

State of Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program Updates

Alaska Alliance for Healthy Kids Steering Committee

March 5, 2014

The Obesity Prevention and Control Program (OPCP) is building a comprehensive program to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity in Alaska. Currently, the program's components are (1) [Play Every Day and Healthy Futures](#); (2) [K-12 School Districts Obesity Prevention grants](#); (3) [Community Nutrition/Alaska Food Policy Council](#); (4) [School Health](#); (5) [Early Childcare](#); and (6) [Surveillance and Evaluation](#). Following is a brief description of the component, recent accomplishments, and next steps.

Play Every Day and Healthy Futures:

One way the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services is addressing childhood obesity is by educating the public through the campaign called Play Every Day. Play Every Day was launched in 2012 to raise awareness statewide about the health concerns associated with childhood obesity and to motivate Alaska families and children to be physically active, 60 minutes a day, for the best health and for maintaining a healthy weight.

Recent successes and accomplishments:

- The campaign is running a TV PSA featuring an Anchorage family who was motivated by the Healthy Futures Challenge. The PSA is running during the Olympics in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau, and will continue running into March. You can watch the PSA here: <http://www.youtube.com/playeverydayAK>.
- Later this spring, we will feature the same family in a PSA that will run statewide, carrying the Play Every Day message of 60 minutes of physical activity every day for the best health.
- The campaign also launched a new Facebook page. Please like and share the page with your friends and colleagues: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/playeverydayAK>.
- Play Every Day's partner in physical activity – the Healthy Futures Program – kicked off the Spring Healthy Futures Challenge in a record 168 schools across Alaska in more than 30 school districts. The spring Challenge will run February, March and April.

Next steps:

- The Play Every Day campaign will be redesigning its website (playeveryday.alaska.gov) during the remainder of this fiscal year.
- The campaign also will be creating a TV PSA and complementary communication materials focused on helping Alaska parents better understand the problem and the consequences of childhood obesity. It also will start creating communication materials for a brand new arm of the campaign – motivating Alaska parents to reduce the amount of sugary drinks they are serving their children.
- Play Every Day and Healthy Futures will kick off the Spring Healthy Futures Challenge using two school assemblies. On Wednesday, Feb. 26, UAA Seawolf hockey players skated with kids and participated in an assembly at O'Malley Elementary in Anchorage. Today, the Play Every Day

campaign and Healthy Futures are kicking off the challenge at Woodriver Elementary in Fairbanks. The event also celebrates the Arctic Winter Games, which will begin mid-March in Fairbanks, and features Winter Games athletes who challenge Woodriver elementary school students to an indoor obstacle course.

K-12 School Districts Obesity Prevention grants

The **Obesity Prevention School Grants** program includes 9 Alaskan school district grantees working to improve their school nutrition and physical activity environments by increasing opportunities for before, during and after school physical activity and improving the nutritional content of foods available for consumption at schools. Each district coordinator is developing strong nutrition programs such as the USDA HealthierUS School Challenge, farm-to-school, serving Alaska fish, and increasing salad bars in the schools. In addition, grantee districts participate in the Healthy Futures Challenge and implement high-quality PE and recess programming aimed at helping students meet the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity. Outcomes of this grant program will be evaluated through collecting and analyzing student height and weight.

Early successes/accomplishments:

- All districts have formed **district wellness teams** and conducted assessments of their local policies and programs using the **WellSAT** assessment tool and the CDC's **School Health Index**.
- All districts are currently participating in the Spring 2014 **Healthy Futures Challenge**, and are increasing participation from the fall.

Some district specific highlights:

- Petersburg SD is piloting universal free **breakfast in the classroom** in two fifth grade classrooms
- Kodiak Island BSD to has added **salad bars** to 4 schools in the district
- North Slope SD is beginning to work with vendors to **stop serving soda and junk foods** at after school sporting events
- Yukon Koyukuk SD's Itinerant PE teacher implements the **SPARK PE curriculum** and hosts fitness and health activities in each community served by the district.
- Sitka SD is partnering with an anti-bullying grant program to implement the 'Playworks' program to train staff on facilitating **highly active, inclusive and non competitive playground games**.
- 21 schools in the Mat Su district have **active local wellness teams** that have been engaged in assessing current nutrition and physical activity programs and have received grants through the MatSu Health Foundation for local programs.
- Ketchikan's wellness team has drafted and gained support for a revised wellness policy that goes **beyond the gold standard** model policy

Next steps to look forward to in the 2014-2015 school year:

