Out Program, which increases people's access to fruits and vegetables and teaches them how to use and prepare fresh produce.

The coalition also developed a local 5 A Day Coalition in Wood County to increase local visibility, knowledge, and awareness of the 5 A Day Program and to build relationships with local retailers.

Wisconsin's 5 A Day Program is located in the Nutrition and Physical Activity Section of the Division of Public Health's Bureau of Community Health Promotion, which merged with the Bureau of Chronic Disease Health Promotion and Prevention in July 2004. This change will increase integration and coordination with diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer, arthritis, and tobacco programs.

Although the 5 A Day coordinator was initially funded through a Maternal and Child Health Title 5 Block Grant, funding now comes from a CDC cooperative agreement. The nutrition coordinator of the state's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program oversees the 5 A Day Program.

During 2004, state officials incorporated 5 A Day action plans developed in 2003 into the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases, which is slated for release in 2005.

## **Teamwork Makes a Great Idea a Success**

To promote the 5 A Day Program in Wisconsin, we started with a great idea—the Veggin’ Out Program, which seeks to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income people by providing food and cooking demonstrations at local farmers’ markets.

The program was created at Johnson & Wales University in Rhode Island. A speaker at the 2001 National Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) Conference enthusiastically described how the chefs and students at her culinary school partnered with the Rhode Island WIC Program to offer demonstrations in low-income, ethnically diverse neighborhoods.

As Wisconsin’s 5 A Day coordinator, I immediately thought this program would further the goals of our state’s nutrition programs. The program also could support the Wisconsin Nutrition and Physical Activity Workgroup’s goal of preventing overweight and obesity in the state.

In addition, it could address some of the common barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption—limited access and lack of knowledge about selection and preparation.

When I returned from the conference, I discussed the idea with key partners, and all were supportive. The Rhode Island WIC Program and Johnson & Wales University gave us permission to adopt the program in Wisconsin, and they provided training.

Financial and staff support came from members of the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network and the state WIC Program. As word spread about the program, we received even more interest and support.

New partners included local WIC agencies and health departments, schools and universities, faith-based and community organizations, restaurants, farmers’ markets, the Hunger Task Force in Milwaukee, and the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

With this team support in place, the Veggin’ Out Program in Wisconsin was off and running. We compiled and adapted materials from the Rhode Island program and developed our own training manual that included marketing materials, lesson plans, and a list of equipment needs, recipes, and resources.

We launched the program in the summer of 2002 with food tastings and cooking demonstrations at farmers’ markets throughout the state. Although the target audience was WIC and Senior FMNP participants and other low-income residents, events were open to everyone attending the markets.

The demonstrations stressed the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables and presented easy-to-prepare recipes using locally available produce. Other topics included the FMNP voucher system; food safety; and the need to decrease hunger, increase physical activity, and decrease obesity in the state.

The program is designed to be flexible and adaptable to the resources available. Materials and demonstrations can be modified for smaller groups or individuals in WIC clinics. Whenever possible, we used existing resources, such as farmers' market cookbooks, an Eat Well, Play Hard . . . The Farmers' Market Way! booklet, and fruit and vegetable education cards.

In 2002, the pilot Veggin' Out Program reached 1,117 adults and 272 children through 34 events in 8 counties. Of the participants surveyed, 98% said they planned to eat more fruits and vegetables because of the program. Ten new community partnerships were formed, and a new local partner provided funding to continue the program.

In 2003, the program reached 1,358 adults and 277 children through 28 events. Of the participants surveyed, 93% said they planned to eat more fruits and vegetables. Our partners praised the program, and several local newspapers and television stations covered the events. In 2004, the program reached 800 adults and 200 children through 25 events.

This program has succeeded because of the many partners who came together to make a great idea a reality.

"Our program has succeeded because of the many partners who came together to make a great idea a reality."



## **Colorado**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Shortly after the 5 A Day Program was introduced in Colorado, the Colorado 5 A Day Coalition was formed to lead the state's efforts to encourage state residents to eat more fruits and vegetables. The coalition is organized through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the state Department of Agriculture.

The coalition is composed of diverse organizations and individuals who share the common goal of improving the health of Coloradoans. Primary funding comes from a CDC cooperative agreement, which helps states develop a Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases.

### **Program Focus**

The mission of the Colorado 5 A Day Coalition is 1) to educate all Coloradoans about the health benefits of eating 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day and 2) to find innovative ways to encourage residents to eat more fruits and vegetables.

In 2002, more than 53% of Colorado adults were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> Yet in 2003, only 24.2% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> Cardiovascular disease and cancer are the two leading causes of death in Colorado,<sup>1</sup> and both can be affected by a person's diet.

### **Program Components**

The Colorado 5 A Day Coalition includes representatives from national health agencies and organizations (e.g., the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association); the state departments of agriculture, education, and public health; Colorado State University and the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center; and many private businesses (e.g., Klein Buendel, Peak Performance Nutrition and Fitness, Rock Bottom Brewing Company).

Two grocery chains in the state, King Soopers and Wild Oats Market, fund special events during national 5 A Day Month and National Employee Health and Fitness Day.

During 2003–2004, coalition members participated in more than 50 activities, such as conducting interventions in schools and grocery stores and working with a national restaurant chain to modify its menu on the basis of 5 A Day guidelines. In 2005, the coalition plans to promote these guidelines to other restaurants across the state.

The 5 A Day coordinator works in the Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Program of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. One-third of her time is dedicated to the 5 A Day Program; the other two-thirds is split between early childhood development and breastfeeding programs.

If a restaurant offers a wide variety of fruits and vegetables on its menu and also promotes these choices, parents can more easily select nutritious foods for their children.

## **Eating Out with Fruits and Vegetables**

Recently, Joyce and her 6-yearold son Billy had been eating most of their dinners at home so that Joyce could include more fruits and vegetables in their diet. But on one particular evening, Joyce had worked late, so the two decided to go out to eat as a special treat.

Joyce chose the Old Chicago restaurant—one of her favorites. But she was a little hesitant, as she didn't know if the restaurant would be able to provide enough fruits and vegetables for Billy's meal. Once they were seated, however, Joyce was surprised and pleased to find a "table tent" that read "5 A Day."

Then, she noticed that the waitress sported a button with the same message. Joyce learned that, as part of the state's 5 A Day Program, Old Chicago was promoting the fruits and vegetables on its menu. The waitress suggested that Joyce consider ordering a side salad or carrots and celery with ranch dressing. These foods would contribute to Joyce and Billy's fruit and vegetable intake for the day.

"Celery and carrot sticks with ranch dressing—Billy loves that," Joyce thought to herself. She also saw that the menu featured applesauce. "Perfect for dessert," she thought.

After their food arrived, Joyce smiled as she watched Billy crunch on his celery sticks, and she was glad they had chosen to eat at the Old Chicago restaurant.

Because of their busy schedules, many parents rely on eating out at restaurants for themselves and their children. But trying to order from a restaurant menu can sometimes frustrate people who are trying to eat a healthy diet. If a restaurant offers a wide variety of fruits and vegetables on its menu and also promotes these choices, parents can more easily select nutritious foods for their children.

The Colorado 5 A Day Restaurant Program is testing whether people will eat more fruits and vegetables if restaurants promote them more. The 4-week pilot program began with Old Chicago adding applesauce and celery and carrot sticks to its menu.

The program was promoted through table tents on every table, buttons worn by waiters and waitresses, and activity books distributed to children. The table tents included information about the menu items to help adults and children reach their 5 A Day goal. The promotion was designed to raise awareness and encourage people to eat more fruits and vegetables.

The pilot program will be evaluated to learn whether restaurant patrons ordered more fruits and vegetables during the 4-week promotional period. If the outcome is positive, the state's 5 A Day Coalition will work with the Colorado Restaurant Association and the Colorado Chefs Association to encourage other state restaurants to join the program.

The goal is for all restaurants in Colorado to be aware of the importance of offering more fruits and vegetables on their menus to help patrons improve their diets and their overall health.



## **West Virginia**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The West Virginia 5 A Day Program began shortly after the national 5 A Day Program was initiated in 1991. The program promotes fruit and vegetable consumption in West Virginia by collaborating with chronic disease and health promotion programs in the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health and with the West Virginia Nutrition and Chronic Disease Coalition.

This coalition includes representatives from the health care industry, government agencies, community and voluntary organizations, and educational institutions.

The coalition is working to develop an infrastructure to promote collaboration on 5 A Day activities throughout the state. The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, which is a member of the coalition, uses the skills and resources of the West Virginia Health Promotion Specialist Network to build community based collaboratives to promote physical activity and improved nutrition among state residents.

### **Program Focus**

Increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables among West Virginia residents is a key strategy for reducing the state's burden of chronic disease. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for heart disease and some cancers, which accounted for 29.6% and 22.1%, respectively, of all West Virginia deaths in 2002.<sup>15</sup>

A healthy diet also can help people avoid obesity, which increases their risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease, some cancers, diabetes, and stroke.

In 2002, 36.5% of West Virginia adults were overweight, and 25.6% were obese.<sup>2</sup> Yet only 18.7% of adults and 20.6% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

In July 2003, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health received funding from a CDC cooperative agreement to develop a Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases.

This funding pays for three full-time staff members—a program coordinator, a nutrition coordinator, and a physical activity coordinator. The coordinators are responsible for developing an integrated state plan to promote physical activity and improved nutrition that includes 5 A Day activities.

The West Virginia Public Employees' Insurance Agency helps promote the 5 A Day Program by providing a link on its Web site. In addition, the Bureau for Public Health's Division of Health Promotion provides community based grants to promote policy and environmental changes that encourage fruit and vegetable consumption.

These grants have been used to plant and cultivate gardens in schools and to post signs that encourage employees to buy fruits and vegetables in their cafeterias.

5 A Day: The Restaurant Way increases the number of healthy fruit and vegetable offerings on restaurant menus throughout the state.

## **5 A Day: The Restaurant Way**

Thomas is an absent-minded but likeable fellow in his early 50s. Like Mr. Magoo, Thomas is completely oblivious to the world around him. However, one thing that even Thomas has become aware of is his increasingly expanding waistline. Poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle have left Thomas sporting an extra 20 pounds.

Like most Americans, Thomas frequently eats meals away from home and selects foods according to their convenience rather than their nutritional value. Because Thomas is trying to get back into the dating scene and wants to look and feel his best, he has decided to become more active and improve his diet so that he can shed those extra pounds.

His plan of action includes walking 30 minutes a day 5 times a week and increasing his intake of fruits and vegetables to 5–9 servings a day. However, after planning this paradigm shift in his eating habits, Thomas discovers that his favorite restaurants offer little in the way of healthy fruits and vegetables. Eliminating french fries, onion rings, and other deepfried vegetables, as well as fruits and vegetables in heavy sauces, leaves him very few choices.

Thomas's discovery was confirmed by a survey of restaurants in 10 of the state's most populous cities. This survey found that only one-third of the participating restaurants offered healthy fruit or vegetable choices. The survey was conducted by the West Virginia University's (WVU) Department of Community Medicine on behalf of the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health.

In response to these results, the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, WVU, and members of the West Virginia Hospitality and Travel Association came together to sponsor 5 A Day: The Restaurant Way. This pilot study was designed to increase the number of healthy fruit and vegetable offerings on restaurant menus throughout the state.

The study was launched in June 2004. Organizers recruited restaurants to participate, identified healthy fruit and vegetable choices on their menus, distributed 5 A Day signs and materials to the participating restaurants, and evaluated the current menu selections made by customers.

A marketing plan was developed to promote the participating restaurants and their healthy food options. This plan allowed people like Thomas to know where to find fruits and vegetables when they eat away from home. Researchers at WVU will evaluate the study results.

Speaking of Thomas, after carefully scrutinizing the menus of his favorite restaurants, he was able to find or modify existing choices to meet his needs. He continues to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and he has stuck to his walking regimen. Thomas is happy to report that he has lost those 20 extra pounds, and he's feeling better than ever!

## **U.S. Coast Guard**

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### **Background**

The U.S. Coast Guard is one of five branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. It includes 39,000 active duty personnel and 7,800 selected reserve personnel.

It is the country's oldest continuous seagoing service, with responsibilities for search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, navigation, icebreaking, environmental protection, port security, and military readiness.

In 1998, the Coast Guard designated a coordinator for its 5 A Day Program. The program is intended to establish policy and provide leadership, programming, training, coordination for food services and nutrition education, and counseling throughout the Coast Guard.

### **Program Focus**

The mission of the Coast Guard 5 A Day Program is to enhance the physical well-being of Coast Guard personnel, so they can optimize their job performance.

### **Program Components**

The theme of the Coast Guard 5 A Day Program is "Make Way for 5 A Day." Its goals are to

- Educate and encourage all Coast Guard members to adopt and maintain healthy lifestyles and to eat 5–10 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
- Integrate 5 A Day initiatives into the culture and policies of the Coast Guard.
- Develop and implement ongoing evaluation of program effectiveness.
- Provide leadership and guidance to support 5 A Day initiatives.

To achieve these goals, officials are taking a three-pronged approach. The first is to increase awareness among Coast Guard members through posters, newsletters, and the Internet. The second is to educate them through videos and seminars about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.

The third approach is to implement interventions that promote behavior change, such as nutritional counseling and improved access to healthy options.



Since the 5 A Day Program began in 1998, several activities have been undertaken. In 1999, the Coast Guard participated in a joint Armed Forces video to promote the 5 A Day campaign.

In 2000, 5 A Day messages were integrated into the Crews Into Shape contest, which is an 8-week team challenge held in March and April. The contest encourages participants to eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, exercise for 30 minutes 5 or more days a week, drink plenty of fluids, and maintain or achieve a healthy weight.

The following year, a 1-week 5 A Day challenge was added in September during national 5 A Day Month.

In 2002, a national strategic planning session was held to increase awareness of the 5 A Day Program among headquarters staff.

In 2003, 5 A Day messages were integrated into military food service operations, and a 5 A Day business plan was developed. The plan includes a train-the-trainer workshop for food service personnel throughout the Coast Guard.

Future plans include extending the 5 A Day training conferences held recently in the northeastern United States to the entire country and integrating 5 A Day messages into all food service training. Officials also hope to develop a tool for measuring annual fruit and vegetable consumption at four ship kitchens and to integrate this tool into an existing survey that is conducted every 5 years.

To make sure they live up to their "always ready" motto, Coast Guard officials have instituted their own 5 A Day Program to help members eat a healthy diet and be as physically fit as possible.

## **Coast Guard Is Always Ready for 5 A Day**

The motto of the U.S. Coast Guard is “Semper Paratus,” which means “always ready.” To make sure they live up to this motto, Coast Guard officials have instituted their own 5 A Day Program to help members eat a healthy diet and be as physically fit as possible.

But how could they make sure the program was reaching as many members as possible? One bright sunny day in January 2002, the three members of the 5 A Day committee were looking for ways to answer this question.

“We need to get 5 A Day into the galleys,” recommended Michael DeLong, a food service chief. Committee members Harry Howell (also a food service chief) and Jeanett Skinner (coordinator of the 5 A Day Program) agreed.

DeLong proposed that the group conduct conferences to teach the cooks who serve in the kitchens or “galleys” of Coast Guard ships how to incorporate 5 A Day principles into their meals. Once they were trained, the cooks would be frontline champions of the program, helping the Coast Guard meet its goal of improving the health and eating habits of its members.

When the committee members took their proposal to Coast Guard headquarters, their enthusiasm was contagious. They were given a green light to make it happen. They began developing lesson plans, 5 A day menus, and implementation plans.

Six months later, the Coast Guard held its first 5 A Day training conference in Portland, Maine. Twenty-two food service specialists traveled from across the northeastern United States to attend.

Attendees learned how to make sure that their meals met the 5 A Day criteria, and they received hands-on experience cooking with 5 A Day recipes. They also learned about the nutritional value of different fruits and vegetables.

Their excitement about trying the new recipes and incorporating 5 A Day principles into their meal planning invigorated the 5 A Day committee members. They watched with satisfaction as their idea took off.

Since that first event, the program has taken root across the country, and conferences have been held in Hawai‘i, Michigan, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Washington. Despite limits in funding and staffing, the “Team Coast Guard” attitude has made these programs happen.

To further expand the 5 A Day Program, Jeanett travels throughout the United States, training food service specialists who aren’t able to attend the conferences. She also has introduced them to 5 A Day cycle menus.

Cycle menus repeat over a specific period of time, usually 3–6 weeks. They are essential for helping Coast Guard cooks plan and prepare safe, nutritious meals for crew members because ships are often away from shore for 4–6 weeks at a time.

As these 5 A Day cycle menus become more commonplace, the Coast Guard will have achieved its goal of making sure that all of its members are “always ready” to eat more fruits and vegetables.

## **Kansas**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Kansas 5 A Day Program began in 1991 in the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. Rather than being a stand-alone program, its activities are promoted through the Kansas Leadership to Encourage Activity and Nutrition (LEAN) Coalition, which shares “ownership” of the program.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, only 18.8% of Kansas adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> In 2002, 37.4% were overweight, and 22.8% were obese.<sup>2</sup>

To address this problem, the Kansas LEAN Coalition has established objectives for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and decreasing dietary fat among state residents. These objectives are consistent with national Healthy People 2010 objectives.

However, achieving these objectives throughout the state will be challenging because of the state’s population distribution. Much of Kansas is rural, with about two-thirds of the population living in the eastern one-third of the state.

The Kansas LEAN Coalition also adopted 5 A Day concepts as a key strategy for promoting healthy eating in response to the growing burden of chronic disease and the influence of diet in the development of many chronic diseases.

### **Program Components**

The Kansas 5 A Day Program has capitalized on the active participation of the Kansas LEAN Coalition’s partners to design and disseminate 5 A Day messages to diverse groups.

Examples include preschool, elementary, and secondary schoolchildren; Senior Nutrition Services participants; state WIC Program clients; Cooperative Extension Service gardeners; farmers’ market coordinators; local health agency clients; medical providers; and community coalitions.

Although employees in the state health department coordinate 5 A Day activities, the Kansas LEAN Coalition plays a major role in turning ideas into practice. The coalition set up a steering committee to help develop a state 5 A Day plan and to make recommendations to the overall group.

This committee includes representatives from the state Departments of Education and Aging; the University of Kansas School of Medicine; the Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service and the Department of Foods and Nutrition, both of which are part of Kansas State University; and one local health agency.

## **Making Work Sites Healthier**

One day, Jim and Judy, who work together at the University of Kansas School of Medicine in Wichita, were discussing their work environment. They agreed that it was great—coworkers supported each other, and the students were fun and challenging.

“I can’t think of anything to make it better,” Judy exclaimed.

But Jim wondered if they could make it better. Although they worked in the Department of Preventive Medicine and Public Health, they weren’t promoting healthy eating or physical activity in their own office.

Jim knew firsthand that eating a healthy diet was hard. He’d lost more than 100 pounds several years ago and wanted to keep it off. But he worked long days, traveled frequently, and ate many of his meals away from home—none of which made his efforts easy.

So Jim and Judy decided to create an environment that made it easier for their coworkers, as well as students and visitors, to adopt and maintain healthy behaviors. First, they made sure fruits and vegetables were more visible in the office. Each week, faculty members pitched in to buy seasonal produce for the employee kitchen and reception area.

As the department’s designated chef, Judy brought healthy dishes for potluck meals and celebrations. She tapped into her recipe collection for tasty, lowfat options such as fruit salsa, baked cinnamon chips, and Greek salad. Even the annual holiday party showcased ideas from the state’s 5 A Day Program!

But Jim and Judy wanted to do more. As partners in the state’s 5 A Day Program, they wanted to promote similar efforts throughout the community. The Wichita campus of the School of Medicine is located in an older part of town, and several of its programs, such as a highly respected master of public health, have community components.

An intervention project called the 1, 2, 3 for Life Program was launched in several settings, including a community mental health center. The numbers represent 1 walk, 2 fruits, and 3 vegetables—easy first steps to a healthier lifestyle.

Program materials included a monthly logbook to help participants track their progress and posters and buttons featuring colorful characters named Joe Strider, Candy Apple, and Barney Broccoli.

Bowls of fruit were placed on the reception counter for clients and staff members. Clients also were able to buy low-cost food packages filled with seasonal fruits and vegetables on-site from the local sponsor of a Heartland Shares food distribution program.

To target adolescents and their families, the 1, 2, 3 for Life Program was expanded to area schools, an African- American church, and a local mortgage company. Participants were asked to

identify places in the physical and social settings where they lived, learned, worked, and played where they could change their lifestyles.

For example, students could keep dried fruit in school lockers and cars for a quick snack. After school, they could eat carrot and celery sticks or frozen applesauce instead of foods high in fat and sugar. Participants were encouraged to try new foods and to think of creative ways to celebrate special events, such as providing healthy treats at holiday parties and playing fun, physically active games.

