

FLORIDA HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Volume 2 Issue 3

Fall 2008

DISTRICTS PARTNER FOR SCHOOL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

School district policies and administrative support are essential to sustaining programs and activities that remove barriers to learning. In 2007, a review of school wellness policies from around the state allowed Florida's Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) to identify 10 school districts, representing over 1,100 schools, that have committed to using a coordinated school health (CSH) approach and having a healthy school, or wellness team, in every school.

The Florida Department of Education (DOE) Office of Healthy Schools and the Florida Department of Health (DOH) Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program continue to work with teams of food service directors; health education, physical education, staff wellness and school health services coordinators; County Health Department representatives; and other district members from the 10 identified districts known as the Healthy District Collaborative (HDC). The districts receive professional development, technical assistance, and resources to help them achieve their health and wellness goals.

The HDC initially met in June 2007 and continues to participate in quarterly conference calls. The initial meeting demonstrated that many of these districts will be able to provide assistance to each other as well as to other districts who are working toward achieving this level. Several conference calls have taken place in which participants were notified of opportunities to access funding and other resources from state-level programs.

Based on an initial survey, the HDC selected the following priorities:

Health Education Integration

- Health education scope and sequence for school nurses, health educators, classroom teachers, and science teachers.
- Identify materials for integrating health education.

Physical Education Integration

- Physical education

scope and sequence for school nurses, health educators, classroom teachers, science teachers.

- Identify materials for integrating physical education.

Health Promotion for Staff

- Identifying resources
- Providing training
- Assistance with evaluation strategies

The May 2008 call provided training by an expert in social marketing, and the focus of the August 2008 call was staff wellness.

Many of these districts have exhibited the ability to overcome barriers to achieving health and wellness goals, achieve excellence in health and physical education, obtain and maintain support from school district leadership, and are willing to share their tools and strategies.

Relationships formed between the teams in the HDC allow ongoing assistance between calls. The districts share information and resources, and have

Inside this issue:

Healthy District Collaborative	1
School Employee Wellness	2
Florida KidCare	3
Florida Schools Receive Awards	4

the ability to provide mutual support that will lead to sustaining their health and wellness focus in the current environment of competing priorities and decreased funding.

Currently the participating districts include Brevard, Duval, Escambia, Gadsden, Hardee, Hillsborough, Marion, Orange, Osceola, and Polk. counties Flagler and Putnam Counties have recently joined the HDC. Other districts that are committed to using the CSH approach are invited to become a part of the collaborative.

For information about how your school district can become a member of the Healthy District Collaborative, please contact Penny Detscher (850) 245-0480, or Carol Vickers (850) 245-4444 extension 2794.

HEALTHY STAFF AND FACULTY: A KEY PART OF A HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines school staff wellness as *“Opportunities for school staff to improve their health status through activities such as health assessments, health education and health-related fitness activities. These opportunities encourage school staff to pursue a healthy lifestyle that contributes to their improved health status, improved morale, and a greater personal commitment to the school's overall coordinated health program. This personal commitment often transfers into greater commitment to the health of students and creates positive role modeling. Health promotion activities have improved productivity, decreased absenteeism, and reduced health insurance costs.”*

The cost of providing healthcare for its employees is a major expense for school districts and the school workforce is aging. The average teacher is in his or her mid-forties. In these challenging economic times, it is even more important to consider having an employee wellness program. An effective program can provide a significant return on investment reflected in decreased healthcare and substitute costs, reduced turnover, increased productivity, improved employee morale, and more positive role models for students. All of which ultimately lead to greater academic success.

The Directors of Health Promotion and Education published, **SCHOOL EMPLOYEE WELLNESS: A Guide for Protecting the Assets of Our Nation's Schools**, which can be downloaded at no cost at <http://www.schoolempwell.org/>. The following excerpts from the publication provide a statement of the value of a school district employee wellness program.

“By ignoring the health of their employees, school districts put a valuable asset of the nation's schools at risk. This asset has the potential to either improve or diminish students' learning. Public schools in the United States employ more than 6.7 million people. Nearly 3.5 million teachers instruct our children and more than 3.2 million school administrators, support staff, and other professionals manage our schools, transport and feed our children, provide for our children's physical and mental health needs, and ensure that the buildings and grounds where students spend their days are safe and well maintained. We entrust this large workforce with one of the nation's most critical functions – preparing our youth to become successful and productive citizens.

One health condition that research has shown to be prominent in teachers is stress. For example, between 5% and 20% of all U.S. teachers are burned out at any given time. Compared with other professions, teachers show high levels of exhaustion and cynicism, the core dimensions of burnout. This intense stress leads to low employee morale and high turnover. In June 2005, the cover story of the American School Board Journal reported that one-third of new U.S. teachers leave the profession during their first 3 years and almost half leave before 5 years.”

Look for quarterly school employee wellness tips in upcoming newsletters. For more information on starting a school employee wellness program, contact Dr. Antionette Meeks in the DOE Office of Healthy Schools at (850) 245-0480 or Carol Vickers in the DOH Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program at (850) 245-4444 ext. 2794. Additional resources are available on the DOE and DOH web sites.

DOE: <http://www.fldoe.org/BII/CSHP/>

DOH: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/CSHP/index.html>

Staff Wellness Quick Tip: Promoting the wellness benefits provided by your insurance carrier is a no cost, first step toward creating healthier school staff.

Fl♥rida KidCare

KidCare Is For Any Child Without Health Insurance.

