

Alabama's Healthy Vending Machine Program Improving Lives One Worksite at a Time

by: Molly B. Killman, MS, RD

SUMMARY

The Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is improving healthy eating and physical activity options for Alabama residents. The health department partnered with community organizations across the state to educate employers about the benefits of healthy vending options. Thirteen worksites across the state attended trainings on healthy vending and now offer healthier food and drink options to employees and visitors to their worksites. These changes benefit almost 30,000 Alabama employees and visitors.



CHALLENGE

According to a report from the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Alabama has the fifth highest rate of adult obesity in the nation, the fourth highest rate of diabetes, and the second highest rate of hypertension. Underlying these conditions are health risk factors including poor nutrition. For example, in 2013, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data showed that nearly 46% of Alabama residents ate fruit less than once each day, and

26% ate vegetables less than once each day. Healthy options in vending machines can assist with leading a healthier lifestyle, but often, vending machines are filled with low nutrient, high calorie foods and drinks.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

To learn more about Alabama's Healthy Vending Machine Program, visit <http://www.adph.org/NUTRITION/index.asp?id=4929> This project is supported by the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health cooperative agreement (DP13-1305).

"Working on the healthy vending machine project with ADPH has been one of the healthiest initiatives that has occurred in our rural, low-income community. By targeting vending machines, I am tackling obesity by creating healthy food access."

- Tawnya Kirkland, SNAP-Ed Educator

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SOLUTION

ADPH partnered with Auburn University and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) to offer and expand the Alabama Healthy Vending Machine Program (AHVMP) to worksites (in mostly rural areas) across Alabama. The program aims to increase access to healthy foods and drinks in vending machines across the state. To do so, AHVMP recommends 25% or more of food and drinks sold in all state vending machines meet their nutrition standards. Nutrition standards include snacks with no more than 200 calories, and snacks low in fat, sugar and sodium. An attractive “Good Choice” logo helps employees and visitors identify snacks that meet those standards.

RESULTS

Since 2015, 13 worksites have added healthier food choices to their vending machines. Improved food choices now include dried fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and foods low in saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium. SNAP-Ed staff provided each worksite technical assistance on how to make healthy eating improvements that meet Alabama’s nutrition standards for healthy vending. Participating worksites attended trainings on promotion, pricing, and placement of food items in healthy vending machines. The initiative continues to grow. ADPH expects more worksites to set up healthy vending options in the future.

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

Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

ADPH will continue to work with community organizations across the state to improve healthy food and drink options at worksites. Many of the resources provided to worksites are accessible on the health department’s website. Plans are in place to offer online training videos on Alabama’s healthy vending program. ADPH is also working to create a healthy vending website that focuses on information about setting up a program and makes it easier for interested worksites to access the information. In addition, through a partnership with Auburn University, SNAP-Educators will help to expand the program to corner stores, small grocery stores, and K-12 schools in low-income and rural areas.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
NCCDPHP



Success Stories

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