At the church and the mortgage company, kitchens and refrigerators were rearranged to make fruits and vegetables more accessible. Adolescent church members were invited into the kitchen to prepare and serve fruit and vegetable snacks.

Today, Jim and Judy are proud that they've helped make their work environment and their community a better place!

Participants were encouraged to try new foods and to think of creative ways to celebrate special events, such as providing healthy treats at holiday parties and playing fun, physically active games.

## **Kentucky**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

In 2003, Kentucky's 5 A Day Program moved from the Chronic Disease and Prevention Branch to the Nutrition Services Branch of the state's Department for Public Health. This move was intended to consolidate all state nutrition programs into one administrative unit.

### **Program Focus**

The Kentucky 5 A Day Program works to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among state residents. In 2002, 62.5% of state adults were overweight or obese, and only 18.2% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup> In addition, 29.9% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight in 2003.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

To help spread 5 A Day messages statewide, Kentucky is teaching staff members in its public health agencies how to conduct 5 A Day Challenges, which encourage residents to eat more fruits and vegetables.

In 2004, 7 agencies that had received training previously helped train their peers in the state's remaining 50 agencies. The training highlights 4 successful 5 A Day Challenge programs, and it gives participants materials and incentives to use in developing their own programs.

Activities and materials are paid for by cooperative agreement funding from CDC designed to support obesity prevention and cardiovascular health programs, as well as by the federal PHHS Block Grant and the state's WIC Program.

Kentucky also is distributing copies of the 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Cookbook, which was published by the New Hampshire 5 A Day Program. The book's recipes are based on official 5 A Day recipes for families that can be adjusted to 25, 50, or 100 servings.

All recipes meet USDA and 5 A Day nutritional guidelines and feature at least one serving of a fruit or vegetable, and all are low in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

In Kentucky, the cookbooks are being distributed to the Division of School & Community Nutrition in the state Department of Education. Officials there plan to use them to train food service personnel how to incorporate 5 A Day recipes into meals served in schools and child care settings.



The cookbooks also are being used by the state's Department of Corrections in its food service programs. Training was conducted in August 2004.

Other state programs that could benefit from this project include the state's Cooperative Extension Service, which provides meals at summer camps; the state Office of Aging, which manages food service operations in senior citizen centers; and the Department of Parks, which provides food at state park facilities and in state government offices.

Also in 2004, the 5 A Day Program

- Revised its official 5 A Day display, which can be loaned to other state agencies, and its nutrition education materials, which are used throughout the state at health fairs and other community events.
- Continued to work with the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to increase awareness of the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables among WIC clients and senior citizens.
- Finalized strategies for promoting 5 A Day messages as part of the state plan to address rising obesity rates.

Corrections officials said they wanted to provide healthy meals to detainees and were eager to add the 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Book to their summer training program.

## **From One State to Another**

When Lisa Arvin, Kentucky's 5 A Day coordinator, first opened the 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Cookbook, she knew she had something really valuable.

"This is exactly the type of resource we need in Kentucky!" she exclaimed. "We could use it in so many different food service programs that serve large groups of people."

Published by the New Hampshire 5 A Day Program, the cookbook is designed to help school food service directors meet USDA and 5 A Day nutritional guidelines while still appealing to students' food preferences.

Lisa was excited about the idea of using the cookbook in Kentucky, so she called a meeting with her health department coworkers and members of the state's Cooperative Extension Service. The others shared her enthusiasm, and they immediately decided to order copies of the book for all nutritionists working in state government.

The group also made a list of state agencies that might be interested in using the cookbook. All of these agencies routinely serve large groups of people—in schools, child care programs, summer camps, park service programs, and the criminal justice system.

Two agencies responded right away—the state Department of Corrections and the Division of School & Community Nutrition in the state Department of Education.

Corrections officials said they wanted a way to provide healthy meals to detainees in state prisons and juvenile detention facilities. They were eager to add the 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Cookbook to their summer training program for food service workers.

They also planned to feature recipes from the cookbook in meals served during September, which is national 5 A Day Month.

In addition to educating and training their employees, corrections officials also wanted to teach adult and juvenile detainees about how important it is to eat a healthy diet. To achieve this goal, they provided 5 A Day videos and slide presentations, as well as other educational materials, to the libraries that serve these populations.

The other group that was eager to use the new cookbook was the state Division of School & Community Nutrition. This agency provides technical assistance, training, and reimbursement to about 860 groups that sponsor child nutrition programs at schools, child care settings, and summer camps.

The division included the cookbook in its summer training program for food service personnel in 2004. They focused on schools and highlighted ways to incorporate 5 A Day recipes into existing meal plans. In the future, nutrition officials hope to expand the training to include groups that provide food for child care and summer programs.

For Lisa and her coworkers in the state health department, the hard work has been worth it. As their efforts continue, they expect to see more and more state programs using 5 A Day recipes and educational materials.

And they hope that Mindy Fitterman, who coordinates the New Hampshire 5 A Day Program, knows that she has developed a valuable resource for helping people eat healthier foods in her own state as well as theirs!

## **North Dakota**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

In North Dakota, the 5 A Day Program is part of the 5 Plus 5 Program, which promotes healthy nutrition and physical activity. The program began in 4 North Dakota communities in 1998 and has since grown to 19 communities in 2004. It reaches an estimated 475,000 people, or 74% of the state's population. The program is modeled after the Iowa 5 Plus 5 Program.

### **Program Focus**

The 5 Plus 5 Program encourages North Dakota citizens to eat fruits and vegetables 5 times a day and to be physically active for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week. These healthy lifestyle changes can help to reduce a person's risk for the state's three leading causes of death—heart disease, some cancers, and diabetes.<sup>16</sup>

Unfortunately, only 21.5% of adults and 17.3% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup> In addition, only 16% of students have access to fruits or vegetables in vending machines outside of school meal programs.<sup>17</sup>

A healthy diet also can help people manage their weight. In 2002, 61.6% of North Dakota adults were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 20.3% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

The 5 A Day Program also is part of the governor's public health initiative, Healthy North Dakota. This initiative comprises more than 400 North Dakotans representing about 150 agencies, organizations, and businesses. The 19 committees and focus areas support programs to improve the nutritional intake and weight status of state residents.

Over the years, the 5 Plus 5 Program has been funded from a variety of sources, including the federal PHHS Block Grant and the Maternal and Child Health Services Program of the Health Resources and Services Administration. The latter supports the hiring of local public health nutritionists.

In January 2004, CDC funded the state Cardiovascular Health Program to hire a consultant to coordinate and provide technical assistance to the 5 Plus 5 Program. The Cardiovascular Health Program also contributes money to the 5 Plus 5 communities, since improving dietary and physical activity habits can help to reduce risk factors for heart disease and stroke.

Additional support for 5 A Day and 5 Plus 5 programs comes from the North Dakota State University Extension Service, which helps prepare educational materials, train field personnel, and pilot new ways of delivering 5 A Day messages.

In the future, state officials hope to be able to hire a full-time coordinator who can build relationships with new partners, such as the American Heart Association, the USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, participants in the state's new farmers' market initiative, other produce retailers, and farmers.

A full-time coordinator also could help support efforts to enhance school nutrition policies and practices, such as increasing students' access to healthy snack options and improving the quality of fruits and vegetables served in school meals.

## **Banking on Improved Health**

Each Monday morning, Duane fills a basket with fresh fruits and vegetables, juice, milk, and bread at the local grocery store in Williston, North Dakota. After he checks out, Duane goes straight to work at American State Bank. He heads to the employee break room, where he unloads the food into the refrigerator and onto shelves.

A couple of hours later, two tellers stop by and help themselves to a banana and a glass of milk. At lunchtime, other employees supplement their sack lunches with apples and baby carrots. During the afternoon staff meeting, employees grab a snack from a fruit tray to refresh themselves.

Although these activities sound too good to be true, they're not. They are an example of how an employer can create a work site environment that supports healthy living for its workers.

In this case, the managers at American State Bank routinely buy healthy snacks for their employees. Duane, the bank's maintenance man, does the shopping each week as part of his regular duties. Fruit trays are provided at monthly staff meetings, and the bank also subsidizes employees' memberships at local fitness centers.

"The bank has been providing these healthy foods to employees for nearly 10 years," said Vicki, a human resources associate. "Employees appreciate and eat the fruits and vegetables—there are seldom any left by Friday."

During this past winter, the bank also encouraged its workers to participate in a 5 A Day Challenge with employees from five other local businesses. Local public health nutritionists coordinated the challenge, providing educational sessions and setting up challenge boards in employee break rooms.

The challenge boards displayed each team member's progress in eating 5 or more servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Overall team scores were tallied on a different board, which was prominently displayed at the local library.

According to participants, the challenge paid off. One bank teller said that afterwards, she began reaching for fruit and vegetable snacks rather than the sugary, high-fat baked goods typically found in employee break rooms.

Programs such as these aren't new in Williston, which was one of the original four communities to participate in the state's 5 Plus 5 Program. This program encourages people to eat fruits and vegetables 5 times a day and to be physically active for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.

In Williston, program coordinators have promoted work site health, partnered with a local farmers' market, and provided lesson plans called 5 Plus 5 for 5th Graders to area teachers.

Today, 19 North Dakota communities participate in the 5 Plus 5 Program, conducting a wide range of interventions. In state schools, organizers are working to implement fruits-and vegetables-only snack policies and to promote the program with fun activities such as preparing a giant fruit salad in a wheelbarrow.

To reach the broader community, one project helped residents track their daily steps on a state map, allowing them to take a “virtual” walk around North Dakota. Another project encouraged people to increase their use of the Lewis and Clark Nature Trail near New Town.

Back in Williston, it’s Friday, and American State Bank is closing. Employees are heading home, and the chatter and clatter of the break room has quieted. But when Monday morning rolls around, it will bring a renewed opportunity for some Williston residents to lead a healthier life!

Programs such as these aren’t new in Williston, which was one of the original four communities to participate in the state’s 5 Plus 5 Program. This program encourages people to eat fruits and vegetables 5 times a day and to be physically active for 30 minutes at least 5 days a week.

## **Event & Media Innovations**

These 5 A Day programs use special events at local venues and imaginative media campaigns to increase people's awareness of the importance of good nutrition for overall health and the critical role of fruits and vegetables in a healthy diet.



## **Arizona**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Arizona was one of the first states to implement a 5 A Day Program. In 1996, it was one of three states to win an Outstanding Achievement Award for early implementation from the National Cancer Institute. In 2003, it received a National Award of Excellence from the Produce for Better Health Foundation.

### **Program Focus**

Five A Day messages are being incorporated into nutrition and chronic disease prevention programs throughout Arizona. A priority nutrition objective in the state's strategic health plan, Healthy Arizona 2010: Collaborating for a Healthier Future, is to help people eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day.<sup>18</sup>

In 2003, only 22.9% of state adults and 20.4% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

Arizona has conducted dozens of 5 A Day projects over the years, such as collaborating with the Produce for Better Health Foundation to promote 5 A Day Across the USA events and publishing 5 A Day for Better Health: Fruit and Vegetable Activity Book for Child Care Programs.

Five A Day messages also were added to state Hearts N' Parks projects. This national program is designed to help park and recreation agencies encourage heart-healthy lifestyles in their communities.

In 1993, the state implemented Arizona Grown, a promotional campaign that encourages people to eat more locally grown produce. The Arizona Iceberg Lettuce Commission provided initial funding, and the campaign is conducted through the state Department of Agriculture.

By 1997, more than 70% of state grocery stores were supporting the 5 A Day Program. By 1998, more than 239 stores were promoting recipe contests called Eat Right—The Arizona Grown Way. In addition, a Farmers' Market Nutrition Program launched in 2002 promotes 5 A Day messages to clients, growers, and market managers.

The 5 A Day Program also targets at-risk populations through state WIC, Head Start, and Food Stamp programs. The Arizona Nutrition Network, which was established in 1996 to provide common nutritional messages to people eligible for food stamps, targets high-risk groups as well.

This public–private partnership is led by the Office of Nutrition and Chronic Disease Prevention Services in the Arizona Department of Health Services, with support from the Family Assistance Administration of the state’s Department of Economic Security. Early campaigns targeted low-income Hispanic women and their children, but the program has since been expanded to reach a broader low-income audience.

In addition, the Arizona Community Nutrition Program offers classroom sessions that promote 5 A Day messages and a tour of the produce section of a local grocery store to thousands of low income third graders each year.

In 2003, surveys of children participating in the Community Nutrition Program indicated a sharp increase (from 57% to 95%) in the percentage who knew how many servings of fruits and vegetables they should eat each day. In addition, 87% had learned how to make a fruit or vegetable snack by themselves.

In 2004, the Arizona Nutrition Network spent \$13.6 million in state, local, and federal funds on a range of activities, including television ads, a Healthy Lifestyles television show, and a consumer-friendly Web site (<http://www.eatwellbewell.org>).

## **Illinois**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The 5 A Day the Illinois Way Program is administered through the Nutrition Services Section (NSS) of the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS). NSS has overseen this program since 1993, and it supports the overall IDHS mission of helping residents achieve self sufficiency, independence, and health. NSS activities promote nutrition and physical activity, breast-feeding education and support, cultural sensitivity in community programs, collaboration with state and community programs, and the expansion of nutrition services at local agencies.

### **Program Focus**

Illinois residents should be encouraged to practice healthy eating habits. In 2002, 37.3% of Illinois adults were overweight, and 21.9% were obese.<sup>2</sup> Despite the proven benefits of a healthy diet, 76.9% of Illinois adults did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

The strategic plan for 5 A Day the Illinois Way calls for incorporating 5 A Day messages throughout existing IDHS, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and other state agency programs.

Examples of these programs include the state WIC Program, WIC Food Centers, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, Teen Reach, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and the Illinois Department on Aging Networks.

Activities also are conducted through the Illinois Interagency Nutrition Council, which represents food assistance programs throughout the state.

Although the 5 A Day the Illinois Way Program has no dedicated funding, efforts have been made to promote 5 A Day messages throughout the state. For example,

- In 1998, CDC funded a study to assess 5 A Day nutrition education interventions in three WIC Food Centers in Chicago to determine which were most successful in increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. The study was a joint project among Loyola University, Catholic Charities, and the state WIC Program.
- In 1998, IDHS conducted a study to identify barriers to fruit and vegetable consumption among older adults. Most respondents reported eating only 1–2 servings a day. This information demonstrated the importance of the pilot Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, which

provided \$60 in vouchers for low-income seniors to use at local farmers' markets. In 1999, 82% of participants surveyed said they were eating more fruits and vegetables.

- During 2003, more than 100,000 5 A Day the Illinois Way materials and promotional items were distributed statewide.
- In fiscal year 2004, IDHS offered Trimming Obesity in Illinois—A Family Approach mini-grants to local WIC agencies. Increased fruit and vegetable consumption is promoted at 16 sites, including several in Chicago. These projects use 5 A Day messages to help women and children achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- The state WIC Program promotes 5 A Day messages by disseminating a variety of local and national materials. Ninety-eight local clinics use these materials to promote increased fruit and vegetable consumption to 274,000 WIC participants.

For the annual Nutrition Month event, organizers strive to attract and educate residents from throughout the state, as well as legislators who vote on nutrition policies.

## **Fruits and Vegetables Hit the Illinois Capitol**

When state Sen. Dale E. Risinger saw the live plants and Illinois canned pumpkin that had been delivered to his office, he went downstairs to find someone to thank. He discovered that his gifts were part of the state's annual Nutrition Month celebration, which promotes healthy eating by focusing on gardening and the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables every day.

He joined other state legislators in expressing their support for the event's message of teaching people to grow their own fruits and vegetables. State Rep. Roger Eddy was so impressed with his gifts that he took pictures with his staff and vowed to take the plants home and "plant them when it was warm enough."

The Nutrition Month celebration has been held at the state capitol in Springfield, Illinois, for the past 4 years. In 2003, the event was sponsored by the 5 A Day the Illinois Way Program and the Illinois Interagency Nutrition Council. The University of Illinois Extension distributed the plants and canned pumpkin.

The event is held at the state capitol each year to draw more people and to raise awareness about the 5 A Day Program and the diversity of fruits and vegetables grown in Illinois. Organizers strive to attract and educate residents from throughout the state, as well as legislators who vote on nutrition policies. They also give out awards to groups that have helped people grow and distribute more fruits and vegetables in Illinois.

Conducting the event is inexpensive, thanks to donations from local grocery stores, the University of Illinois Extension, and exhibitors. In addition, most participants use existing materials and displays, and there's no charge for using space at the capitol.

An estimated 250 people attended the 2003 celebration, which featured presentations by about 30 state groups. Examples of these groups include the following:

- The Illinois Fruit and Vegetable Crops Task Force, which works to improve the production and marketing of fruits and vegetables in the state. For the 2003 event, the group donated plants to encourage people to grow their own produce at home.
- The Illinois Hunger Coalition, which works to alleviate hunger through education, networking, advocacy, and empowerment. The coalition's Hunger Hotline gives callers free information on federal nutrition programs (e.g., qualification guidelines, locations). The coalition also refers people to food pantries, soup kitchens, and the national Food Stamp Program.
- The Food Stamp Program and the state WIC Program, which serve low income families in Illinois. During the 2003 event, local WIC agencies distributed colorful brochures with information on nutrition, breastfeeding, and WIC services. They also promoted a project in which local WIC agencies worked with community partners to grow container gardens with WIC families. This project helped low-income families add more fruits and vegetables to their diets.

- The University of Illinois Extension, which provides educational programs and information to help residents improve the quality of their lives. At the 2003 event, nutrition educators taught residents how to include more fruits and vegetables in their daily meals and snacks, and gardeners shared information on container gardening.

In 2004, the theme of the event was “Celebrating Good Nutrition for Families and Youth in Illinois—Grow Your Way to 5 A Day.”

In the future, organizers hope to boost participation by encouraging more interactive booths, promoting the event more widely, and continuing the new awards program.

## **Pennsylvania**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Pennsylvania 5 A Day Program is coordinated in the Nutrition Program of the Division of Chronic Disease Intervention of the Bureau of Chronic Diseases and Injury Prevention of the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Funding from a CDC cooperative agreement that helps states develop a Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases pays for a program manager who also serves as the state's 5 A Day coordinator.

### **Program Focus**

The vision of the Pennsylvania 5 A Day Program is to develop a comprehensive state and national infrastructure to increase the percentage of state residents who eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day to 75% by 2010.

In 2002, 35.6% of state adults were overweight, and 23.9% were obese.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, 35.2% of children in 8th grade were overweight or at risk of being overweight.<sup>19</sup> Yet in 2003, only 24.7% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

The Pennsylvania 5 A Day Program conducts activities in 10 county or municipal health departments throughout the state with support from a federal PHHS Block Grant. These health departments form partnerships within their communities to promote healthy eating and physical activity in order to help reduce people's risk for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and osteoporosis.

In 2002, the state integrated its 5 A Day strategic plan into the Pennsylvania Nutrition and Physical Activity to Prevent Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases Plan, which is being implemented by the Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA). PANA has more than 400 members and is funded by the state health department through a CDC cooperative agreement.

The state plan was released in 2003 and targeted youth and children, in part through the Keystone Healthy Zone Campaign. As part of this campaign, schools were invited to participate in an online health assessment in 2004.

Participating schools received instructions, forms to apply for mini-grants, and information about the state's Coordinated School Health Policy. One hundred schools received \$2,000 minigrants

to help change school policies and environments to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity.

Also in 2003, the state 5 A Day Program expanded its collaboration with other state partners, including the state departments of education and public welfare; the Head Start program; the American Cancer Society; the Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network; and the Penn State Cooperative Extension.

As part of an interagency strategy, these partners reviewed successful projects in other states and decided to implement the North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Color Me Healthy program. This fun, interactive program promotes early learning opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating among children aged 4–5 years.

During 2003–2004, the Color Me Healthy program was piloted in day cares, Head Start facilities, and Family Literacy Centers in five Pennsylvania counties. It will be implemented statewide after the pilot study evaluation is completed.



## **Texas**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Begun in 1993, the Texas 5 A Day Program is part of the Public Health Nutrition Program of the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS). This department was created in 2004 and includes the former Texas Department of Health (TDH).

The 5 A Day Program collaborates with internal and external partners, including other DSHS programs, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Department of Agriculture, to promote and evaluate 5 A Day initiatives in schools and communities and at work sites and conferences.

In addition, Houston has its own local 5 A Day coalition, and a statewide coalition is being developed. Regional nutritionists help promote the program, and state WIC clinics conduct 5 A Day activities.

### **Program Focus**

A top priority of the DSHS is to reduce the state's chronic disease burden. In 2002, more than 43,000 Texans died of heart disease,<sup>20</sup> and nearly 36,000 died of cancer.<sup>21</sup> In addition, more than 62% of adults were overweight or obese in 2002.<sup>2</sup> Data from the 2000–2001 school year indicated that 35% of school-aged children in Texas were overweight.<sup>22</sup>

Although a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to prevent obesity and some chronic diseases, 88% of people who responded to a 1998 survey conducted by the TDH did not eat 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

Other data indicated that 86% of women participating in the state WIC Program did not eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables a day, and only 7%–9% of children had eaten the recommended servings on the previous day (Texas Department of Health, WIC Program, unpublished data, 1999 and 2000).