Nine out of 10 families in Florida have health insurance for their children. You can join them with Florida KidCare if your child is uninsured.

Florida KidCare provides quality healthcare benefits to children under the age of 19. Children enrolled in the program have access to preventive care such as regular doctor's visits, immunizations, and dental and vision benefits. Most families pay \$20 or less per month. Many pay nothing at all.

You can apply for Florida KidCare by simply completing an online application at www.floridakidcare.org. You can also call 1-888-540-5437 to receive an application by mail or help over the phone.

"KidCare is for any child that's uninsured and our goal is to enroll as many children in the program as possible," said Rich Robleto, executive director of the Florida Healthy Kids Corporation. "Families are applying everyday because they know there's nothing like having the peace of mind that you can take your child in for a doctor's visit without breaking the bank."

Since it began in 1998, Florida KidCare has offered working families access to high-quality doctors and preventive care for their children at little or no cost. Florida KidCare currently serves more than 1.4 million children, of which 1.2 million are Children's Medicaid customers and more than 250,000 are enrolled in MediKids, Children's Medical Services Network or Healthy Kids.

To apply for Florida KidCare, visit www.floridakidcare.org or call 1-888-540-KIDS.

Florida KidCare Application Information

Families are encouraged to apply online at: www.floridakidcare.org

Enrollment applications can be downloaded off the internet at: <http://www.floridakidcare.org/printapp.html>

Families can also call 1-888-540-KIDS (1-888-540-5437) to receive the enrollment application by mail

To complete your application, you will need to have your most recent federal income tax return, wages and earnings statements OR your last four weeks pay stubs.

You can check the status of your application and make a payment at: www.floridakidcare.org

To submit an application you can:

Apply online at: www.floridakidcare.org

Mail it to:
Florida KidCare
Post Office Box 980
Tallahassee, Florida 32302-0980

Fax it to: 1-866-867-0054

Email it to: apply@healthykids.org
(Accepted email attachments MUST be sent in one of the following formats: .JPG .JPEG .BMP .GIF .TIF .PDF .DOC .PPT .TIF .TIFF .TXT .RTF)

Calendar of Upcoming Events in 2008

October 20 - 23	Pro Bike/Pro Walk Florida http://www.bikewalk.org/calendar.php	St. Petersburg
Sept. 30 - Oct 3	Florida Prevention Conference & Suicide Prevention Symposium http://www.meetingmasterminds.com/prevention.htm	Orlando
October 2 - 4	2008 Florida Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Dance and Sport Conference http://www.fahperd.org/	Orlando
November 12 - 15	American School Health Association National Conference Finding Common Ground in Human Sexuality and Other Adolescent Health Issues http://www.ashaweb.org/	Tampa

Florida's Coordinated School Health Partnership

Your Contacts

DOH Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion RN Consultant	Carol Vickers	850-245-4330
DOH School Health Services Office Director	Laura Brazell	850-245-4445
DOE Office of Healthy Schools Director	Penny Detscher	850-245-5089
Assistant Director	Dr. Antionette Meeks	850-245-0480
Physical Education	Nichole Wilder	850-245-0480
HIV/AIDS Prevention Resource Center	Ksena Zipperer Eileen Smith	850-245-9952 850-245-0978



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
www.fldoe.org



Ten of 43 Schools Honored at 3rd Annual Healthy Schools Forum Are From Florida

The third annual Healthy Schools Forum was held in Little Rock, AR, on August 4-6, 2008. Forty-three schools from across the nation received awards from former President Bill Clinton, American Heart Association President-Elect, Dr. Clyde Yancy, and Dr. James Marks Senior Vice President of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the major funder of the Healthy Schools Program.

Schools participating in the Healthy Schools Program are eligible to earn bronze, silver, gold, or platinum awards based on their range of healthy eating and physical activity programs and policies. The rigorous program criteria were developed in consultation with a panel of experts, including representatives from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the American Heart Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and others.

Of the 43 schools receiving the National Recognition Award, nearly one quarter were from the state of Florida. Two in the Hillsborough County School District, Kenly and



Alliance
for a
**Healthier
Generation**



Clair Mel Elementary, earned a bronze level award. Seven schools in the Miami-Dade School District received awards. Miami Springs Middle School earned the silver level award and North Beach Elementary, Flagami Elementary, George Washington Carver Elementary, Silver Bluff Elementary, Edison Middle School, and Felix Varela High School each earned a bronze level award. Pierson Elementary in Volusia County earned a bronze award as well.

"Despite the rising food prices and constrained budgets impacting programs nationally, these schools are using innovative approaches to curb the country's alarming rates of childhood obesity," President Clinton said. "Schools around the country are stepping up and making progress. Currently, we are helping to

support nearly 3,000 schools in this effort, but there is more work to be done to continue this forward momentum."

Presenters praised school leaders for their achievements in removing unhealthy foods from cafeterias and vending machines, and for finding creative ways for students to be increasingly active during the school day. Such efforts have become more difficult in the last year due to high food costs and funding cuts for physical activity programs at local, state, and federal levels. Yet the honored schools have made major strides since joining the Healthy Schools Program. In the U.S., 12-million children and teens are obese and more than 23-million are either overweight or obese. Over the past 40 years, the obesity rate for children ages 6 to 11 has more than quadrupled from 4.2 to 17 percent; for adolescents from ages 12 to 19 years of age, the rate has tripled from 4.6 to 17.6 percent.

For more information on the Alliance for a Healthier Generation or to register your school please visit www.healthiergeneration.org.