

Florida Communities Lead the Way to a Healthy Future

October 2008

Healthy People 2010 Objective:

7-10 Increase the proportion of Tribal and local health service areas or jurisdictions that have established a community health promotion program that addresses multiple Healthy People 2010 focus areas.

Issue:

In 2003, over 10 million cases of chronic diseases were reported in Florida. These diseases reduce the quality and length of lives and create considerable burden for caregivers. The cost of treating these conditions in Florida not considering the secondary health problems totaled \$17.6 billion in 2003. During that same year employers suffered the burden of chronic conditions as well as lost workdays and lower employee productivity resulting in an economic loss over \$68.7 billion. Between treatment expenditures and lost productivity there was a total economic impact of \$86.3 billion. Many of these chronic diseases and the associated costs are preventable, caused by poor diet, sedentary lifestyles and tobacco use. These risk factors are largely predicted by the communities in which Floridians live, environments in which they work and learn, and access and use health care services.

Results of a national survey, administered in January 2003 to local health departments across the U.S., show that on average only 1.85 percent of the U.S. health department's overall budget was spent on chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs. The survey also revealed that only half of responding health departments had received any federal funding for chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs; total funding amounting to only \$0.24 per person. The increasing threat that chronic disease poses to quality of life, preventable death, and economic vitality and the knowledge that health problems are influenced by policies and environments provides the Florida Department of Health with an opportunity to strengthen its chronic disease prevention and health promotion infrastructure.

Intervention:

In July of 2003, the Florida Department of Health developed and implemented the Healthy Communities, Healthy People (HCHP) Program with Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant funding. HCHP provided each of Florida's sixty-seven counties with the resources to develop policy or environmental changes within communities, schools, worksites, healthcare agencies, and faith-based organizations. In 2007-2008, standards for the HCHP were modified to include the basic public health services and infrastructure that all Floridians can reasonably expect from a community disease prevention and health promotion program. The five standards of a comprehensive chronic disease prevention and health promotion program are:

- **public health workforce.** Develop and sustain an organizational structure that supports professional development.
- **community partnerships.** Develop and sustain state and local partnerships that foster successful collaborations within and outside the health department.
- **data-driven decisions.** Use public health data as a tool to develop and prioritize community-based interventions.
- **evidence-based action plans.** Implement evidence-based strategies at the informational, environmental and policy levels within schools, worksites, healthcare, faith-based settings and the overall community.

- **evaluation and reporting.** Understand and implement evaluation and reporting systems in order to highlight successes that are being achieved in the community.

Outcome:

The Florida public health standards for a chronic disease prevention and health promotion program strengthens the public health system, which in turn benefits all Floridians. Significant outcomes include:

- **successful community health outcomes.** Consistent chronic disease prevention public health infrastructure and services across Florida has strengthened state and local partnership efforts. By collaborating with traditional (schools, non-profit health organizations, etc.) and nontraditional (restaurants, employers, etc.) partners, over 65 policy and environmental strategies were put in place across Florida in 2007.
- **streamlined communication and reporting.** Increased accountability for communication, submitting community action plans and reporting out intervention completion has been ensured through an established communication and reporting process.
- **recruitment and retention.** State and local personnel are provided with a position description that outlines duties and are supported with a professional development plan for achieving competencies. Professionalization of the public health workforce under the umbrella of chronic disease prevention and health promotion has led to successful recruitment and higher retention rates.
- **integration.** The integration of chronic disease services and other programs such as environmental health, WIC, oral health, maternal and child health with HCCP has provided the department with the capacity to address multiple levels of influence on nutrition, physical activity, and tobacco use.

The Florida Public Health standards for a chronic disease prevention and health promotion program “raise the bar” for public health but are tempered with realistic expectations allowing for sustainability in the future.

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