Through the efforts of the Texas 5 A Day Program, the percentage of adults who did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day dropped to 77.5% in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

Activities that promote healthy eating in Texas include the following:

- The Texas Department of Agriculture's Child Nutrition Program released a new public school policy regulating the foods allowed on school campuses and mandating that fruits and vegetables be offered at all points where foods are sold.
- The Texas Education Agency approved two coordinated school health curricula that encourage all school staff members to help teach health topics, specifically nutrition and physical activity.
- In 2003, the TDH and the Statewide Obesity Taskforce published the Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Obesity in Texas to help communities organize local obesity coalitions and campaigns.
- Also in 2003, CDC funded the TDH to prevent obesity and related chronic diseases by promoting 5 priority areas—increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, increased physical activity, decreased television viewing, calorie balance, and increased rates and duration of breast-feeding.
- The Public Health Nutrition Program provides 5 A Day workshops and activities to help communities address obesity and related chronic diseases.

In January 2005, the Texas Fruit and Vegetable Network held its first meeting to help increase access to fresh produce and to educate Texans about the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables.

## **Hands-On Learning at Children's Museum**

In 2004, about 2,000 children and their parents attended the 4th Annual Children's Nutrition Expo at the Houston Children's Museum. This event was created to help make children and their parents more aware of the importance of the state's 5 A Day Program, healthy nutrition, and physical activity through hands-on, interactive learning experiences.

The Houston Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association and the Houston Area Dietetic Association fund the Expo, which is chaired by the regional 5 A Day coordinator. In-kind contributions come from the museum and members of the Greater Houston Nutrition Coalition.

Representatives from all of these organizations work together to plan, set up, and staff the exhibits so that 5 A Day messages can be spread to families throughout the region.

The Children's Museum is an ideal location for the Expo because the staff is accustomed to large numbers of children and parents, as well as the noise and chaos that large groups of excited children bring.

Last year, when the children entered the museum, the first thing they saw was a table covered with coloring books and stickers that featured pictures of fruits and vegetables with silly names like Special Agent 1015, Wynona Watermelon, CeCe Citrus, and Carlotta Cabbage.

At the next table, children could use round stickers and crayons to create a fruit or vegetable picture. For children who were feeling hungry, snacks of sliced apples, baby carrots and dip, and trail mix with dried fruit were available.

In an exhibit called Celebrations, volunteer chefs helped children make easy fruit and vegetable dishes, like Cinnful Grape Salad, which featured red and green grapes, vanilla yogurt, and cinnamon. Participants were able to eat the results of their efforts, and if they liked a particular dish—which they almost always did—the chefs encouraged them to try making it at home with a little help from their parents.

At a table outside the Celebrations room, children could make Potato People—like Mr. Potato Head but with real potatoes. They glued yarn, eyes, hats, and other decorations onto the potatoes and used Popsicle sticks for arms and legs.

In another part of the museum, children played 5 A Day Bingo using cards with pictures of fruits and vegetables instead of numbers and letters. Winners received bright neon green 5 A Day pencils.

In the Eco-Station, children planted vegetables in cups that they could take home with them. They also received gardening tools and learned about the nutritional value of their new plants.

These activities are just a few examples of the many hands-on 5 A Day learning experiences for children at the Expo. Most parents rated the Expo as excellent, with comments such as “I know we should eat more vegetables” and “We’re going to have vegetables for dinner tonight.”

A main ingredient of the Expo’s success is the existing partnerships and collaborations of the sponsoring organizations. Without these, the Expo would not be possible. More than 100 volunteers also help to make the event a success. And each year, organizers review their lessons learned and the feedback from participants and make changes to the exhibits as needed.

## **Utah**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Utah 5 A Day Program began in 1994. Activities are conducted by the Utah 5 A Day Association in conjunction with the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program of the Utah Department of Health.

The 5 A Day Association consists of 40 partners, including 15 active core members. Partners within the state health department include the Cancer Control Program, the Worksite Wellness Program, and the WIC Program.

External partners include the state Department of Agriculture, several retail and grocery store chains, and local chapters of nonprofit agencies such as the American Heart Association. Health insurance groups interested in prevention also have been supportive, and some partners have effectively advocated for healthy choices in school vending machines.

### **Program Focus**

The 5 A Day Program works to increase fruit and vegetable consumption at work sites and among low-income families and schoolchildren throughout Utah. In 2002, 53.6% of state adults were overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 18.3% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Yet only 19.5% of adults and 20.3% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

To reach children and low-income families, the Utah 5 A Day Program has worked with the state WIC Program to integrate a 5 A Day curriculum into nutrition education classes and to place 5 A Day messages on the WIC food card. The two programs also are working together to obtain fruit and vegetable vouchers for WIC clients.

Other 5 A Day activities aimed at schoolchildren include the following:

- The Grocery Store Tour Program, which is a collaborative effort of grocers and elementary schools that reaches 6,000 third-grade students each year.
- A 5 A Day newsletter that is sent to all elementary schools.

In addition, 5 A Day messages are integrated into the state's Gold Medal School Initiative, which encourages schools to adopt a healthy school culture by making policy and environmental changes that promote opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating.

This initiative reaches more than 160 elementary schools each year. It was created by the Cardiovascular Health Program of the Utah Department of Health and the Utah State Office of Education.

To reach people where they work, the 5 A Day Association has distributed 5 A Day Worksite Wellness Kits over the past three years to more than 110 work sites with approximately 22,000 employees. The association also coordinates with Utah's government employees' wellness program to reach thousands of workers across the state.

Over the next few years, the Utah 5 A Day Association intends to continue incorporating more environmental and policy strategies into the state's 5 A Day plan.

The World's Largest 5 A Day Cornucopia was intended primarily to draw media attention and promote the 5 A Day message statewide. Before it was over, the event would reach more than half a million people through television and newspaper coverage.

## **Giant Cornucopia Gets People's Attention**

It was not yet dawn on a chilly September morning, and already the huge steel and canvas wrapped structure was beginning to spill forth with boxes of watermelons, apples, pumpkins, peaches, and peppers.

The canvas snapped in the breeze as workers used forklifts to stack crate upon crate of fresh produce inside what looked like a gigantic sweet potato from the busy intersection that bisected strip malls and new subdivisions nearby.

By noon, the World's Largest 5 A Day Cornucopia would hold more than 60,000 pounds of fresh Utah fruits and vegetables.

The monstrous public relations stunt was intended primarily to draw media attention and promote the 5 A Day message statewide. Before it was over, the event would reach more than half a million people through television and newspaper coverage.

Even before the cornucopia materialized in the parking lot of a busy suburban Wal-Mart, it had already had an unexpected effect on the people who worked there. Many employees had never heard of "5 A Day," and few knew what the slogan meant. But they were excited to be a part of such a large, coordinated effort.

As buzz about the event spread, employees began to learn the importance of eating fruits and vegetables. They challenged each other to increase their consumption of healthy foods, and they became more aware of the convenience and variety of their own store's produce department.

Jill, an employee in the invoice department, took seriously the challenge to eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. She began eating fruits and vegetables on breaks and at lunch, and she encouraged her coworkers to do the same. By the end of the week, Jill and her friends, Andrea, Samantha, and Wendy, were all making healthier food choices, drinking 8–10 glasses of water a day, and beginning to exercise.

The idea for the cornucopia sprang from the collaborative relationship of the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program of the Utah Department of Health, the Utah 5 A Day Association, and key industry partners such as Wal-Mart and the Strawberry Commission. The project was aggressively promoted through local television stations and newspapers, creating an event that visibly united the community.

Securing major partnerships was key to the event's success, and these relationships were strengthened and promoted in the process. Long-term planning also was important. The 5 A Day Association pitched the story to local television stations and newspapers several months in advance and sought free promotion through health and food segments and live remotes. Experts from state agencies, produce growers, and retailers were recruited for interviews.

Days before the event, media kits and cornucopia fruit baskets were delivered to area newspapers, television and radio stations, the local bureau of the Associated Press, and Spanish-language radio and television stations. Media materials also were faxed to outlying media organizations.

In addition to putting together the media kits and fruit baskets, members of the 5 A Day Association also distributed posters to health clinics and hospitals, dietitians' offices, the state education department, local WIC offices, malls, food service areas of schools, and state and federal buildings. On the day of the event, kids' games, prizes, free samples, and entertainment were offered as an additional draw.



## **Partnerships & Coalitions**

Productive partnerships and coalitions play a vital role in promoting and supporting 5 A Day programs, particularly when resources are scarce. These interventions illustrate the process of building, maintaining, and enhancing 5 A Day partnerships, the cornerstone of successful 5 A Day programs.

## **Delaware**

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### **Background**

Although staff shortages have kept Delaware from implementing an official program, 5 A Day messages are being incorporated into other state programs. In addition, strategic planning has begun for physical activity and nutrition programs, including 5 A Day. In 2002, the state published Blueprint for a Healthier Delaware: Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition, which outlines a strategic plan to help Delaware residents take control of their health.<sup>23</sup>

### **Program Focus**

Also known as “The First State,” Delaware is seeking to become “The Fit State.” State government leaders, employers, educators, consumers, and concerned citizens are using 5 A Day messages to help reduce chronic disease and obesity rates in the state.

Although nearly 58.6% of state residents were overweight or obese in 2002, only 22% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

Examples of ongoing or new 5 A Day activities include the following:

- The Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) and the City of Wilmington integrated 5 A Day messages into the following planning and public policy documents: Healthy Wilmington 2010 and Blueprint for a Healthier Delaware: Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition.
- The Delaware Division of Services for Aging and Adults with Physical Disabilities (DSAAPD) developed a curriculum called Fruits and Vegetables: Rx for Better Health! It is being used in all senior centers in Delaware and as a model for other states. It is now part of a larger project called Eating Better and Moving More.
- DSAAPD also created Healthy for Life, a 10-week demonstration project that helps seniors set goals, discuss strategies, and overcome challenges to increasing their fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity levels. University of Delaware graduate students provide instruction, support, and evaluation.
- The Delaware Division of the American Cancer Society launched 5 A Day Body and Soul, a community outreach program designed to reach African American women and their families in 3 Delaware churches.

- The Produce for Better Health (PBH) Foundation, which leads the national 5 A Day Partnership, worked with the City of Wilmington to host 5 A Day Month and Wilmington Wellness Month, providing interactive exhibits and free produce to thousands of participants.
- National 5 A Day materials have been displayed at health exhibits throughout the state, including at the University of Delaware, the Delaware State Fair, the American Heart Walk, the MBNA Corn Boil, and the Health Education Network of Delaware.
- In November 2003, the PBH Foundation and the Institute for a Healthier America added 3 elementary schools in Sussex County to a national pilot program called Wellness, Academics, and You. The curriculum for this program contains a 5 A Day module for third and fourth graders.
- Executives of several private companies and the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce's Health Advisory Committee are creating partnership programs to encourage employees to change their diets and eat healthier.
- The DPH Web site (<http://www.deph.org>) includes information on nutrition and links to the national 5 A Day Program. Similar information is available on Web sites that promote physical activity (<http://www.getupanddosomething.org>).

## **Promoting Healthy Eating with Limited Funding**

When new programs or initiatives are proposed, funding and staffing are often problematic—especially when the economy is in recession and states are cutting budgets and not hiring new employees.

But in Delaware, groups of concerned professionals and laypeople have come together to find ways to promote the 5 A Day concept despite limited resources.

In 2002, representatives from the University of Delaware Cooperative Extension, the state WIC Program, and the national Produce for Better Health (PBH) Foundation worked together to develop a 5 A Day plan.

At the same time, the Delaware Coalition to Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition was formed to develop a strategic plan for the state, the Blueprint for a Healthier Delaware: Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition. When the work of these two groups merged, both plans became stronger.

Meanwhile, Delaware Lt. Governor John C. Carney, Jr. had announced a program called the Lt. Governor's Challenge, which was designed to help state residents become more physically active. The program was supported by the American Cancer Society, the Delaware Division of Public Health, the Delaware State Chamber of Commerce, and the Christiana Care Health System.

The program was based on two simple messages—that people need to participate in regular, moderate intensity physical activity and eat a healthy diet that includes 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Challenge participants could earn points and medals by completing any of a variety of daily activities. (For more information, visit <http://www.state.de.us/lgov>.)

Even without significant funding, the organizers of these activities were able to promote 5 A Day messages. In addition, a small marketing campaign was launched with funds from a special state fund (related to the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement) and a federal PHHS Block Grant. The PBH Foundation, which leads the national 5 A Day Partnership and is headquartered in Delaware, provided a colorful 5 A Day The Color Way television advertisement.

This advertisement targeted mothers and children, airing on several television channels that appeal to women and on one aimed at children. It also included information about the Delaware Division of Public Health and the Lt. Governor's Challenge.

The advertisement ran for about one month in 2003 and again during the spring of 2004. The state's cable provider (Delaware has only one) will evaluate the advertisement's effectiveness with support from the University of Delaware.

It's a small start, but one that may have a big impact in a small state like Delaware. And it proves what can be accomplished even without significant staffing or funding. As more resources

become available, the 5 A Day Program will become a more definitive component of Delaware's comprehensive physical activity and nutrition plan.

## **Georgia**

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### **Background**

The Georgia 5 A Day Program is located in the Family Health Branch of the Division of Public Health in the Georgia Department of Human Resources. It recently enhanced its visibility and collaboration with the division's Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Branch, Epidemiology Branch, and state WIC Program.

### **Program Focus**

Activities of the Georgia 5 A Day Program are planned and coordinated by the 5 A Day Committee, which promotes fruit and vegetable consumption in schools, at work sites, and in communities (including food retailers). The committee also works to increase access to fruits and vegetables and to build and strengthen partnerships with other state groups.

In 2002, 35.5% of Georgia adults were overweight, and 23.5% were obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 26.2% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Yet only 23% of adults and 16.8% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

In December 2002, Georgia's 5 A Day Committee was made a formal subcommittee of the Georgia Coalition for Physical Activity and Nutrition (GPAN). One of GPAN's objectives is to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among state residents.

Working through GPAN is a perfect fit for the 5 A Day Program because it provides the infrastructure and support needed to coordinate efforts statewide.

The 5 A Day Committee held its first meeting in May 2003 as part of a GPAN strategic planning session. The committee is chaired by the state 5 A Day coordinator, who works in the Division of Public Health.

Current activities include planning supermarket tours for adults with school-age children and for older adults living in senior centers. These tours are conducted in September during national 5 A Day Month.

Although regional 5 A Day committees have not been established, local contacts have been identified. In addition, objectives for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption have been incorporated into most local health department plans.

The salary of the state 5 A Day coordinator is paid by the state. However, the position was recently combined with that of nutrition coordinator for Take Charge of Your Health Georgia, which is funded by CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases.

The 5 A Day coordinator already serves as acting project coordinator for this initiative, which includes increased access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables as a key strategy for preventing obesity and other chronic conditions.

In addition to the main 5 A Day coordinator, Georgia also has a second coordinator in the state Department of Education who focuses on activities in schools and participates on the 5 A Day Committee.

Although the 5 A Day Program has no designated funding of its own, educational resources are purchased through state funds, when available.

"We learned that perseverance is critical, and that every small step can be a great success."

## **Louisiana**

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### **Background**

The Louisiana 5 A Day Program began as part of the Chronic Disease Control Program of the Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) in 1991 with funding from a federal PHHS Block Grant. The initial target audiences were middle-class families and senior citizens.

A few years later, the program was transferred to OPH's Nutrition Services coordinator divides her time between the 5 A Day Program and the state WIC Program.

### **Program Focus**

The primary goal of the Louisiana 5 A Day Program is to improve the health of Louisiana citizens by promoting the 5 A Day message to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The secondary goal is to improve residents' knowledge about the importance of eating healthy and being physically active, in hopes of convincing them to make healthy lifestyle choices.

In 2002, 35.7% of state adults were overweight, and 25.2% were obese.<sup>2</sup> Yet 83.6% did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the state has some of the highest death rates in the country from chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, hypertension, and cancer.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, the state had the highest death rate for diabetes in the country.<sup>24</sup>

Although the 5 A Day Program provides education and materials to all state residents, the primary target is African Americans because of the higher rates of chronic diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes among this population compared with other racial and ethnic groups. African Americans also report lower consumption of fruits and vegetables.

### **Program Components**

Because the Louisiana 5 A Day Program does not have its own budget, partnerships are the most productive and cost-effective way to achieve its goals. Current partners include the Chronic Disease Control Program in OPH, the state WIC Program, the National Black Women's Health Project (as part of its REACH 2010: At the Heart of New Orleans study), and the Louisiana Department of Education.



These partnerships provide access to personnel, resources, and funding through grant opportunities. Some nonprofit health promotion and health care organizations find that they are more likely to receive grants when they partner with the 5 A Day Program.

For the future, plans are under way to build a more solid network of partnerships in the form of a 5 A Day Coalition. Because of the activities already conducted and the partnerships already established, state officials hope this task will be an easy one.

## **Working Together for Healthy Lifestyles**

Everyone felt the excitement as they bustled through final preparations for the Saturday health fair at the Greater St. Stephen Baptist Church. Health professionals, church members, and community volunteers worked together to decorate tables and lay out fresh fruit, bagels, and juice for the expected 200 participants. Blood pressure cuffs and blood sugar monitors were tested once more for accuracy.

The event was one of several organized throughout New Orleans by the National Black Women's Health Project as part of a study called Reach 2010: At the Heart of New Orleans. This study is intended to help reduce disparities in cardiovascular disease among African American women.

Louisiana has seen a recent revival in community health fairs and church based health programs as people have become more aware of the poor health of many members of their communities and congregations. The Louisiana 5 A Day Program has seized the opportunities offered by this growing awareness to reach more residents with its important message about eating more fruits and vegetables to improve health.

The health fair held at the Greater St. Stephen Baptist Church was the first to include the 5 A Day Program as a partner. This relationship has continued to blossom, and the two groups now routinely exchange ideas and resources and support each other's goals.

In addition, the 5 A Day Program has used this event as a springboard for participating in health fairs and similar activities sponsored by universities, nursing schools, sororities, other state agencies, professional health associations, and nonprofit groups throughout the state.

These activities have helped move the 5 A Day Program closer to being a truly statewide program. In addition to sharing its information and materials, the program works to develop new partnerships with key community leaders. These partnerships provide greater access to resources and opportunities for increased publicity and growth.

One such partner is the Louisiana Department of Education, which integrated 5 A Day messages and training into its application for a federal Team Nutrition Training Grant. The goal of this grant is to encourage students and their parents to make healthier lifestyle choices.

To achieve this goal, state officials plan to promote nutrition education in schools and build school and community support for creating school environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

Another important partner is the Cardiovascular Health Program of the state's Office of Public Health. The 5 A Day coordinator helped plan a grant-funded program to develop policy, educational, and environmental approaches to reducing heart disease risk factors in schools, communities, and health care settings, and at work sites.

The 5 A Day Program also works with the state WIC Program to provide educational materials, training, and promotional items to WIC participants and staff members in all 133 clinics throughout Louisiana. In addition, the program supports the state's 9 regional nutritionists and helps train WIC nutrition educators.

The result of this hard work is that more people are aware of the state's 5 A Day Program, and we are receiving more requests for nutrition education materials. The program is now included in projects of all kinds, including the New Orleans Public Library's Healthy Libraries Project, which offers free seminars to the public on healthy eating as well as health fairs and fitness walks at local branches.

As our partnerships continue to grow, the possibilities for new ideas, resources, and support are endless. And the enthusiasm of participants is contagious as we work together to build a healthier Louisiana.

The result of this hard work is that more people are aware of the state's 5 A Day Program, and we are receiving more requests for nutrition education materials.

## **Massachusetts**

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### **Background**

The Massachusetts 5 A Day Program began shortly after the national 5 A Day Program was initiated in 1991. Activities are coordinated internally through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit and externally through the Massachusetts 5 A Day Coalition.

### **Program Focus**

Helping people eat more fruits and vegetables is a key strategy for reducing the burden of chronic disease in Massachusetts. Research has shown that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for the state's three leading causes of death—heart disease (26%), cancer (24%), and stroke (6%).<sup>25</sup>

A healthy diet also can help people achieve and maintain a healthy weight, which can help reduce their risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, some cancers, and diabetes. Although 54.6% of Massachusetts adults were overweight or obese in 2002, only 29% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Among high school students in 2003, 9.9% were overweight, and 13.8% were at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>26</sup> Only 11% ate 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day, which is a significant decrease from 14% in 1999.<sup>26</sup>

### **Program Components**

The Massachusetts 5 A Day Coalition is a public–private partnership that includes representatives from industry, government, community and voluntary organizations, and educational institutions. Its mission is to promote access to and consumption of high quality fruits and vegetables for all Massachusetts residents.

To achieve this goal, the coalition established a statewide infrastructure to facilitate communication, collaboration, and training throughout the state. Coalition members provide technical assistance to local communities and coalitions.

The coalition is headed by a 5 A Day coordinator who works in the Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention's Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit. She is a full-time employee but splits her 5 A Day responsibilities with her nutrition coordinator duties within the unit.

Coalition activities are supported by contributions from sponsors, in-kind donations from members, mini-grants, and resources from state chronic disease initiatives. The state coalition has also sponsored training for its members, such as the recent media training coordinated by the American Heart Association and the American Cancer Society to improve skills in this critical area.

In 2001 and 2002, the 5 A Day Coalition conducted a survey that showed that 79% of the education, food, and health organizations that one would expect to promote fruits and vegetables were doing so. In 2003, a total of 773 people participated in educational events, and more than 85,000 promotional materials were distributed.

Coalition members are working now to help communities and schools increase access to fruits and vegetables and to educate residents about the importance of eating more healthy foods. They also teach people how to select, store, and prepare produce.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health integrates 5 A Day into many of its programs, including WIC and chronic disease prevention and control initiatives. The 5 A Day program is integral to the state's plan to prevent and control overweight and obesity. This statewide infrastructure helps to spread the 5 A Day message more effectively. If Massachusetts residents respond to this message and begin to eat healthier diets, their risk for heart disease, certain types of cancer, stroke, and diabetes may decline.

The statewide infrastructure helps to spread the 5 A Day message more effectively.

## **Conference Makes Hard Work Fun**

One of the early strategic goals of the Massachusetts 5 A Day Coalition was to build a statewide 5 A Day infrastructure that promoted better communication, collaboration, and training for health professionals and interested participants at all levels. This infrastructure would include six regional coalitions that work with local communities and organizations and serve as a link to the state 5 A Day Program.

First, coalition members sought to assess what types of education and training people needed, as well as how many people would be interested in participating in regional coalitions. To answer these questions, they mailed surveys to state educational and community-based organizations. Responses were extremely positive, and the coalition decided to hold a statewide conference to begin building the infrastructure needed to develop and promote the 5 A Day Program.

Coalition members contacted 15 potential sponsors, including grocery stores, health care organizations, and food companies, for support. Additional funds and in-kind contributions from coalition members themselves, community organizations, and the Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health helped make the First Massachusetts Statewide 5 A Day Conference a reality.

The conference was held in October 2002, and more than 200 people from a variety of different professions (e.g., academia, the media, the medical and health communities, the food industry) and organizations from throughout the state attended.

The conference featured 7 workshops— Basic Advocacy, Coalition Building/ Community Organizing, Marketing and Media Relations, 5 A Day 101, Linking Local Farms with Schools, How to Receive Grants and Deciphering Trendy Label Claims Related to Fruits and Vegetables. Regional breakout sessions also were held, and healthy meals based on 5 A Day guidelines were served.

The conference was a fun and effective way to educate and increase skills among people involved or potentially interested in supporting the 5 A Day Program. Comments from participants were positive, including, “The grant writing workshop was excellent—I now see that grant writing is possible” and “I would very much like to explore linking farms to my school district.”

Participants also were asked what they had learned from the conference that would most help them increase fruit and vegetable consumption among citizens in their parts of the state. Some cited information about collaborations and networking to enhance resource sharing at local and state levels, while others cited the valuable data that will help them promote the 5 A Day Program in schools.

Most importantly, the conference accomplished its goal of building a strong statewide infrastructure with 6 regional coalitions to spread the 5 A Day message. For example, the

principal and staff at 1 particular school have made 5 A Day messages a central part of their school environment and are buying fresh, locally grown produce for their cafeteria.

The relationships developed through the conference are enhancing the state's ability to continue to build support for and expand the Massachusetts 5 A Day Program.

## **Minnesota**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Minnesota 5 A Day Program began in 1991 and is coordinated in the Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit of the Division of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease in the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Many of the details and materials of the program are available on the Internet at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/5aday/index.htm>.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, only 24.2% of Minnesota adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> To address this problem, the 5 A Day Program targets all Minnesota citizens. To increase efficiency, it often works through agencies that serve residents directly in the state's 87 counties.

### **Program Components**

The Minnesota 5 A Day Program is supported by a coalition of more than 80 members, including representatives from various MDH divisions as well as the public and private sectors.

These members represent a wide variety of partners, including nonprofit organizations; health insurers and health plans; professional associations; food producers, suppliers, and retailers; local public health agencies; state agriculture and education agencies; and food banks.

Although the coalition does not contribute funding to the 5 A Day Program, many partners contribute in-kind resources for major projects. For example, development, recipe testing, and graphic art services were provided for the Minnesota 5 A Day Cookbook 2001–2002.

Coalition members also contribute to Fitness Fever, a popular program that promotes fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity outside the school day. The program operates in more than two-thirds of Minnesota elementary schools every February.

Other activities that the 5 A Day Program has participated in include the following:

- Sporting Geography, a pilot project in its second year that promotes fruits and vegetables to middle school students. Partners include the Minnesota Wild hockey team and food distributors C.H. Robinson Worldwide and the Nash Finch Company.
- Power Plus and Cafeteria Power Plus, grant-funded research programs designed to modify fruit and vegetable consumption among preschool and school-aged children.



- Changing the Scene: Minnesota Makes the First Move, a project that promotes healthier food environments in schools.
- Work site wellness projects, including Take the 5 A Day Challenge, Posh Squash, and 5 A Day the Minnesota Grown Way. All materials are available for use by partners and other state agencies.
- Food safety campaigns, such as Food Safe, Wash Your Hands, and Washing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, for which display and collateral materials were developed in English, Spanish, Hmong, and Somali. Other campaigns (English and Spanish only) included Food Irradiation and Food Thermometer: How to Choose and Use One.
- The state WIC Program, which incorporates 5 A Day concepts into its programs and materials for clients.

The MDH provides several resources for the 5 A Day Program, including in-house art, printing, and Internet services. Promotional displays can be loaned to local agencies, and many are available on the Internet. Smaller exhibits are available for promotional activities at schools, supermarkets, or community events (e.g., health fairs, county fairs, work site wellness projects).

The MDH also continues to integrate 5 A Day messages into emerging programs in areas such as cardiovascular health, obesity, diabetes, and multicultural health.

## **Keeping the Fiscal Canoe Afloat**

Here's the scenario: you live in one of the healthiest states in the nation, where residents eat more fruits and vegetables than the overall U.S. population. Maintaining this status might be hard, though, because the state budget for health programs has been cut and cut again. All indications are that it will continue to be cut in the future.

Although your state has a 5 A Day Program to promote activities that help people eat more fruits and vegetables, it receives no dedicated state funding except to pay the coordinator's salary—and she has to perform other duties as well.

During the past 10 years, funding has varied significantly because the program depends on partner contributions and research grants. So what do you do when money for state health programs is tight and people need these programs more and more because of unemployment and spiraling health care costs?

In Minnesota, we had to get creative. Our state is just one of 50 paddling this little fiscal canoe up that infamous stream, and we continue to look for ways to do more with less.

For example, in 2000, our 5 A Day Program “went electronic” by putting all of our resources and publications on the Internet for others to access free of charge (<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/5aday>). This change saves time as well as mailing and printing costs.

Another way we save money is through in-kind contributions from the creative and dedicated partners in our 5 A Day Coalition. Our state health department also provides many in-house resources, including graphic art, color printing, lamination, and Internet services. And the leader of the department's Nutrition and Physical Activity Unit, which houses the 5 A Day Program, is an excellent grant writer.

We've also benefited from successful ideas from other states—such as California's Phantom Diner program, which surveys restaurants and awards certificates to those that serve healthy foods. We plan to take the project a step further by surveying caterers in several counties to find out if they offer healthy options.

Another efficient and potentially inexpensive way to promote the 5 A Day Program is to have other people spread your message. Our growing list of interested participants includes nurses, employers, work site wellness coordinators, health educators (from all 87 counties), reporters, the Minnesota Dietetic Association, the Minnesota Food and Nutrition Network, and individual state citizens.

As more people become interested in the program, we can access a backlog of creative project ideas that are waiting for someone to give them new life.

Drawing on these numerous assets has allowed our program to accomplish many things, such as creating popular 5 A Day displays for use at state and county fairs and in schools and workplaces. We've also worked with grocery stores to create recipes that use food from as many different sections of the store as possible and to develop standards for demonstrating these recipes.

In addition, we've been able to study ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in schools, thanks to funding from the National Cancer Institute. And for our work site wellness projects, partners have contributed money, while local graduate students have conducted field research and local health agencies have conducted field testing.

In the end, our limited funding hasn't stopped us. We have carried the 5 A Day message throughout the state, and we hope to continue to help all Minnesotans be as healthy as they can be.

#### Minnesota 5 A Day Cookbook 2001–2002

It's Time to Celebrate . . .

Picnic Month

Food Safety Tip

Wash sponges with dish soap and squeeze dry each day.

Physical Activity Tip

Organize a friendly softball game at your company picnic.

Breakfast Banana Splits

1 cup fresh blueberries or cut-up fresh strawberries

1 ripe banana

6 ounces nonfat or low-fat vanilla yogurt

1 cup Cheerios or other low-sugar cereal such as Wheaties

Wash berries. Peel banana. Slice it longways, then cut each long slice in half. Divide yogurt between two cereal bowls, making a rounded mound. Sprinkle cereal on yogurt. Place a banana quarter on either side of yogurt mound. Sprinkle fruit over cereal. Makes 2 servings.

Per serving: 220 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 175 mg sodium.

## **Mississippi**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Mississippi 5 A Day Program began in 1995. It is part of Nutrition Services and is located in the Office of Child and Adolescent Health in the Mississippi State Department of Health.

### **Program Focus**

Mississippi has the country's second highest prevalence of obesity,<sup>2</sup> and like the rest of the United States, this rate is steadily increasing. Mississippi residents also are the third most sedentary in the country.<sup>2</sup> Although this rate has improved somewhat in the last 10 years, it remains higher than the national average.

In 2002, 36.3% of state adults were overweight, and 26.8% were obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 31.4% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

Despite evidence that eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to prevent obesity, only 17.9% of state adults and 20.4% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

Rather than establishing a stand-alone program, Mississippi's strategy has been to incorporate 5 A Day messages and activities into other health programs, including the Mississippi Alliance for Healthy Schools, Action for Healthy Kids, the Mississippi Alliance for Self-Sufficiency, the Mississippi Obesity Council, and the Mississippi Chronic Illness Coalition.

Other state programs that have embraced 5 A Day messages include those that deal with WIC, family planning, health promotion, child care licensure, early childhood intervention, childhood disabilities, tobacco-use cessation, and employee wellness.

Integrating the 5 A Day Program into other state agencies and public health programs saves money, improves efficiency, and ensures that health messages are consistent statewide.

Despite a lack of dedicated funding, 5 A Day messages have been spread throughout Mississippi thanks to low cost promotional materials from national partners. These materials have been sent to diverse groups—from prison inmates to Girl Scouts and from homeless populations to members of the Daughters of the American Revolution. They are popular in every setting.

Mississippi was one of the last states to appoint a 5 A Day coordinator. In the beginning, people were not sure what the program was all about, and no one stepped forward to champion it. When

the current coordinator assumed her position in 1995, she was asked questions such as, “Does Mississippi need to be involved?” and “What is 5 A Day?”

When people heard the phrase “5 A Day for Better Health,” the usual response was “Five of what?” Then, when they heard the explanation, they exclaimed, “FIVE fruits and vegetables EVERY DAY?”

Today, as more residents learn about the 5 A Day Program and the importance of eating a healthy diet, state officials are receiving more and more requests for information and program assistance. These requests suggest that the 5 A Day Program will continue to play a leading role in promoting behavioral, policy, and environmental changes designed to improve people’s health throughout Mississippi.

"Some at the food pantries had never seen the produce section of a grocery store or shopped at a farmers’ market. Access to fresh produce was uncharted territory."

## **Persistence Pays Off**

In 2002, America's Second Harvest, the largest domestic hunger-relief organization in the United States, issued a national Call to Action because of the dramatic increase in the number of people coming to food-relief programs for assistance. At the time, demand was far outpacing supplies.

As director of Mississippi's Nutrition Services, I was sent to represent my state at a national conference held to address this problem. I'd always been interested in the problem of hunger and how to prevent it since my early days in the U.S. Air Force in the 1970s.

There, I had worked with prisoners of war returning from Vietnam who had experienced "profound and unrelenting" hunger during their imprisonment.

At the conference, speaker after speaker painted a bleaker and bleaker picture about the scope and magnitude of the hunger problem nationwide. I suddenly realized that even though Mississippi has more obese residents than any other state, hunger is still a problem here. It's just "camouflaged" and misunderstood.

Because I also serve as my state's 5 A Day coordinator, I wondered how this program could be used to tackle such an enormous problem. When I returned from the America's Second Harvest conference, I met with John Alford, executive director of the Mississippi Food Network, which helps get donated food to nonprofit organizations (such as food pantries) that serve needy state residents.

John invited me to begin promoting the 5 A Day Program at food pantries throughout Mississippi. Although this might sound like a good idea, these 2 groups are not a match made in heaven!

Food pantries work to combat hunger by distributing any food available to people in need. By contrast, the 5 A Day Program encourages people to make specific food choices from select groups of foods. For example, we promote 5 A Day The Color Way, a national campaign that encourages people to eat 1 serving each day from 5 different color groups—blue/purple, green, white, red, and yellow/orange (e.g., blackberries, spinach, bananas, tomatoes, squash).

When I presented this information at the food pantries, people were interested to learn more and to taste the samples I had brought. Some of them had never seen the produce section of a grocery store or shopped at a farmers' market. Some had never even seen a farmer selling watermelons out of the back of his pick-up truck! Access to fresh produce was uncharted territory.

To spread the 5 A Day message to other people at risk, I turned next to the Farmers' Market Program of the state WIC Program. In addition to educating low-income clients and their children about the benefits of a healthy diet, we increased their access to fresh produce. This partnership provides a chance to help the state's next generation become healthy eaters at a young age.

Integrating the 5 A Day Program into state food-relief efforts wasn't easy, but by taking small steps and being persistent, we charted a new course. And we did it despite limited funding and staff support. We made sure we were at the right places at the right times to create interest among new partners and to take advantage of new opportunities.

Of course, one big advantage of our program is that its messages about eating more fruits and vegetables and improving your overall health are so positive—and they're easy, fun, and inexpensive to execute!

## **New Jersey**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Begun in 1993, the New Jersey 5 A Day Program is cosponsored by the state's Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) and Department of Agriculture. The state WIC Program administers the 5 A Day Program in NJDHSS, with support from the Department of Agriculture's Jersey Fresh Program.

### **Program Focus**

Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption in New Jersey is an important strategy for decreasing the state's chronic disease burden. A diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for the 3 leading causes of death in New Jersey—heart disease (31%), cancer (24%), and stroke (5%).<sup>27</sup>

In addition, if more people ate a healthy, low-calorie diet, it could help counter the nation's growing obesity crisis and its health consequences.

Although New Jersey adults were more likely to eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day than the average U.S. adult in 2003 (26.6% versus 22.6%),<sup>2</sup> the state's public health objectives include increasing this figure to 35% by 2010. Percentages are highest among people aged 65 or older (32.4%) and lowest among non-Hispanic blacks (26.4%) and Hispanics (22.7%) in the state.

### **Program Components**

The 5 A Day Program is promoted by the 5 A Day Coalition, a public-private partnership of 22 groups representing industry, government, community and voluntary organizations, and educational institutions. An infrastructure of state and regional partnerships provides additional collaboration and communication. The coalition's mission is to improve the long-term quality of life for all state residents by encouraging them to eat more fruits and vegetables.

Coalition members work throughout the year on various projects and meet formally 4 times a year. Members also participate in the Team Nutrition Roundtable (currently unfunded), the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Support Network, and the Steering Committee of the New Jersey Nutrition Council. A Web site is maintained as an ongoing public resource (<http://www.state.nj.us/health/fiveaday>).

Coordinating the 5 A Day Program in the state WIC Program offers a unique opportunity for early intervention among the approximately 150,000 WIC participants.



The WIC Program also administers farmers' market programs for WIC participants and senior adults, giving them seasonal opportunities to eat more fresh produce. Funds designated for nutrition education through these programs are the state's biggest resource for promoting fruit and vegetable consumption.

In 2003, the 5 A Day Coalition cosponsored a Phytochemical Conference with Rutgers University that was attended by 180 nutrition and health professionals. It also collaborated with the state's Child Nutrition Bureau, using federal Team Nutrition funds to encourage 750 school districts to promote 5 A Day messages in schools.

In 2004, the coalition reached out to the general public in schools, retail and farmers' markets, and work sites, as well as through faith-based initiatives. Efforts focused on increasing awareness of the 5 A Day Program among school nurses, educators, and pediatricians.

In the future, the coalition hopes to build a comprehensive network with local and regional capacity to provide behaviorally focused, culturally appropriate interventions to diverse populations throughout the state, starting with young people, their families, and their health care providers.

## **North Carolina**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Established in 1996, the North Carolina 5 A Day Program operates in the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch of the Division of Public Health in the state Department of Health and Human Services. The branch's nutrition coordinator oversees the program, spending about 35% of her time on 5 A Day activities.

The coordinator works with the North Carolina 5 A Day Coalition, which has grown from 5 to more than 250 members, representing 81 of the state's 100 counties, the Cherokee Reservation, other government agencies, academia, industry, the media, and nonprofit and private organizations. Financial support comes from the state budget, in-kind donations from coalition members and state agencies, and chronic disease initiatives and grants.

### **Program Focus**

A healthy diet can help to reduce a person's risk for many chronic diseases, including heart disease and some cancers, the first and second leading causes of death in North Carolina.<sup>1</sup> It also can help to reduce medical costs and prevent obesity.

Yet in 2003, 76.9% of state adults and 82.2% of high school students did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

#### Program Components

The 5 A Day Coalition includes a steering committee that guides overall initiatives, while coalition members plan and implement local activities. The coalition developed a strategic plan for 2004–2010 that includes five goals for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among residents in North Carolina.

These goals, along with examples of supporting activities, are as follows:

- Develop a strong state, regional, and community infrastructure to support state goals. Activities include completing a 1-year action plan, further integrating the 5 A Day Program into multiple state-level programs, and incorporating 5 A Day activities into a CDC-funded nutrition and physical activity program to prevent obesity and other chronic conditions.
- Coordinate communications resources and programs that promote fruit and vegetable consumption. Promote these resources to partners at all levels. Activities include establishing a Web site (<http://www.nc5aday.com>); developing training modules for schools; and distributing

educational materials throughout the state, especially to senior citizens, low income residents, and minority groups.

- Engage industry partners to leverage additional communications and marketing resources. Activities include obtaining resources from the state Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services to promote state-grown fruits and vegetables, surveying state farmers about their interest in participating in 5 A Day activities, and recruiting Lowe's Foods Stores to promote 5 A Day messages.
- Enhance efforts at all levels for changing policies and environments in public and private sectors to increase availability and consumption of fruits and vegetables. Activities include making 5 A Day messages part of the state plan to address obesity, supporting the development of policy statements on farmers' markets and standards for school foods, and supporting the North Carolina Farmers' Market Nutrition Program and a Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.
- Promote and support research and evaluation activities. Make sure this information is disseminated to help meet state goals. Activities include collecting and publishing county success stories, assessing local and state projects, and assessing residents' current fruit and vegetable intake.

For more information, visit the following Web sites: [www.nc5aday.com](http://www.nc5aday.com) and [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com).

## **Working Together to Create What You Need**

What happens when state and local resources aren't there to support your program, but people keep asking for materials anyway?

In North Carolina, we decided that staring at our computer screens and wondering what to do just wouldn't work. We had to put our heads together and create the 5 A Day products that people needed to promote this fabulous program all over the state!

The project started with members of the state's 5 A Day Coalition, which includes more than 250 partners throughout North Carolina. Local members, such as Jen Hames, a community health educator in the Davidson County Health Department, knew they needed materials to integrate into community health programs.

So they called Diane Beth, who coordinates the state 5 A Day Program. Although Diane didn't have enough materials to meet the demand, she knew the coalition members could solve the problem if they worked together.

Fortunately, they didn't have to start from scratch. Media and educational kits had been created in the past to promote national 5 A Day Week in September. Activity books had been created for kindergartners and for the farmers' market program, which is part of the state WIC Program.

So the group rounded up the existing state and national 5 A Day materials and packaged them into a North Carolina 5 A Day Tool Kit. They made sure to select items that would appeal to a variety of different audiences, particularly those with low literacy levels.

They also included information about nutrition and physical activity programs beyond 5 A Day to pique the interest of a broader range of people. Materials were organized in a user-friendly way, and electronic files were provided in accessible formats such as Microsoft Word and PDF.

The finished product, which was released in October 2002, features more than 150 materials from many different sources. A major contribution arrived just in time—a CD-ROM from CDC loaded with great materials for state 5 A Day coordinators.

Other items include downloadable graphics, logos, guidelines for logo use, handouts, slide presentations, recipes, and data on fruit and vegetable consumption in North Carolina. Information about the state 5 A Day Program's Web site also is included.

Together, these materials give local and state partners everything they need to help North Carolina residents eat the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Although some training has occurred, the tool kit was designed as a stand-alone resource.

To cover the costs of the tool kits, we sold them for \$45, which is less than the \$65 a piece it took to create 500 kits. Initial funding came from the Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch of

the state's Department of Health and Human Services, and other state programs helped by buying kits for local partners and staff members.

One of the lessons that we learned along the way is that projects of this magnitude require a lot of time, energy, and money—but they really help increase enthusiasm for a program. We also learned the importance of involving as many people as possible and making sure administrative support (and storage space!) is adequate.

Jen says she's gotten lots of positive feedback at local levels and that she uses the tool kit often.

“The tool kit has been a big help in developing presentations,” she says. “When I need a particular item, it's usually available in a camera-ready format, which saves so much time and energy.”

The tool kit is available for distribution outside North Carolina. Just contact Diane Beth at [diane.beth@ncmail.net](mailto:diane.beth@ncmail.net).

## **Ohio**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Ohio 5 A Day Program began in 1991 and is funded by a federal PHHS Block Grant. Its principles are integrated into existing chronic disease programs, and the program coordinator also serves as the chronic disease nutritionist of the Bureau of Health Promotion and Risk Reduction in the Ohio Department of Health.

### **Program Focus**

Ohio's chronic disease death rates are among the highest in the nation. In 2002, heart disease accounted for 28.6% of all state deaths, while cancer accounted for 22.9% and diabetes accounted for 3.5%.<sup>1</sup>

In 2002, 58.7% of adults were overweight or obese, and only 22.7% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup> In 1999, only 18.7% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>3</sup>

In response to these health concerns, state officials created Healthy Ohioans, a multiyear program designed to encourage citizens to adopt healthier behaviors and lifestyles. Several program activities include 5 A Day messages about eating more fruits and vegetables as a way to improve overall health.

### **Program Components**

The 5 A Day Program relies on partnerships within and beyond the state health department to promote its activities. For example,

- The state WIC Program includes 5 A Day messages in assessment and education activities, as well as on approved food lists for participants.
- The Ohio State University Extension Service uses 5 A Day activities in its Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Family Life Program, and Senior Series Program.
- The state health department distributes hundreds of 5 A Day brochures and other materials at the annual state fair.

- The Cardiovascular Health Program has incorporated 5 A Day principles into projects designed to change systems and policies to improve the nutritional environment of schools, work sites, and local communities in 42 counties.

During 1993–2000, the PHHS Block Grant allowed Ohio to support local projects with mini-grants. These projects promoted 5 A Day messages through garden plots for low-income residents, recipe challenges and cookbooks, farmers' markets at elementary schools, awards to restaurants that promoted fruits and vegetables on their menus, and training for school cooks and home day care providers.

In 2002, Ohio was one of four states chosen for the USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program. The 5 A Day coordinator partnered with the state education and agriculture departments and the Ohio Division of the American Cancer Society (ACS) to provide 5 A Day resources to teachers and food service personnel in the 25 participating schools.

Lessons learned were shared with other schools and health professionals, and ACS Community Investment Grants paid for free produce at other state schools.

In 2003, Ohio formed a statewide 5 A Day Coalition through a unique partnership with ACS. Members include representatives from the public health community, academic institutions, nonprofit organizations, and commodity groups.

The Ohio 5 A Day Program continues to adapt and evolve, demonstrating the durability of its message in many different settings.

## **Unique Partners Make the Difference**

One way to help your 5 A Day Program grow is to find unique partners to support your activities. That's what we've done in Ohio, where the Comprehensive Cancer Program of the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is working with the Ohio Division of the American Cancer Society (ACS).

In 2001, the two groups formally agreed to work together to develop and implement a state cancer plan. As the resulting Partners for Cancer Control initiative took shape, ACS expanded its focus from detecting and treating cancer to preventing it.

To promote these efforts, ACS hired Craig Wethington, a health educator who had been working in a local health department and understood both the needs and the abilities of local public health agencies—as well as how ACS efforts could be integrated.

Assigned to work at ODH, Craig spent 2 years developing a local infrastructure for ACS initiatives. In 2003, he moved to the ACS-Ohio Division office, where he still works closely with state and local public health staff members to develop and expand a variety of community and work site cancer prevention programs.

Craig also spends about one-fourth of his time working on 5 A Day activities, and his efforts have helped to advance this important program. His resources, collaborations, and connections with other groups have opened many doors.

For example, ACS helps promote 5 A Day messages through its partnerships with the Governor's Healthy Ohioan campaign, the Healthy Ohioans Business Council, the Ohio Dietetic Association, the Ohio Occupational Health Nurses Association, and the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.

Craig also cochairs the Ohio 5 A Day Strategic Committee with Barbara Pryor, who coordinates the state's 5 A Day Program.

Under Craig's direction, ACS has provided regional training work-shops for its staff members in regional, state, and local field offices in Ohio. It developed a how-to guide for implementing 5 A Day activities in communities, schools, work sites, and the media.

ACS also promotes 5 A Day messages through Ohio's Cardiovascular Health Program, which currently has 42 local projects. Regional ACS staff members serve on community-based coalitions that oversee these projects.

In this capacity, ACS staff members help coordinate activities, provide financial and program support, and provide training and resources. Community Investment Grants have supported countywide professional education workshops in Ohio counties and walking programs for students in three school districts.



In addition, ACS has supported a partnership between the 5 A Day Program and the state's Department of Aging. This project resulted in distribution of materials on the 5 A Day Program and on cancer prevention and early detection to more than 80,000 seniors. In 2004, we worked to distribute 5 A Day materials to all sites that participate in the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

Also in 2004, the 5 A Day Strategic Committee applied for national ACS funding to develop and pilot an interactive Web site for employers and employees. The site will feature work site nutrition programs, healthy vending machine recommendations, and a variety of educational activities and resources that promote Ohio-grown fruits and vegetables.

The enthusiasm and support that the ACS-Ohio Division has given to our 5 A Day Program indicates its commitment to prevention. Its willingness to collaborate with a variety of partners, to commit resources, and to support innovative and creative ways of delivering 5 A Day messages inspires all of us working to improve nutrition and health in Ohio.

## **South Dakota**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

Established in 1993, the South Dakota 5 A Day Program collaborates with several programs in the South Dakota Department of Health, including Maternal and Child Health, WIC, Cardiovascular Health, and the Health Promotion Office.

The 5 A Day Program's state coalition is no longer active because of limited funding, but activities are conducted by representatives from the state Department of Health, the state Cooperative Extension Service, Child and Adult Nutrition Services, and the American Cancer Society.

### **Program Focus**

Encouraging South Dakota residents to eat more fruits and vegetables is a key strategy for reducing the state's chronic disease burden. In 2001, South Dakota's three leading causes of death were heart disease (28.7%), cancer (23.1%), and cerebrovascular diseases such as stroke (7.1%).<sup>28</sup>

Poor diet and physical inactivity are risk factors for many chronic diseases, and the percentage of state children aged 2–5 years who are already overweight has increased from 9.4% in 1996 to 13.6% in 2003.<sup>29</sup>

Data from the 2002–2003 school year indicated that 16.6% of South Dakota students aged 5–19 were overweight, and another 16.7% were at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>30</sup> Among adults, overweight and obesity have increased from 46.9% in 1990 to 60.6% in 2002.<sup>2</sup>

Although a healthy diet can help to prevent overweight and obesity, only 17.1% of high school students in South Dakota ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>3</sup> Among adults, the percentage declined from 23.9% in 1996 to 19% in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

South Dakota's state nutritionist served as the 5 A Day coordinator for 10 years. Today, the Cardiovascular Health Program coordinator oversees the program. She is the only 5 A Day staff person and spends about 25% of her time on 5 A Day activities.

The coordinator works in the Health Promotion Office of the state health department, which frequently shares employees between departments because of limited staffing.

A federal PHHS Block Grant funds South Dakota's 5 A Day Program. Because funding is limited, the program focuses on educational activities aimed at specific populations such as participants in WIC and the All Women Count! breast and cervical cancer screening program. In-kind donations from partners support these efforts.

Activities include teaching targeted residents how to buy and prepare fruits and vegetables. Five A Day messages are promoted in local WIC agencies, the All Women Count! program, school food service and senior meal programs, and state colleges and technical schools.

During 1994–1995, a small grant paid for 1 full-time 5 A Day position that was shared by several people. Multilevel activities were conducted with input from schools, retailers, the media, and community members. During this time, the percentage of state adults who ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day increased from 20.9% in 1994 to 23.9% in 1996, but has since declined nearly 5%.<sup>2</sup>

"I felt overwhelmed at first, but as I sifted through the boxes, I grew more and more curious about what I would find."

## **The Adventures of a 5 A Day Coordinator**

Becoming a 5 A Day coordinator is a fun and challenging adventure that began for me in January 2004. My name is Larissa, and I'm also the coordinator of the Cardiovascular Health Program in the South Dakota Department of Health.

From 1993 through 2003, our state nutritionist oversaw the 5 A Day Program. Now I've been asked to take over the reins of this important program, and I'm very excited.

After the former coordinator had briefed me on the program, she left me with the materials that she had accumulated over the years—several boxes and a big tub of “goodies.”

I felt overwhelmed at first, but as I sifted through the boxes, I grew more and more curious about what I would find. The brightly colored stuffed toys in the shapes of fruits and vegetables now sit on my desk.

A scrapbook filled with colorful pictures and pamphlets that highlight previous 5 A Day projects and events provide historical perspective and, more importantly, stimulate my imagination.

Sorting through the materials allowed me to brainstorm about ways that 5 A Day messages and activities could be integrated into Cardiovascular Health and other programs throughout the health department.

Up until now, the 5 A Day Program had only been promoted in schools and through the state WIC Program. One of my first goals is to expand the program to target new populations. For example, we need to reach out to people aged 65 or older because this population will continue to increase in the coming years, and their rates of chronic diseases tend to be high.

Another area where I want to expand is the state's Community Health Services Office. Employees there already bombard me with requests for presentations and materials for local health fairs.

These dedicated staff members routinely promote 5 A Day messages in their communities, and I've been impressed with the creative ways they deliver these messages—such as giving away bags of baby carrots at health fairs.

To build on past progress, I also plan to continue promoting the importance of a healthy diet to low-income women enrolled in the All Women Count! breast and cervical cancer screening program. Plans are already under way to disseminate 5 A Day materials such as cookbooks and planning guides as incentives.

As my work with the 5 A Day Program continues, I'm also learning about the many challenges we face. When the program was funded for its own fulltime staff person during 1994–1995, consumption of fruits and vegetables among state adults went up. Since then, the numbers have declined.

For the future, new partnerships and resources are needed to expand this important program and to create the infrastructure needed to make it sustainable. We should continue to develop new educational activities and innovative ways to promote 5 A Day messages. As we learn what works, this information should be incorporated into “best practice” documents that communities can use to implement local interventions and programs.

I look forward to meeting these challenges in the coming years!

## Youth Innovations

Healthy behaviors—including a diet rich in fruits and vegetables—are often established in childhood. These 5 A Day programs are touching the lives of children and their parents both in and outside of the classroom and giving children the knowledge and skills they need to establish healthy eating habits that can last them a lifetime.

## **Connecticut**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Connecticut 5 A Day Program is located in the Connecticut State Department of Public Health. It collaborates with multiple state and local organizations, and activities are planned by a 5 A Day State Advisory Committee. The 5 A Day coordinator also serves as the Health Programs Supervisor for the state health department.

### **Program Focus**

The Connecticut 5 A Day Program works to improve the health of state residents, particularly those with low incomes, by helping them eat more fruits and vegetables. In 2003, only 29.8% of state adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

Connecticut uses funding from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to provide nutrition education to people enrolled in the Food Stamp Program. The 5 A Day Program's biggest emphasis, however, is on low-income children in the Head Start program.

Head Start provides a conducive environment for positive behavior change because teachers and parents work together, nutrition education is mandated, and meals and snacks must meet federal nutrition standards.

Connecticut's 5 A Day Head Start initiative works to build partnerships at community, state, and federal levels. Current partners, many of whom also serve on the 5 A Day State Advisory Committee, include other state agencies, universities and schools, community service agencies, food service professionals, and grocery stores. These partners continuously provide resources and opportunities for program expansion.

The Head Start initiative also has developed two curricula—one for school personnel and one for parents—to help children eat more fruits and vegetables at school and at home. Input from focus groups, early childhood education and behavioral experts, teachers, and consultants helped create the curricula.

To learn how to use the school-based curriculum, called Adventures of Captain 5 A Day, teachers and food service personnel attend training workshops. The three modules (Fruit and Vegetable Adventures, Physical Activity Adventures, and Healthy Bones Adventures) include audio cassettes and activity cards that encourage learning through music and movement, arts and crafts, and imaginative play.

Once children learn to taste new foods, they're encouraged to share what they've learned with their parents. Teachers also send note cards home to parents with 5 A Day messages, recipes, and suggestions for physical activity.

The curriculum for parents teaches them how to select, prepare, and serve fruits and vegetables. The centerpiece is a video called Supermarket Smarts:

The 5 A Day Way, which shows a virtual grocery store tour and highlights perceived barriers and solutions to eating healthy.

These initiatives also have been expanded to the state's School Readiness Program and to eligible elementary schools. The state helps participants conduct 5 A Day activities— such as taking the 5 A Day Challenge, writing stories, making posters, and preparing recipes—for 1 week. At the end of the week, Captain 5 A Day visits, joining the children at lunch and leading them in nutrition-related physical activities.

A 15-week evaluation of about 300 children enrolled in Head Start and School Readiness programs found that the 5 A Day initiative increased participants' willingness to try and eat carrots, broccoli, and spinach.

"More of the children were willing to taste or eat the carrots if the teachers ate the carrots while sitting at the table with them."



## **District of Columbia**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The District of Columbia (DC) 5 A Day Program is located in the Nutrition Programs Administration of the DC Department of Health. DC is unique because it functions as a state, a county, and a city all in one, and it is our nation's capital.

### **Program Focus**

As the political heart of the nation, DC is home to some of the most educated and well-paid politicians in the world. Unfortunately, it is also a city marked by overwhelming poverty, homelessness, and crime.

In addition, DC has high rates of chronic disease—with heart disease, cancer, and stroke reported as the three leading causes of death.<sup>1</sup> Although eating fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day can help to reduce a person's risk for many chronic diseases, 70.4% of DC adults and 78.7% of high school students did not meet this goal in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

To help address these problems, the DC 5 A Day Program targets low income people enrolled in the WIC Program, the Food Stamp Program, the Commodity and Supplemental Food Program, the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, and the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP). It also seeks to reach people who might be eligible for these types of programs.

### **Program Components**

Because DC is not a state, funding levels for many government programs are smaller than even the smallest state. No funding is allocated for the DC 5 A Day Program, so collaborations and partnerships with other local agencies and organizations are key to spreading the 5 A Day message.

The 5 A Day coordinator devotes only 10% of her time to this program, with the rest spent on other state nutrition programs (e.g., WIC, FSNEP). She works to organize activities that are mutually beneficial to all projects.

For example, 5 A Day messages are promoted in all 17 WIC clinics, and in 2003, a promotional campaign was conducted in the public transit system during 5 A Day Month.

Since the FSNEP began in DC in 2003, the target population for the 5 A Day Program has doubled. The FSNEP incorporates 5 A Day messages, presenting them several times each month to participating parents and schoolchildren in churches and at local community events.

The DC 5 A Day Program also is working with the American Cancer Society to implement its Body & Soul Program in five African American churches in DC to increase members' knowledge and consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables.

This faith-based program is designed to reinforce the importance of eating a healthy diet to decrease a person's risk for some cancers and other diseases.

Other partners that are helping spread 5 A Day messages include the Anacostia Farmers' Market, the Capital Area Food Bank, the Covenant House of Washington, DC, the Latin American Youth Council, and DC Public Schools.

## **Exposure, Education, and Entertainment**

"We talk about food labels and look at the product samples I've brought.

The students are upset to learn that advertisers try to trick them with deceptive packaging. 'What do you mean this isn't real juice? It says 100% Vitamin C right on the label!' exclaims one student."

As I ride the Metro each morning from a northern suburb of the District of Columbia (DC) to an urban area in the southeastern part of the city, I am reminded of the income and health disparities that divide our nation's capital.

My commute starts in a predominantly white, middle-class neighborhood and takes me through low-income areas that are Hispanic, multicultural, and progressively more African American.

My destination is Anacostia, located in the poorest of DC's eight wards. Most residents are African American, and 36% live below the poverty line, according to the DC Office of Planning. Anacostia also is home to the DC Department of Health, where I coordinate nutrition activities such as the 5 A Day Program.

Every morning, I see the same patterns. Children walk to school eating hot dogs and chips. A young mother smokes a cigarette and hands her child a soft drink. As a public health worker, I know we must combat these early poor eating habits because they can lead to obesity and premature death from disease.

One way to address this problem is through the three Es—Exposure, Education, and Entertainment. I remember this strategy the day I visit Hamilton Middle School, located in another poor inner-city neighborhood.

I pass through Hamilton's huge double doors and the metal detector and head to Mrs. Smith's 7th-grade classroom.

Before I begin my presentation, I ask how many students had breakfast. About 10% raise their hands—although 97% of Hamilton's students are eligible for free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch. No wonder so many of them look tired!

Eating in the cafeteria must not be popular. Perhaps the students skip breakfast and wait for lunch, when they can go off campus to fast-food restaurants or street vendors.

I start by telling the students how food companies use "creative marketing" in their commercials to sell products that might not be very healthy. I ask them if they like juice and whether they know how much juice they're actually getting in some products.

We talk about food labels and look at the product samples I've brought. The students are upset to learn that advertisers try to trick them with deceptive packaging. "What do you mean this isn't real juice? It says 100% Vitamin C right on the label!" exclaims one student.

Next, I ask how many of them have a relative with diabetes, heart disease, or high blood pressure. All but two raise their hands. So we talk about how a healthy diet can help to prevent and sometimes reverse certain chronic conditions.

I also tell them about DC's 5 A Day Program, where we work to help people eat more fruits and vegetables every day. They seem interested, so I share my materials with them.

Now that I've exposed and educated the students, it's time to entertain them. I pull out my blender and pour in fruit juice, ice, and fresh fruit. I go to work on a smoothie, Emeril style, and the students love it—"This doesn't have any sugar in it?" "Can I have

As I pack to leave, one student stops and thanks me for teaching him about the 5 A Day Program. I realize that once these students leave school, they'll probably go back to their usual way of eating unless they have continued education and support. But I have left them with a spark, and I hope others come along to add more fuel.

## **Florida**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Florida 5 A Day Program is funded and overseen by the Obesity Prevention Program of the Florida Department of Health. The state coordinator, who is a nutrition educator in the Obesity Prevention Program, provides information and technical assistance for regional and local activities.

All 67 Florida counties have their own 5 A Day coordinators who promote fruit and vegetable consumption within their communities. Although each county's approach is different, most promote 5 A Day messages in schools and health care settings. Some also work with grocery stores and farmers' markets.

### **Program Focus**

The goal of the Florida 5 A Day Program is to increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables by Floridians to 5–9 servings a day.

The program works to educate people about how a healthy diet can help them maintain a healthy weight and decrease their risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease and some cancers. It also teaches them how to add more fruits and vegetables to their daily diets.

In 2003, only 23.6% of Florida adults and 20.7% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

Like many states, Florida is experiencing an epidemic of overweight and obesity among its residents. In 2002, 57% of adults were overweight, and 19.4% were obese.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 26.4% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

The Florida 5 A Day Program conducts many activities throughout the state, such as distributing materials during National Nutrition Month (March) and national 5 A Day Month (September).

Other projects include the Employee Extravaganza, which features interactive fruit and vegetable activities; quarterly newsletters that are sent to local 5 A Day coordinators; and a new Web site (<http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/5aday>).

In 2003, the program distributed a children's book called Give Me 5 A Day! to all county health departments, state libraries, and 3,500 pediatrician offices. The book targets children in

preschool through first grade and promotes 5 A Day messages, physical activity, reading, and counting.

It was created and published by the Florida Department of Health's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs and Bureau of WIC and Nutrition Services.

The 5 A Day Program also partnered with the Florida Outdoor Advertising Association in 10 counties to produce billboard displays that encourage fruit and vegetable consumption. It is working with the Partnership for Promoting Physical Activity and Healthful Nutrition to increase awareness of the importance of eating 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day and being physically active.

In addition, it collaborates with the state WIC Program to print 5 A Day messages on voucher envelopes used by WIC participants.

In 2004, the Florida Interagency Food and Nutrition Committee launched a statewide campaign called Snack Smart, Move More to encourage families to choose healthy snacks and be more physically active.

Information about this campaign—including a literature review, suggested activities, and curricula for all age groups—is available on the Internet at <http://www.fldoe.org/nutrition/teachers/SnackSmart>.

Also in 2004, the Florida Department of Health produced an 18-minute, 4-song CD of original children's music called "Give Me 5 A Day" to encourage children to be more physically active and to eat more fruits and vegetables. Information on the CD can be found at [http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/wic/Documents/Five\\_A\\_Day/Give\\_me\\_5\\_a\\_day\\_CD.html](http://www.doh.state.fl.us/family/wic/Documents/Five_A_Day/Give_me_5_a_day_CD.html).

In 2005, state officials will launch a new nutritional campaign called Be Wise About Your Portion Size that focuses on portion control. Campaign materials will be created for children, adults, and seniors.

## **Indiana**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Indiana 5 A Day Steering Committee helped launch the state's 5 A Day Program in 1991. A survey conducted by the Indiana University Public Opinion Laboratory found that state residents ate an average of only 3.5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

People reported that they did not eat more produce because they thought such foods were time-consuming and inconvenient to prepare, or they didn't like the taste. These results guided the direction of the 5 A Day Program.

### **Program Focus**

Obesity has historically been a major health problem in Indiana, with 61.3% of adults reported to be overweight or obese in 2002.<sup>2</sup> Although a healthy diet can help address this problem, only 22% of adults and 20.3% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

The 5 A Day Steering Committee has developed several programs and events to promote the idea that children and adults will accept fruits and vegetables if they are presented in an appealing way and are easy to prepare.

### **Program Components**

The Indiana State Department of Health funded the Marion County Health Department in Indianapolis to develop a curriculum to promote the 5 A Day Program and to introduce healthy foods to children in grades K–6 when they are forming taste preferences and eating habits.

The curriculum includes three 40-minute sessions designed to foster interest in fruits and vegetables. The third session is planned around a party where the children can sample fresh produce. Foods are usually provided by school food services departments, but in 1 county, Caito Foods—the largest produce distributor in the Midwest and a major 5 A Day partner—provides the food.

Copies of the curriculum can be ordered from the state health department's Web site at <http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/nutrition/5aday/order.html>.

During 2002–2003, 25 Indiana schools participated in the USDA's Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program, which funds schools to buy produce from local grocery stores. The program's goal is to find out whether children will eat fruits and vegetables if they are provided free.

Staff members at the participating schools embraced the healthy eating effort. They also reported that students' attitudes and behaviors improved when fruits and vegetables were substituted for soda, chips, and candy in vending machines.

The 5 A Day Program also works with the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program in the state WIC Program. For several years, nutrition education that encourages WIC participants to eat more fruits and vegetables has been offered as part of the certification process.

This information was provided in English and Spanish on a touch-screen computer. Although this project was well-accepted, it was discontinued because no funds were available to update it.

The 5 A Day Program is promoted statewide during an annual 5 A Day Week and through media events and special presentations throughout the year. Food tastings and cooking demonstrations are offered at events such as the Indiana Black Expo Health Fair, which reaches thousands of people.

Students' attitudes and behaviors improved when fruits and vegetables were substituted for soda, chips, and candy in vending machines.



## **Bunny Party Helps Children Eat Healthy Foods**

Bobby is a kindergarten student who has always turned up his nose at vegetables such as carrots and spinach when his parents offered them at dinner. So imagine their surprise when Bobby came home one day with an “I tried it” badge and enthusiastically reported that he had eaten those vegetables at his school’s “Bunny Party.”

As part of Indiana’s 5 A Day curriculum, this party encourages children to pretend to be bunnies—to wear bunny ears, hop like a bunny, and learn about how bunnies live and what they eat.

Quite naturally, the children are willing to try some bunny foods like raw carrots and spinach. Bobby tasted those vegetables and was rewarded with the “I tried it” badge. Bobby’s parents decided to build on this positive experience by introducing more fruits and vegetables at home.

The Bunny Party was part of the broader Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program funded by the USDA at 25 Indiana schools during 2002–2003. The program enables schools to buy fresh produce and offer it free to students in the hope that they will prefer it to less-healthy snacks such as soda, chips, and candy.

Besides proving that children will eat healthy foods if they are available and appealing, the program brought school administrators, teachers, and food service personnel together like never before. All of them saw positive improvements in students’ attitudes and behaviors. School nurses even reported that fewer children were complaining of stomachaches—complaints they now think were related to hunger.

The success of this program depended on unprecedented cooperation among the USDA; the Indiana departments of education and health; school administrators, teachers, and maintenance staff; students and parents; and local produce vendors.

Several schools had to buy or lease refrigerators to store the extra produce, and some ordered premade trays from local grocery stores because they lacked storage space or staff to prepare the produce.

In addition to its success in getting children to try new fruits and vegetables, the Indiana 5 A Day Program also has scored a big hit with adults. After the 5 A Day coordinator gave cooking demonstrations and tastings at the annual Indiana Black Expo Health Fair, many adults embraced new, healthier ways of preparing old favorites.

For example, collard greens have long been a favorite vegetable, but many busy, working people don’t have the time to rinse them and cook them for hours, the way their grandparents did. Expo attendees learned how to stir-fry collard greens and found out that many grocery stores now offer prewashed and precut greens to make preparation easier.

The greens were a big hit, as were baked sweet potatoes, grilled vegetables, and easy and nutritious desserts like fruit trifle. Indianapolisbased Caito Foods and Kroger grocery stores provided food for the event, and volunteers learned how to conduct similar events in their communities.

The philosophy of the Indiana 5 A Day Program is that people of all ages can learn to change their eating habits if healthy foods are easily available and presented in an appealing way. A phrase you'll hear less and less in Indiana is, "You'll never get children and adults to eat fruits and vegetables."

## **Iowa**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Iowa 5 A Day Program began in January 1994 as part of the Cardiovascular Risk Reduction Program of the Iowa Bureau of Health Promotion. An Iowa Community Nutrition Coalition implemented local activities, such as publishing 5+5: A Step By Step Approach to Developing Community Based Nutrition/Physical Activity Programs, conducting innovative interventions through 5 A Day community grants, and evaluating local coalitions built using the 5+5 model.

In 1997, the 5 A Day coordinator moved to the Diabetes Control Program, but continued to support nutrition and other related programs. Successful projects included 99 in '99 and New Century Challenge, which led to a statewide program called Lighten Up Iowa. The coordinator's position is funded by the Iowa Nutrition Network, which is supported by the USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, only 17.1% of Iowa adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> In 2001, only 18.9% of high school students met this goal.<sup>3</sup>

In 1998, a statewide 5 A Day Coalition was formed, bringing together representatives from industry, government, community, and volunteer groups. Its mission is to promote consumption of fruits and vegetables by Iowans, especially those with low incomes.

### **Program Components**

Today, the 5 A Day Coalition helps to guide implementation of the 5 A Day strategic plan. It was also a key partner in developing Iowa's Pick a better snack social marketing campaign targeting children aged 2–12 and their parents or caregivers.

One element of this campaign, the Pick a better snack & Act program, rewards children for trying new fruits and vegetables and physical activities. Partners and coalition members representing major retailers were essential in building support for this campaign.

Pick a better snack and 5 A Day messages also have been successfully integrated into the nutrition education plans of community coalitions across Iowa. In 2003, 20 local coalitions reported nearly 4.7 million contacts (direct and indirect) with Pick a better snack materials. State 5 A Day initiatives (e.g., radio and newspaper advertisements, billboards, classroom interventions) generated more than 1.6 million contacts.

The percentage of elementary school students who recognized 5 A Day and Pick a better snack logos and reported positive attitudes about fruit and vegetable snacks increased significantly according to local surveys. In addition, 51% of adults surveyed in Food Stamp offices were familiar with Pick a better snack messages, and more than 60% of those same adults said they were eating more fruits and vegetables or thinking about doing so because of the campaign.

More information about this campaign is available at <http://www.idph.state.ia.us/pickabetersnack>.

The Iowa 5 A Day Coalition also provides training to partners, including the Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association, the Iowa Network of Community Agriculture, the state WIC Program, and those working with USDA programs (Team Nutrition, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program).

Partners such as the Iowa State University Extension and the state departments of education, agriculture, and public health provide resources to help convey the 5 A Day message to broader audiences.

Five A Day messages also were incorporated into Lighten Up Iowa, a 2003 event that encouraged healthy eating and physical activity across the state. About 1,400 teams representing nearly 12,000 Iowans participated in the 5-month competition, recording more than 2.6 million miles of activity and 23.5 tons of weight lost overall.

"What I like about the fruit is they have vitamin C. My favorite is the kiwi because I never tasted it before. It is new to me and my classroom."

## **New Hampshire**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The New Hampshire 5 A Day Program began in 1993 and operates in the Division of Public Health Services of the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services. The program receives 100% of its funding from a federal PHHS Block Grant. The 5 A Day coordinator dedicates 80% of her time to the program, with assistance from a support staff person who gives 20% of her time.

### **Program Focus**

The New Hampshire 5 A Day Program is working to improve the health of state residents by encouraging them to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Although a healthy diet can help to reduce a person's risk for chronic conditions such as heart disease, some cancers, and obesity, only 28.5% of New Hampshire adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup> Heart disease is responsible for 29% of all deaths in New Hampshire each year, and cancer accounts for 25% of deaths.<sup>31</sup>

In addition, 56.3% of adults were overweight or obese in 2002,<sup>2</sup> and 23.3% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight in 2003.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

By 2010, the state 5 A Day Program hopes to achieve the following goals:

- Increase the percentage of people who eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day to 50%.
- Increase the percentage of adults who have heard of the 5 A Day Program to 30%.
- Reduce the state's prevalence of overweight and obesity to 40% for adults and 5% for high school students.

To achieve these goals, the 5 A Day Program provides technical assistance; brochures, posters, and recipes; free library materials; and exhibits and speakers for professional conferences to schools, work sites, and community

Highlights of recent activities by the 5 A Day Program and its partners include the following:

- A newsletter series targeting older adults participating in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program.
- A 5 A Day Patch Program by the Girl Scouts of Swift Water Council.
- A 10-week work site wellness program called Get Fit With 5 Goes to Work (based on the Stages of Change Model) in 7 schools and municipalities. The program was offered through HealthTrust, an insurer for schools and municipalities.
- The 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Cookbook, which was developed in collaboration with the state Department of Education.
- A planned series of newsletter articles by the state WIC Program.
- A series of articles in the Volunteer Ventures food co-op newsletter, which has a circulation of 25,000 in 6 states (6,000 in New Hampshire).

Food service personnel lacked the recipes that would put 5 A Day right onto students' plates. A cookbook of 5 A Day recipes was an ideal solution.

## **Dreaming Out Loud**

Getting children to eat vegetables has been one of the biggest challenges of Nancy Stiles' 30-year career. As the director of school food service for the Hampton School District, she is responsible for feeding 1,400 students in grades 1–8.

She wants her students to eat a greater variety and quantity of both vegetables and fruits because of the health benefits. In particular, Nancy wants to increase her students' range of "edible" vegetables beyond the usual carrots, green beans, and corn.

Nancy celebrated 5 A Day Month in her school district by introducing new fruits and vegetables and by preparing vegetables in a variety of ways. But like many food service directors, she wanted new recipes that not only met the USDA's nutritional requirements but also expanded her students' eating horizons.

Fifty miles away in the state capital, Mindy Fitterman, the state's 5 A Day coordinator, was "dreaming out loud" with her colleague, Cheri White, an education consultant in the state education department. Although Cheri had provided numerous opportunities for Mindy to present 5 A Day messages in New Hampshire schools, Mindy knew that food service personnel "lacked the recipes that would put 5 A Day right on the students' plates." Cheri agreed that a cookbook with 5 A Day recipes would be an ideal solution.

Early in 2002, Cheri gave Mindy a pleasant surprise—her dream cookbook could become a reality thanks to Team Nutrition training funds from the USDA. Mindy and Cheri started by selecting about 40 family-size, official 5 A Day recipes on the basis of their appeal to children's food preferences and their use of commodity foods and New Hampshire-grown produce.

Mindy got permission from various organizations to expand and adapt the selected recipes for use in schools. Cheri hired Chef Julianne Guyette of the Atlantic Culinary Academy in Dover to spend 12 months expanding and kidtesting every recipe and determining its nutrient content.

In late 2003, after months of drafting and editing, the 5 A Day Quantity Recipe Cookbook was delivered to New Hampshire's 230 school food service directors. In Hampton, Nancy Stiles is already using her copy.

"I introduce a new recipe every other week," she said. "The recipes we tried have all been excellent. They energize and stimulate the taste buds."

All of the recipes can be adjusted to 25, 50, or 100 servings, and all meet the 5 A Day recipe criteria—low in fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium and featuring at least 1 serving of a fruit or vegetable per portion. Each recipe conforms to USDA requirements and indicates the nutrients per serving, national Child Nutrition Program servings per portion, 5 A Day servings per portion, approximate preparation time, and the recipe source.

In addition, the original family-size recipes are included in the appendices so that students can bring home their cafeteria favorites.

Making the 5 A Day cookbook a reality depended on the close working relationship between Cheri and Mindy and the partnership between their employers—the 5 A Day Program in the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services and the Bureau of Nutrition Programs and Services in the New Hampshire Department of Education.

This partnership continues to grow. Jointly sponsored workshops in 2004 featured ideas for promoting 5 A Day messages in school cafeterias and beyond and demonstrations of cookbook recipes by Chef Julienne Guyette.

The cookbook is available online at <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/doe/organization/programsupport/bnps/cookbook.pdf> and at <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Training/NC5aday/NH5aday/index.html>.



## **New Mexico**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The New Mexico 5 A Day Program began in the early 1990s in the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program of the Chronic Disease Bureau of the New Mexico Department of Health. It has moved a couple of times before settling in the Obesity, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Program.

### **Program Focus**

The New Mexico 5 A Day Program works to reduce the state's high rates of obesity and diabetes by encouraging residents to eat more fruits and vegetables. In 2003, only 22.4% of state adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup>

Obesity prevalence increased in New Mexico during 1990–2002, particularly among residents aged 18–34 years (7.1% to 17.2%) and 35–49 years (11.3% to 21.1%).<sup>2</sup>

In addition, nearly 60% of adults have a body mass index that increases their risk for several chronic diseases, including diabetes. The state's prevalence of diagnosed diabetes in 2002 was 6.2%, which is slightly lower than the national average of 6.7%.<sup>2</sup>

New Mexico spends approximately \$324 million a year on medical costs associated with obesity and overweight.<sup>32</sup>

### **Program Components**

During strategic planning in 2003, the state's 5 A Day Coalition—an informal group composed primarily of community nutritionists—agreed to focus its efforts on preschool through elementary school children. Because this age group accepts 5 A Day messages more easily, coalition members hope that these children will influence fruit and vegetable consumption in their homes.

Interventions that target children are delivered through several venues, including classrooms, the summer lunch program, the Head to Toe Wellness Conference (for health and wellness school personnel), the New Mexico School Nurse Association, and 4-H and Cooperative Extension programs.

The coalition also supports the efforts of the state Farmers' Market Association and the New Mexico Department of Agriculture to obtain funding for a Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. Although no money has been received so far, state officials are committed to continuing to seek federal support to target older adults.

The Family Health Bureau of the Public Health Division of the Department of Health, which operates a WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, is a partner in this effort.

The 5 A Day Coalition also conducts conferences to train health workers to effectively spread 5 A Day messages to their clients. During the 2004 conference, more than 100 attendees learned about new campaigns, the science base of 5 A Day principles, and practical applications and interventions.

The conference also offered planning sessions and resources for programs that target adults, children, school food services, and community gardening.

Despite limited funds, the state's Diabetes Prevention and Control Program has supported the 5 A Day Program by purchasing and distributing educational materials and by providing staff time to coordinate the program.

Coloring and activity books, bookmarks, games, and incentives are available to nutritionists, nurses, health educators, and community health representatives throughout the state.

In July 2003, New Mexico established an Obesity, Physical Activity, and Nutrition Program, which provides additional funding for the 5 A Day Program. The nutrition coordinator of this new program also coordinates 5 A Day activities. State officials hope to continue to expand the 5 A Day Program with help from other chronic disease programs and state agencies.

## **Bringing Fresh Produce to Zuni Children**

In 2002, Lou Enote heard that the 2002 federal Farm Bill would include \$6 million to conduct a Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program in 4 states and 1 Indian Tribal Organization.

This USDA program was designed to determine the best ways to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in elementary and secondary schools throughout the country.

As food service director for the Zuni Public School District, which serves the Zuni people in New Mexico, Lou wanted to make sure her tribe was picked to participate. First, she conducted extensive research on how to apply for grants, and she followed the bill's progress through Congress. She also sought help from senators in her state and the bill's sponsor.

Lou's diligence paid off. Seven Zuni schools were chosen for the pilot program, along with 25 schools each in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Ohio. The program would fund free fruits and vegetables for students during the 2002–2003 school year.

“When I heard the news, I called my boss, but she wasn't in,” Lou said. “I called the school superintendent, and then my daughter, but they weren't in. So I just closed my office door and cried for 5 minutes.”

She also began to wonder what she had gotten herself into. Fortunately, Lou is an experienced community leader, and the Zuni community has a long history of promoting nutrition and fitness among its people.

First, Lou organized a community-wide planning committee. She invited the principals of the participating schools, who outlined potential problems and solutions. She also pulled together more than 20 community organizations for a promotional health fair.

Additional support came from the state health department's 5 A Day Program and the state education department's food service program. The National Cancer Institute provided 5 A Day educational materials and incentives.

The East Coast Produce for Better Health representative had a sister living in Albuquerque who worked for a large building contractor constructing schools in the Zuni community. She found a volunteer to move the educational materials from a third-floor office onto a truck, cover the load from the rain, and deliver the materials to Zuni, several hours away.

Participating schools distributed 2 fruit and vegetable snacks each school day, in addition to breakfast and lunch, to all K–12 students. As a result, school personnel reported that students were making healthier food choices at school, performing better in class, and visiting the school nurse less.

Fruit and vegetable snacks also were distributed to teachers, school board members, and parents so that students could see adults eating healthier foods too. Club and sports team participants received healthy snacks during meetings or before practice.

Problems along the way included limited time for planning and evaluation and limited funding for administrative costs. Using volunteers to prepare snacks didn't work, so additional funds were needed to pay food service personnel to perform these extra duties.

The University of New Mexico evaluated the program by interviewing stakeholders, who reported that children appreciated not being hungry and that families who couldn't afford fresh fruits and vegetables at home were relieved to know their children were eating them at school.

Principals reported lower truancy rates because students weren't leaving school to buy snacks from convenience stores. School nurses said fewer students complained of morning headaches and upset stomachs.

The success of the pilot program encouraged the search for funding to continue and expand the program at Zuni. And thanks to Lou's persistence, Zuni schools received \$50,000 from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to continue providing fruit and vegetable snacks to students. In addition, neighboring American Indian school districts hope to replicate the program with diabetes prevention funding.

## **South Carolina**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

South Carolina started its 5 A Day Program in 1991. The program works to promote fruit and vegetable consumption in South Carolina by building public–private partnerships, increasing public awareness and knowledge, and developing the necessary capacity to reduce the state’s chronic disease burden.

### **Program Focus**

Helping people eat more fruits and vegetables is a key strategy for reducing chronic disease incidence and deaths in South Carolina. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in South Carolina, accounting for 25.8% of all state deaths in 2002.<sup>1</sup> Stroke is the third leading cause of death, accounting for 7.5% of all state deaths in 2002.

Although research has shown that a healthy diet can help to reduce a person’s risk for many chronic diseases, only 19% of South Carolina adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Healthy diets also can help to prevent obesity, which increases a person’s risk for some chronic diseases, including diabetes. In 2002, about 61% of state adults were overweight or obese, and 8.4% said they had been told that they have diabetes.<sup>2</sup> South Carolina’s diabetes rate is one of the highest in the country.

Among young people, 27.2% of high school students were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight, but only 17.3% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2001.<sup>3</sup>

### **Program Components**

The South Carolina 5 A Day Program works to motivate people to eat more fruits and vegetables. It also seeks to develop and promote the social supports, policy and environmental changes, and partnerships needed to achieve this goal.

One such partnership was established between the 5 A Day Program and several public and private groups in Spartanburg. Partners included nutritionists from a local school district and a local health department, other school staff members, representatives from local businesses, and community members.

The group’s efforts led to the development of an integrated nutrition education curriculum for South Carolina elementary schools. The curriculum was designed to encourage students to adopt healthier behaviors as they learn about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.

The curriculum was pilot tested in 3 schools in 2003. Additional pilot testing was conducted in 2004. This testing was supported by the Spartanburg Nutrition Council, the Appalachia III Public Health District, the Division of Obesity Prevention and Control of the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control, and the South Carolina Department of Education.

An integrated nutrition education curriculum has been developed to encourage students to adopt healthier behaviors as they learn about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables.

## **Promote It, and They Will Come**

As people are finding out all across the United States, promoting the 5 A Day message is easy when you make it fun. In Spartanburg, South Carolina, a grade school teacher put this lesson into practice in her classroom.

In the early 1990s, Kathleen Elam, a K–6 science teacher at Z.L. Madden Elementary School, met with 2 local nutritionists from her school and public health district. They worked out a plan to integrate nutrition messages into Kathleen’s lesson plans, emphasizing the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables.

The students were so excited to learn about healthy eating that Kathleen decided to expand her efforts to include a schoolwide festival. The response was tremendous, with more than 250 people—including members of the school’s staff, students’ families, and the local community—turning out for the event.

Local businesses donated food, and students in each grade prepared a different food item featuring lots of fruits and vegetables.

The festival also gave students a chance to showcase what they’d learned about nutrition and how eating “5 A Day” can help to promote health and prevent disease. They shared this message through songs, raps, and dances—and they were even invited to present their ideas on a local television program.

Soon, people outside the community were recognizing Kathleen’s efforts as well. In 2000, she was honored by BI-LO, a supermarket chain that is headquartered in Mauldin near Spartanburg. The store “adopted” Z.L. Madden Elementary and has provided money to buy fruits and vegetables for future programs.

In addition, the supermarket’s strong support of the 5 A Day Program encouraged other retail businesses in South Carolina to get involved.

In 2001, Kathleen won the Creative 5 A Day Teacher of the Year Award from Dole Food Company. Each year since 1997, Dole has awarded 3 outstanding elementary educators who support the national 5 A Day Program and whose curricular activities motivate students to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables every day. Teachers in South Carolina have won the award three times.

When company representatives visited South Carolina to give Kathleen her award, they also conducted a 5 A Day workshop for public health and education professionals. The workshop, called Creating Healthy 5 A Day Schools in South Carolina, emphasized the importance of increased collaboration between these 2 fields.

Afterward, Kathleen decided to develop an integrated nutrition education curriculum that met state health standards, integrated 5 A Day and nutrition principles into every subject area, and included strong family and community components.

The Spartanburg Nutrition Council provided funds for these efforts, and in 2003, the curriculum was pilot tested in 3 Spartanburg elementary schools among students in kindergarten through third grade. In 2004, it was pilot tested among students in fourth through sixth grades.

As South Carolina's efforts in this area continue to garner recognition and support, they demonstrate that when you start with a positive concept like 5 A Day, good things will happen.



## **Tennessee**

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### **Background**

The Tennessee 5 A Day Program was established in the Nutrition Services Section of the Tennessee Department of Health and the state WIC Program in 1995. At that time, a local grant provided funds for billboards, bus signs, and promotional items for use in educational settings, making the program highly visible.

The 5 A Day Program continues to be a viable component of the state health department, with which it shares many common goals.

### **Program Focus**

Eating more fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for many chronic diseases. In 2001, Tennessee ranked 8th in the nation for death rates for diabetes, 7th for cancer, 10th for heart disease, and 3rd for stroke.<sup>33</sup>

A healthy diet also can help to prevent overweight and obesity, which are becoming more common among all age groups in Tennessee. For example, 10% of preschool children enrolled in the state WIC Program are overweight, and 10% are at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>29</sup>

Among school-aged children in the state, 22%–46% are either overweight or at risk of becoming overweight (Coordinated School Health Program, unpublished data, 2002 and 2003).

In addition, 36.7% of Tennessee adults were overweight and 24.6% were obese in 2002.<sup>2</sup> Although dietary changes could help address this problem, only 22.2% of adults and 18.1% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

The Tennessee 5 A Day Program is promoted at the state level through the Tennessee Nutrition Coalition and the Tennessee Healthy Weight Network.

The state 5 A Day coordinator works in the state health department and serves as the program contact for 14 regional coordinators. She communicates information to the regional coordinators through regularly scheduled conference calls and a quarterly newsletter, 5 A Day for You & Me in Tennessee.

The regional coordinators, in turn, report their region's 5 A Day activities quarterly to the state coordinator. Because the coordinators' salaries are funded primarily through the state WIC Program, these activities account for only a small portion of their overall job responsibilities.

The state coordinator's salary is paid by funds from the state and a federal Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. She spends about 20% of her time on the 5 A Day Program, in addition to working on related activities with the state Community Nutrition Program and the state WIC Program, including the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program.

In 2003, the state health department's Nutrition Services Section helped distribute more than 250,000 promotional materials and reached more than 80,000 Tennesseans with the 5 A Day message. Materials also were distributed through other state programs and agencies, including the Cardiovascular Program, the state Extension Service, and the state departments of human services and education.

Zach, an 8-year-old boy who had refused to eat fruits and vegetables previously, went home after his cooking lesson and prepared—and ate— Touchdown Tostadas for his family.

## **Teaching Children How to Cook**

With wide eyes and open minds, children come excitedly into the demonstration kitchen—today is Kids’ Cooking School. Their parents are equally excited to have a few hours to themselves while their children not only learn to cook, but also how important it is to eat fruits and vegetables.

“Maybe she’ll cook dinner for the family tonight,” remarks one single mother, enjoying the thought of a break from preparing meals every night.

The Kids’ Cooking School began in 1999 thanks to Laurie, a dietitian working in a county health department. Laurie taught a similar award-winning program in Southern Illinois. When she came to the Tennessee WIC Program, she thought the Kids’ Cooking School would be a perfect way to meet one of the community outreach requirements of her new job.

Although the Illinois cooking school lasted 5 days, the new version had to be cut to just 1 session because of Laurie’s full WIC caseload. The health department allows her to see fewer clients on class day, but shopping for food and fine-tuning the curriculum must be squeezed in between other duties or after hours.

The new class lasts 3–4 hours and focuses on fruits and vegetables because so few children eat enough of them. Educational messages and recipes from the state’s 5 A Day Program are shared, along with information on food safety. Because of the rising rates of childhood obesity, the children also learn about physical activity and enjoy a fun physical game outside.

Class size is limited to 20, and all children aged 8–12 years are eligible. At that age, most have the necessary cutting and safety skills.

Because more than 20 children registered for the first class, some had to be put on a waiting list for later sessions. Efforts to raise funds from public and private sources were unsuccessful, so each child was charged \$3 to cover the costs of food and supplies. Parents also were asked to sign permission forms confirming that their children did not have food allergies.

The first class was a huge success. Four more classes were held the first year, and the program has since expanded to 3 other counties. This expansion makes finding volunteers easier. Also, county health officials now allow dietitians time to shop and prepare lessons, and community groups such as the Girl Scouts contribute money for supplies. The classes are so popular that some children sign up more than once.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Funding continues to be a problem. Some health departments cannot collect fees, and even when fees are collected, they often do not cover costs. Extra help is needed to supervise the children during some of the kitchen activities, and some nutritionists are not comfortable teaching young children or trying to hold their attention.

But hold their attention is just what this class does. Zach, an 8-year-oldboy who had refused to eat fruits and vegetables previously, went home after his cooking lesson and prepared—and ate—Touchdown Tostadas for his family.

“This is my favorite food,” he says as he takes a big bite of the tostada prepared with fat-free refried beans, carrots, and lettuce. “I can’t wait to go back and learn how to cook more stuff.”

His mom can’t wait either. Those were the first vegetables he had eaten beyond a few bites since he was a baby. Zach was even excited to wash the dishes after dinner— another valuable lesson of the cooking school.

## **Washington**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Washington 5 A Day Program began in 1994. Despite limited funding and staffing, the program has conducted several activities by partnering with the Access to Healthy Foods Coalition, a public–private partnership overseen by the Cardiovascular, Diabetes, Nutrition, and Physical Activity (CDNPA) Section of the Washington State Department of Health.

### **Program Focus**

The Access to Healthy Foods Coalition supports the 5 A Day Program by promoting access to healthy foods where Washington residents live, learn, work, and play.

The agriculture industry is the state’s largest employer, generating more than \$5.6 billion annually.<sup>34</sup> Washington also is the world’s top producer of 13 agricultural products.<sup>34</sup>

Yet the state has the second highest rate of hunger in the nation, and 1 in 3 schoolchildren qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.<sup>35</sup> In addition, only 23.3% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

In 2002, the 5 A Day Program became part of the Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, which was funded through a cooperative agreement with CDC. A full-time coordinator was hired to work in the CDNPA Section, which is part of the health department’s Division of Community and Family Health.

The coordinator spends 70% of her time working with the Access to Healthy Foods Coalition. She spends 30% of her time providing technical assistance to Moses Lake, a Healthy Community project funded by CDC, and promoting the Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan and the 5 A Day Program at local, state, and regional meetings.

The Access to Healthy Foods Coalition is governed by a steering committee that represents more than 100 different groups, including industry (e.g., restaurants, vending machine companies, dairies, farmers’ market associations), government (e.g., Medicaid, WIC, agriculture departments), state and national health organizations (e.g., the American Cancer Society, state medical and dental hygienist associations), and the military (Washington Military Department).

The coalition focuses on supporting environmental and policy changes, such as building a statewide infrastructure to help all citizens gain equal access to healthy foods.

Examples of current projects include the following:

- A database that connects food banks, restaurants, grocery stores, producers, growers, and faith-based organizations in order to prevent excess produce from being wasted.
- A certification process that allows farmers' markets to accept WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program vouchers.
- Pilot projects that substitute bread baskets with fresh fruits and vegetables at restaurants and provide sliced apples and low-fat dairy products in vending machines.

The 5 A Day Program also developed a clearinghouse of materials with funding from the state's Basic Food and Nutrition Education Program (BFNEP). In 2003, a statewide social marketing campaign during 5 A Day Month was supported by funds from BFNEP, the Pear Bureau Northwest, and the federal Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

## **Teenager Chooses Healthy Lifestyle over Drugs**

Just 2 years ago, Tiffany's life was unimaginably bleak. The 17-yearold was diabetic, addicted to crack cocaine and alcohol, obese (weighing more than 300 pounds), and 8 months pregnant.

Her young life was out of control. She hit bottom—literally—one terrible day when she blacked out in a diabetic coma and crashed to the floor.

Fortunately, her parents found her and took her to a detox unit in their suburban Seattle neighborhood. There, Tiffany slowly recovered. Her parents agreed to let her come home, but only if she would try to make something of her life—first, by obtaining her high school equivalency diploma, and next, by enrolling in a Job Corps program to learn life and job skills. In the meantime, they would care for her baby boy, Jessie.

Tiffany agreed to her parents' terms, but it wasn't easy. Her diabetes and weight made even climbing a flight of stairs difficult. And the institutional food—canned fruits and vegetables, white bread and rolls, heavy sauces and gravies—served at the Job Corps campus didn't help.

But Tiffany's life took a dramatic turn when the 5 A Day coordinator from the state health department came to talk with students about adopting healthy habits such as eating more fruits and vegetables. She invited them to organize and make changes for themselves and their community. The students responded to the challenge and dubbed themselves the Moses Lake Youth Wellness Team.

The team was a subcommittee of the Community Garden Committee, 1 of 3 Moses Lake Health Communityprojects funded through a cooperative agreement from CDC. The state health department provided technical assistance, while a health educator from the county health department guided local activities.

The team's work plan focused on three areas: 1) helping the Community Garden Committee plan and construct compost bins at the Job Corps site, 2) piloting a wellness project with the 250 Job Corps members, and 3) advising community groups on ways to make their city healthier.

With an eye toward publicity, the teenagers had polo shirts printed with the team's logo. Soon, they found themselves appearing in radio and television ads for the state's diabetes prevention program.

Tiffany was at the forefront of the team's efforts. From the beginning, she saw the project as a way to address her own health problems while helping others. She worked in the community gardens, where she came to appreciate fresh produce and learned about composting. She also worked with the Job Corps food service director to incorporate more fresh produce, whole grains, and low-fat choices into campus meals.

She helped motivate students working in the construction program to build gardens adjacent to the Job Corps dorms, providing all students access to fresh produce during the summer. She also

helped promote a competition between the dorms that encouraged students to lose weight and increase their physical activity. In the first week alone, the students lost more than 150 pounds among themselves.

The team's accomplishments and Tiffany's leadership role have attracted attention from many people, including nutrition professionals. Team members were invited to speak at an American Dietetic Association meeting in Chicago, and the mayor of Moses Lake nominated Tiffany for a prestigious Rotary Youth Leadership Award that included a scholarship to attend an international youth meeting in British Columbia.

Tiffany won the award—and she's lost 40 pounds. This determined young woman, whose life once seemed hopeless, now faces a future brimming with promise.



## Program Resumes

Like the other 5 A Day programs illustrated in this book, these programs and their partners are working to help people adopt healthier diets through education and improved access to fruits and vegetables.

## **Hawai'i**

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### **Background**

The Hawai'i 5 A Day Program is coordinated by the Hawai'i 5 A Day Coalition, which includes representatives from state, federal, private, nonprofit, and community organizations and agencies.

Currently, the program is reorganizing to align itself with the framework of the national 5 A Day Partnership. It has moved to the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and a steering committee is working to develop a 3-year strategic plan.

### **Program Focus**

In previous years, coalition activities focused on promotional and educational activities, particularly during national 5 A Day Month in September. Examples include promoting healthy foods at tailgate parties at University of Hawai'i football games, setting up booths at health fairs and other related events, displaying 5 A Day posters on city buses, conducting supermarket tours, and distributing 5 A Day book covers to schoolchildren.

In recent years, the coalition has shifted its focus to supporting policy, environmental, and systems changes designed to have more lasting effects on people's eating habits and their overall health.

In 2002, more than 53% of Hawai'i adults were overweight or obese, and only 27.6% reported eating fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

In 2002, the coalition began working with the Hawai'i Department of Education's School Food Services Branch to develop nutrition education training for school food service managers. The coalition developed a curriculum to educate these managers about nutrition and the preparation of healthy meals.

The training took into account the challenges of the school environment, including food procurement regulations, equipment limitations, and USDA guidelines and regulations. It also promoted the inclusion of a variety of local produce in ethnic dishes acceptable to schoolchildren. Training began during the summer of 2004.

In 2003, the coalition developed 2 brochures, *Eating 5 A Day in Hawai'i* and *Eating By Color*, intended to appeal to the state's diverse population. Although the largest racial and ethnic groups are Native Hawai'ian, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, and white, increasing numbers of people are

from other Pacific Island (e.g., Samoan, Micronesian, Palauan) and Asian (e.g., Vietnamese, Thai) cultures. Many of these populations are not common in other U.S. states.

The Eating 5 A Day in Hawai'i brochure contains general information on the 5 A Day Program and its benefits, as well as tips on how to reduce food costs while still eating more fruits and vegetables at home and in restaurants. The Eating By Color brochure encourages people to eat colorful fruits and vegetables and includes examples of produce popular among ethnic populations.

These brochures are designed to teach people from different cultures how the 5 A Day message applies to them. They also are appropriate for a variety of settings, including schools, community health centers, and markets.

In 2004, the Hawai'i 5 A Day Coalition developed and distributed a discount coupon book for items containing at least 1 serving of fruits and vegetables from a variety of stores and restaurants. The book also promotes 5 A Day messages about healthy eating. In addition, coalition members developed a promotional newspaper supplement that was distributed through a major daily newspaper.

## **Idaho**

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### **Background**

Although Idaho does not have an official 5 A Day Program, the 5 A Day coordinator has found ways to disseminate information and materials and to promote the importance of increasing fruit and vegetable consumption among state residents.

### **Program Focus**

The state's 5 A Day coordinator serves as a resource to programs and organizations interested in promoting healthy diets and lifestyles in Idaho. In 2002, 37.1% of state adults were overweight, and 20.2% were obese.<sup>2</sup> Yet only 20.4% of adults and 19% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

In 2001, the Idaho Healthy Weight Steering Committee was formed to conduct strategic planning for the state with support from the national 5 A Day Program. Committee members have identified ways to promote 5 A Day messages through their own program activities.

Members include representatives from the state WIC Program, the state Department of Education's Nutrition Program, the Women's Reproductive Health Program, Boise State University's Department of Health Sciences, the University of Idaho Cooperative Extension, the Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, and the Idaho Arthritis Program.

The Idaho Diabetes Prevention and Control Program purchased a 5 A Day display board and brochures, and then used these materials to promote 5 A Day messages at its Diabetes Alliance meetings. Program staff members reported that diabetes educators from across Idaho collected copies of materials to distribute in the areas of the state they serve.

The University of Idaho Cooperative Extension also has distributed materials, and its local nutrition educators use 5 A Day resources in their programs. The Team Nutrition initiative (funded by the USDA) integrated 5 A Day messages into its statewide training sessions for school food service personnel, teachers, and administrators.

In addition, 5 A Day materials and messages were included in a tristate healthy living project called WIN the Rockies and distributed at 2003 Relay for Life events sponsored by the Idaho Division of the American Cancer Society. The American Cancer Society also provided 5 A Day education to schoolchildren in central Idaho.

The 5 A Day coordinator also works with the state WIC Program to distribute materials to WIC clients. At the state's Southeastern District Health Department, the WIC Program partnered with the USDA's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to teach people the importance of eating fruits and vegetables as part of its spring educational series.

In the future, the Idaho 5 A Day Program will continue to explore opportunities to incorporate 5 A Day messages into other state programs and to identify new partners to further promote these messages.

## **Nebraska**

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### **Background**

The Nebraska 5 A Day Program was established in the Nebraska Health and Human Services System (NHHSS) shortly after the national 5 A Day Program began in 1991. Activities are coordinated with other programs within the NHHSS, including the Comprehensive Cancer Program, the Diabetes Prevention and Control Program, the Cardiovascular Health Program, the state WIC Program, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, and the State Wellness Program.

### **Program Focus**

The Nebraska 5 A Day Program encourages state residents to eat 5–9 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. Research shows that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for heart disease, some cancers, and stroke, which are the three leading causes of death among Nebraskans.<sup>1</sup>

Yet 82.2% of Nebraska adults and 83.7% of high school students did not eat fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup> Compared with all high school students nationwide, Nebraska high school students were 26% less likely to meet this goal.

A healthy diet also can help to prevent obesity, which is an important risk factor for some chronic diseases. The percentage of Nebraska adults who are obese has doubled from 11.6% in 1990 to 23.2% in 2002.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

To help promote the Nebraska program, 5 A Day messages have been incorporated into the upcoming Nebraska Physical Activity and Nutrition State Plan—Promoting Healthy Weight and Preventing Chronic Disease 2005–2010. The long-term goal of this plan is to decrease the rates of chronic diseases in Nebraska that are associated with physical inactivity and unhealthy eating habits.

The 5 A Day Program also is promoted through other NHHSS programs. For example, the Comprehensive Cancer Program's Nutrition Work Group incorporated 5 A Day messages into its work plan. Activities include assessing the needs of cancer centers and distributing materials to them.

The Diabetes Prevention and Control Program incorporates 5 A Day messages into materials and educational packets for the general public and for health professionals. This information is distributed during educational exhibits, workshops, and symposia.

The state's Cardiovascular Health Program distributes 5 A Day materials to county and district health departments and funds parish nurses to conduct nutrition and education activities that promote the 5 A Day Program. It also distributes a newsletter to elementary school students participating in the All Recreate on Fridays Program.

In addition to these collaborations, the 5 A Day Program also is supported by the 5 A Day Coalition, a public– private partnership with representatives from community and voluntary agencies, educational institutions, and government agencies. Nebraska currently does not have a 5 A Day coordinator.

## **Nevada**

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### **Background**

The Nevada 5 A Day Program is coordinated through the Bureau of Family Health Services of the Nevada State Health Division in the Nevada Department of Health, in conjunction with the state WIC Program. The health department provides most of the funding, with support from the USDA through the WIC Program.

For the past 2 years, the program has been coordinated by the manager of the state WIC Program. As a result of a recent reorganization of the WIC Program—and the USDA's continuing emphasis on increasing fruit and vegetable consumption—state officials plan to hire a health program specialist to coordinate Nevada's 5 A Day Program. This new coordinator will work with local WIC Programs to incorporate 5 A Day messages.

### **Program Focus**

The Nevada 5 A Day Program works to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among state residents. In 2003, only 20.4% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> In 1999, only 22.1% of high school students met this goal.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 58.9% of adults were overweight or obese in 2002.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

Before 2000, Nevada's 5 A Day activities



were conducted by two 5 A Day coalitions, one in the southern part of the state and the other in the north. Both groups included representatives from state, federal, private, nonprofit, and community organizations and agencies.

The coalitions' efforts focused on promotional and educational activities and events, particularly during national 5 A Day Month in September. For example, the coalitions promoted farmers' markets at work sites and in communities and exhibited 5 A Day materials at health fairs and other related events.

In 2002, the 2 coalitions merged into 1 consortium and began working with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension to develop nutrition education training as part of a professional development course for K–3 teachers.

The curriculum, called A Celebration of Fruits and Vegetables, is designed to educate teachers about good nutrition and show them how to integrate 5 A Day messages into every-day learning. For example, teachers learned how to use games to teach children about various types of fruits and vegetables and why eating a healthy diet is important.

A long-term goal of this training program is to expand the nutrition curriculum into all Nevada public schools. Ongoing coordinated efforts will be needed to make this goal a reality.

Also in 2002, the new consortium began to expand its focus to include support for policy, environmental, and systems changes designed to have a more lasting impact on people's eating

habits. As part of this effort, the consortium is working to develop new state and national partnerships that can provide support and leadership.

During 2004, the Nevada State Health Division collaborated with other organizations—including food banks and state WIC, Food Stamp, school nutrition, commodity food, and tribal serving programs—to work toward preventing hunger and improving nutrition among state residents.

Activities included drafting a state plan to end hunger in Nevada, working to increase communication and referrals among different programs, and helping people obtain services from all programs for which they qualify.

In addition, the state WIC Program is adding 5 A Day messages to its nutrition education program. This program's nutrition coordinator also will take an active role in coordinating the 5 A Day Program, which will make the state WIC Program the primary avenue for delivering 5 A Day messages in the future.

## **Oklahoma**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Oklahoma 5 A Day Program, which began in 1998, operates in the Chronic Disease Service of the Oklahoma State Department of Health. Nutrition and physical activity are promoted through several Chronic Disease Service programs that target people with or at risk for certain chronic diseases.

These program areas include cardiovascular health, diabetes prevention and control, comprehensive cancer prevention and control, asthma control, women's health issues (e.g., osteoporosis, urinary incontinence), and the Oklahoma Native American REACH 2010 Project to Reduce Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease.

In addition, 5 A Day messages are integrated into general awareness campaigns and targeted public education programs. These activities are supported by funding from CDC and the National Cancer Institute.

### **Program Focus**

Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables among all Oklahomans is a key strategy for reducing the state's burden of chronic disease. It also can help to reduce a person's risk for the 3 leading causes of death in Oklahoma in 2002—heart disease (35.3%), cancer (23.6%), and stroke (7.7%).<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, fruits and vegetables are nutritious, low-calorie foods that can help people manage their weight. Obesity increases a person's risk for many chronic diseases, including heart disease, some cancers, and diabetes.

In 2002, 58.7% of Oklahoma adults were overweight or obese, and 6.7% said they had been told they had diabetes.<sup>2</sup> In 2003, 11.1% of high school students were overweight, and 14.2% were at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>3</sup> Yet only 15.4% of adults and 14.3% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

With support from internal and external partners, the Oklahoma 5 A Day Program has grown and changed over the years. It is promoted externally through the Oklahoma 5 A Day Coalition, a public-private partnership that includes representatives from industry, government, community and voluntary organizations, and educational institutions.

Examples of coalition members and their activities include the following:

- The Oklahoma Employee Benefits Council (OEBC) is a state agency that manages a wellness program for state employees. State government is Oklahoma's largest employer, with 37,000 employees working and residing in all 77 counties. Five A Day messages are integrated into the OEBC's overall wellness program, as well as its risk reduction and disease management program for people with or at risk for diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

- The Oklahoma State and Education Employee Group Insurance Board is a state agency that provides health insurance to 325,000 people (beneficiaries and dependents), including state employees, teachers, and retirees, as well as employees of small municipalities. Five A Day messages are incorporated into health updates in beneficiary newsletters.

- The Choctaw Nation Salad Sisters work at the Choctaw Nation Health Center. They dress in vegetable costumes to promote 5 A Day messages in elementary and middle schools throughout the state's 14-county tribal jurisdictions.

## **Oregon**

### **Contact**

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### **Background**

The Oregon 5 A Day Program collaborates with other state programs, including the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Program, the Office of Family Health, and the Seniors and People with Disabilities Program—all of which are part of the Health Services Program of the Oregon Department of Human Services.

### **Program Focus**

In 2003, Oregon released A Healthy, Active Oregon: The Statewide Public Health Nutrition Plan.<sup>37</sup> Increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables in Oregon is a key objective of the first goal of this plan, which is to help local communities support and promote healthy eating, daily physical activity, and healthy weight.

Research has shown that diets rich in fruits and vegetables can help to reduce a person's risk for the leading causes of death in Oregon. In 2000, heart disease accounted for 35.7% of state deaths, while cancer accounted for 23.7%.<sup>38</sup> Yet only 24.1% of state adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

Fruits and vegetables are nutritious, lowcalorie foods that also can help people manage their weight. Obesity increases a person's risk for many chronic diseases, including heart disease, some cancers,

and diabetes. In 2002, 57.2% of Oregon adults were overweight or obese, and 6.2% said they had been told they had diabetes.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, 7.9% of students in 11th grade were overweight, and 14.1% were at risk of becoming overweight.<sup>39</sup> Yet only 23.2% ate 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables a day in 2003.<sup>39</sup>

### Program Components

In 2003, public and private partners came together to form the Oregon 5 A Day Partnership to promote daily consumption of fruits and vegetables as part of a healthy lifestyle. Some of these partners include business representatives, health insurers, hospitals, the state's Child Nutrition Program, and the state's Cooperative Extension Service.

The Oregon 5 A Day Partnership is developing a strategic plan to promote access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables for all state residents. The state 5 A Day coordinator cochairs the group with representatives from the Oregon Department of Education's Child Nutrition Program and the American Cancer Society. The coordinator dedicates 20% of her time to the 5 A Day Program, and her salary is paid by cooperative agreement funding from CDC.

During September 2004, the partnership promoted national 5 A Day Month. The American Cancer Society provided media training for partners in support of this effort. The Child Nutrition

Program also piloted the Eat Your Colors Every Day Salad Bar and Salad Options Project, which is coordinated by the Produce for Better Health Foundation.



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### **Background**

In 2001, the Rhode Island Department of Health sublicensed its 5 A Day Program to a public-private partnership called Kids First. This nonprofit organization provides educational programs on nutrition, food safety, and physical activity in the state's 36 school districts and more than 100 child care and after-school programs.

### **Program Focus**

Rather than make the state's 5 A Day activities a stand-alone program, the members of the health department's 5 A Day team unanimously agreed to incorporate their efforts into all ongoing and future nutrition education programs in Rhode Island. The goal is to improve the nutritional well-being of children and their families by helping them increase their daily intake of fruits and vegetables. In 2003, only 27.1% of state adults and 28.4% of high school students ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2,3</sup>

### **Program Components**

Integrating the 5 A Day Program into other state programs increases efficiency and effectiveness and prevents duplication of effort. Five A Day

messages are now part of hundreds of activities aimed at improving nutrition and food safety throughout the state.

Examples include projects at state WIC outreach centers, hospitals, and after-school programs (including those operated by the Girl Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, and YMCA). These efforts have reached more than 50,000 children, parents, teachers, school administrators, school food service personnel, day care providers, and even members of the state legislature.

Kids First is a good match for the 5 A Day Program, because it is dedicated to improving the nutrition of state children and to making sure that all state nutrition programs work together to deliver a common message.

Kids First supports several federally funded initiatives, including Team Nutrition (funded by the USDA); the Rhode Island Obesity Prevention Project (funded by CDC); the Rhode Island Comprehensive School Health Program, called Healthy Schools! Healthy Kids! (funded by CDC); and the Rhode Island Food Safe Schools Project (funded by CDC).

It also works with the state departments of education, health, and agriculture. For more information, visit <http://www.kidsfirstri.org>.

In May 2002, Kids First helped form the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition to promote school environments where children can learn to eat a healthy diet and be physically active every day. The coalition was established with support from the New England Dairy and Food Council and the Rhode Island Division of the American Cancer Society. It includes more than 65 members, and it supports the national Action for Healthy Kids initiative.

Because of these efforts, schools throughout Rhode Island regularly request 5 A Day recipes and other materials to distribute at fairs, special events, and orientation programs and workshops for teachers. Five A Day principles also are included in training and orientation programs for all school food service staff members. Many of these materials are available in Spanish and are used extensively in state schools and child care programs.

In addition, more than 2,200 teachers have been trained to use the Teacher's Guide to Cooking Across the Curriculum, a lesson plan created by Kids First with Team Nutrition funds.

## **U.S. Navy**

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### **Background**

For men and women serving in the U.S. Navy, being fit for duty is of paramount importance.

### **Program Focus**

Although the Navy does not have a 5 A Day Program, it has recently implemented innovative nutrition initiatives designed to bring about positive environmental change for service men and women. These initiatives have increased access to fruit, fruit juice, and vegetables as healthy food options.

### **Program Components**

In 2002, the Navy Special Warfare Development Group (NSWDG) in Virginia Beach, Virginia, developed a plan for new post-exercise “recovery meals” after reports of significant weight loss and potential nutritional deficiencies among its personnel.

NSWDG service members undergo rigorous training that requires a high-calorie diet to stay physically fit. Unfortunately, the demands of the training schedules often make this difficult. To address this concern, registered dietitian Lori Tubbs of the Navy Environmental Health Center developed a meal plan centered on natural juices and healthy foods.

Tubbs also made sure that prepackaged

versions were created so that the recovery meals were available even when ship or naval station kitchens (called galleys) were closed.

The NSWDG's recovery meal plan was developed on the basis of 3 criteria—the food preferences of the service personnel being targeted, food logs that indicated which food groups were being neglected, and nutritional guidelines for post-exercise meals.

The plan called for increasing daily consumption of fruit by 3 servings, vegetables by 1 serving, dairy products by 1 serving, and fiber-rich carbohydrates by 4 servings.

When surveyed, NSWDG personnel reported that the new recovery meals improved their job performance. In late 2003, additional funds were obtained to cover associated costs. This initiative served as a benchmark for how to support special military populations who have limited access to food services.

Another nutrition initiative launched in 2003 was A Juice Switch at the Dam Neck Annex Galley in Virginia Beach. Sugary juice drinks were replaced with 100% natural fruit juices, which cost about the same as those made with artificial ingredients but provide greater nutritional value.

The sailors who use the galley expressed their appreciation for the change, saying that it demonstrated the Navy's commitment to improving the health and well-being of its personnel.

Galleys at other military facilities in the area also are considering implementing this initiative, which

helped the Dam Neck Annex Galley win the 46th Annual Captain Edward F. Ney Award in 2003. This award encourages excellence in Navy and Marine Corps food service programs in order to improve the quality of life for all military personnel.

The sailors who use the galley expressed their appreciation for the change, saying that it demonstrated the Navy's commitment to improving the health and well-being of its personnel.

## **Virginia**

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### **Background**

The Virginia 5 A Day Program is coordinated by the Division of WIC & Community Nutrition Services in the Virginia Department of Health. It is funded by a federal PHHS Block Grant.

### **Program Focus**

In recent years, the Virginia 5 A Day Program has focused on encouraging state residents to eat more state-grown fruits and vegetables. In 2002, 58.8% of state adults were overweight or obese, but only 25.8% ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day in 2003.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

In Virginia, 5 A Day activities are overseen by a 5 A Day State Coalition. The coalition includes representatives from 35 local health districts, as well as members of the Division of WIC & Community Nutrition Services and the Division of Chronic Disease Prevention & Control, which are both part of the state health department.

The coalition has collaborated with other organizations, both public and private, to conduct campaigns that promote 5 A Day messages and Virginia-grown produce.

In 2002, the state health department's Cardiovascular Health Project collaborated with the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

to promote state-grown apples. The campaign, called Virginia Apples—Take a Healthy Bite, was supported by the 5 A Day Program and by Virginia Grown, a promotional program in the agriculture department.

In addition to advertisements in seven state newspapers, the campaign was promoted through colorful in-store displays. Several retailers, including The Kroger Company and Ukrop's Super Markets, participated.

A second campaign that promoted both Virginia Grown and the 5 A Day Program encouraged residents to increase their consumption of a broad range of stategrown fruits and vegetables. Twelve major grocery store chains throughout the state participated in this project, which included in-store promotions such as price cards and colorful posters and banners.

This campaign was supported by the state's health and agriculture departments, as well as by several partners in other state agencies, private industry, and local communities. By working together, Virginia Grown and the 5 A Day Program were able to reach a large number of state residents.

Five A Day activities were limited in 2003 because the program coordinator position was vacant. In 2004, the state health department hired a new coordinator, who will work to strengthen current partnerships and create new ones in order to reach more Virginians with the 5 A Day message.





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### **Background**

The Wyoming 5 A Day Program began in 1991. Although the program has no dedicated funding, 5 A Day messages are promoted through the Wyoming Department of Health's WIC Program and Cardiovascular Disease Program, the University of Wyoming's Cent\$ible Nutrition Program, and the Wyoming Department of Education's Team Nutrition program.

Both of these programs were once members of a state 5 A Day Coalition that no longer operates because of staffing and time constraints. The position of 5 A Day coordinator is shared by two state health department employees—the nutrition coordinator of the state WIC Program and the coordinator of the Cardiovascular Disease/Obesity Prevention Program.

### **Program Focus**

The mission of the Wyoming 5 A Day Program is to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables among state residents. In 2003, only 22.1% of adults ate fruits and vegetables 5 or more times a day.<sup>2</sup> Women and people aged 65 or older reported the highest consumption—27.4% and 31.4%, respectively.<sup>2</sup>

### **Program Components**

To educate people about the importance of eating more fruits and vegetables, the Wyoming 5 A Day Program distributes materials annually and by request to health fairs, WIC offices, schools, and the offices of health professionals.

During 2000–2001, a 5 A Day committee developed a cookbook to raise money for mini-grants to help local communities promote 5 A Day messages. The project was funded by a \$500 grant from the Wyoming Coalition for Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies. The resulting book, *Best of the West 5 A Day Cookbook*, sold 376 copies.

Mini-grants are awarded to projects that integrate 5 A Day messages into existing state or community nutrition and health programs, include 2 or more organizations and disciplines, are easy to replicate, include an evaluation component, and cultivate private and public partnerships.

During 2002–2003, 2 projects that targeted men at their work sites were funded. The first was called the People At Work 5 A Day Program. It was coordinated by the University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service, the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program, Sheridan County Com-

munity Health Services, the Sheridan County Commission, and Wyoming Sawmills, Inc (WSI).

At WSI, mini-workshops, called “tailgate parties,” were held each month immediately after afternoon breaks to teach employees how to eat a healthy

diet to prevent disease.

Sixty-eight percent of employees participated; of those who responded to evaluation questions, 45% said they were eating more fruit each day, and 39% were eating more vegetables.

The second mini-grant went to the Weston County Extension Service and the Weston County Health Promotion Coalition for an intervention called Eat 5 A Day. This project targeted employees of the Wyoming Refining Company and their families with information on how to add fruits and vegetables to their daily diets.

Quarterly newsletters promoted 5 A Day messages, and fruit and vegetable snacks were provided weekly to all employees during September and December 2002 and again in March and June 2003. Local grocery stores were encouraged to display 5 A Day materials.

## Beyond 5 A Day

The following two stories illustrate interventions that are not part of the 5 A Day Program. However, these interventions are compelling, and their potential ability to improve fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income people living in urban areas merits our attention.

## **Residents Are Part of the Solution in Detroit**

In eastside Detroit, being healthy isn't always easy. Like many large urban areas, much of the city's social and physical infrastructure has collapsed.

As more people move to the suburbs, parks and grocery stores close. Those residents who are left behind have few options for getting the exercise and healthy foods that can help them reduce their risk for many chronic diseases. To counter these problems, the Eastside Village Health Worker Partnership (ESVHWP) was established in 1995 as part of the Detroit Community-Academic Urban Research Center, which is funded by CDC.

The organization uses two strategies to achieve its goal of improving the health of women, children, and families living on Detroit's eastside. The first is to recruit community members to help collect research in their own communities. The second is to use the information collected to implement appropriate public health interventions.

To ensure that these interventions are relevant to the community, the ESVHWP uses lay health advisors to promote and conduct the interventions. These "village health workers" are recruited from the targeted communities because they understand the strengths and resources of these communities. And they're motivated to get involved because they're helping to improve their own neighborhoods.

In 1999, the ESVHWP identified diabetes as a priority health concern for Detroit

residents. Two years later, they launched the Healthy Eating and Exercise to Reduce Diabetes (HEED) initiative to strengthen the local community's ability to prevent or delay the onset of the disease.

To achieve this goal, village health workers educate people about the risk factors for diabetes, strengthen social supports to reduce these risks, and provide information on how to plan and cook healthy meals. They also work to expand community resources and to reduce the barriers that prevent people from eating healthy diets and enjoying safe physical activities.

One particular barrier for older residents is limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables. In many local grocery stores, the produce is overpriced or in bad condition. Most of the stores that offer bigger selections and cheaper prices are located in outlying suburbs, and elderly adults who can't drive must rely on others for transportation.

In response, the HEED project coordinator found a local food distributor willing to stock a monthly Fruit and Vegetable Mini-Market at a community center in eastside Detroit. There, residents can buy high-quality, fresh produce at reasonable prices in their own neighborhood. They also receive free recipes for quick, easy, and healthy meals.

"Our seniors look forward to the market," said Teretha Hollis-Neely, HEED project

coordinator. “They enjoy being able to see, touch, smell, and even taste the fruits and vegetables before purchasing them.”

“As for me, most folks don’t remember my name, so they call me the Fruit Lady,” she added. “I share in their excitement and enjoy their smiles. Whether it’s about a new recipe or their grandchildren, I enjoy talking with them. Best of all, I like hearing them say, ‘See you next month!’ ”

In 2002, this initiative was extended as part of the REACH Detroit Partnership through its Promoting Healthy Eating in Detroit project. For more information about these projects and their many partners, visit <http://www.sph.umich.edu/urc/projects/esvhwp.html>.

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## **St. Louis Church Boasts Garden of Eden Market**

You won't find hamburgers and hot dogs at this market, only fresh produce and an army of researchers ready to show you how to prepare a healthy meal.

Fed up with telling residents in north St. Louis to eat better, but knowing that they didn't have the resources to do it, religious leaders joined with business owners and Saint Louis University researchers to open a produce market in the basement of Union Memorial United Methodist Church.

The Garden of Eden market opened in 2003 with CDC funding of nearly \$500,000. It was designed to offer the surrounding low- and middle-income community a healthy alternative to fast food by providing fresh produce at low prices, along with help in preparing it. Now many residents also look to the market to provide jobs and bring the community together.

"It's one thing to tell people to eat better, and it's another thing to tell them to eat better and we're going to provide you with some resources to do that," says Orvin Kimbrough, executive director of the Interfaith Partnership of Metropolitan St. Louis, which helped open the market.

Studies show that while 22.1% of all Americans were obese in 2002, the rate for blacks was 30%.<sup>2</sup> Saint Louis University researchers hope to reduce the rate among urban blacks by increasing their access to the food and recipes they need to eat better.

“Grocery stores are leaving the area, and fast-food restaurants are maintaining or even growing,” says Elizabeth Baker, associate professor of community health at Saint Louis University. “It makes it so that people who want to make changes don’t have access to do so.”

At the Garden of Eden, shoppers browse in an atmosphere reminiscent of a farmers’ market. Researchers give nutritional guidance and survey shoppers on their eating habits. Other workers, both paid and volunteer, demonstrate how to prepare healthy meals, give out samples, and offer recipes. Teenagers bag groceries, earning gift certificates to the local mall.

The greens are most popular, says Rose Goodrum, 72, who has worked at the market since it opened. “They marvel over our greens. Our vegetables, they say, are first-rate, better than local supermarkets.”

In addition to CDC and Saint Louis University, the market is supported by Union Memorial United Methodist Church, the Interfaith Partnership, and three other local churches. Owners of local supermarkets have helped train staff members, teaching them how to select good produce and organize displays. One supermarket owner even invited workers to shadow him at his job.

The Rev. Lynn Mims, pastor of Union Memorial, says the church got involved because the effort helps counteract the problem of “organizations (that) come into poor communities . . . and do research and never leave anything behind.”

Researchers plan to present what they learn from the Garden of Eden at a community forum with local health and minority leaders, politicians, and urban planners. In addition, they'll use their surveys to keep tabs on the community's eating habits over time. The goal is to inspire community members to work together toward improvement.

Organizers also hope to expand to other locations in the future. The current market, which is open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturdays, draws about 50 shoppers a week.

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"It's one thing to tell people to eat better, and it's another thing to tell them to eat better and we're going to provide you with some resources to do that."

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