- All districts are working with their school boards to strengthen and pass a **gold standard school wellness policy** to create supportive environments for good nutrition and physical activity
- District coordinators are working with booster clubs, vendors, and other key stakeholders to ensure that **all foods sold in school** at vending, school stores, and fundraisers meet USDA nutritional standards required for the 2014-2015 school year

- All districts will conduct a spring 2015 local **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** and continue monitoring student height and weight status

Community Nutrition/Alaska Food Policy Council

OPCP Community Nutrition (CN) works to improve access to and availability of affordable, healthy foods for all Alaskans. Community Nutrition initiated and continues to support the Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Program, allowing low income Alaskans the chance to use their SNAP benefits at farmers' markets. CN supports schools, ECEs, and community partners' food and nutrition initiatives and events, such as salad bars in schools, Farm-to-School and fish to school. CN provides leadership and support to the Alaska Food Policy Council, which serves as a resource for information on local and state food systems, and works to identify and propose policy and environmental changes that can improve the production, processing, distribution, health, security and safety of our food.

Recent Community Nutrition Accomplishments:

- Provided funding and support for an AmeriCorp VISTA volunteer to coordinate the Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Program. In 2013, the program doubled the number of participating markets (from 5 markets in 2012 to 10 markets), and doubled the number of Quest transactions (from 404 transactions in 2012 to 884 transactions).
- Worked with Alaska Department of Education & Early Development to purchase salad bars for 11 schools.
- Provided funding to the Division of Agriculture for Farm to School grants for 18 projects that reached 35 schools.
- Contracted with Denali Daniels, Inc. to assist the Alaska Food Policy Council with public engagement and outreach. This will consist of 7-8 Town Halls across the state, a food systems conference, and developing a communication strategic plan. Two Town Halls have been held in Nome and Juneau this year.
- Contracted with Ken Meter to conduct a food system economic analysis. Ken has worked with 12 state health departments and many other local health departments and groups to develop reports that examine the economic impact of food and where investments should be made to improve the local food system.
- Provided support for ANTHC's Store Outside Your Door webisodes and a new video for the Food Bank of Alaska on healthy cooking and recipes using accessible foods (such as commodity foods, traditional foods, and foods purchased at the market with Quest cards).

Next Steps:

- Hire and fund two new VISTAs for the Alaska Farmers' Market-Quest Program and the Alaska Food Policy Council.
- Partner with the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to promote all farmers' market nutrition assistance programs to low income Alaskans.
- Support the Sitka Conservation Society to develop a Fish to School Toolkit.
- Continue planning and implementing the AFPC Town Halls and the food systems conference.

- The Alaska Food Policy Council is requesting support and funding for the Alaska Farmers' Market – Quest Program, Farm to School Program, Funding for School Meals, and the Nutritional Alaskan Foods to Schools Grants.

School Health

Using the [coordinated school health model](#) the School Health program is a collaboration and partnership of several state and non-governmental agencies, all working together to promote the overall health of students and the school setting. School health includes [health and nursing services](#), [behavioral and mental health services](#), health and nutrition education, [nutritious foods](#), physical education, [physical activity throughout the day](#), and [environmental health](#).

Our purpose is to raise awareness about the importance of addressing all aspects of a student's health to ensure their best chance at academic success, and to promote policies and practices supporting that purpose.

A healthy student is a successful student.

Successes and accomplishments:

- The 8th Annual School Health and Wellness Institute in November had record attendance.
- Began in depth survey of Alaska's 54 school districts regarding PE and Recess policies to gain overview of current policy status. Final report to be completed by March 28, 2014.
- Began biennial (every even year) CDC sponsored School Health Profiles survey of 265 secondary schools in Alaska. Currently have 46% response rate for principals' surveys, 32% for health teachers' surveys.
- Held regular meeting of School Health Collaborative partner agencies.

Next steps:

- Begin planning the 2014 9th Annual School Health and Wellness Institute.
- Finish survey of school district PE and Recess policies; review and disseminate findings; plan next steps.
- Continue pursuing the return of School Health Profiles surveys to reach the required 70% response rate.
- Create presentation promoting the important link between student health and academics to share at important conferences.
- Staff resource tables at important conferences to disseminate information and resources about school health and wellness.

Early Childhood Education

The State of Alaska Obesity Prevention and Control Program (OPCP) is currently working to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in early childhood education (ECE) settings in an effort to decrease levels of childhood obesity. Strategies include increasing the number of ECE sites that adopt and/or implement policies for improved nutrition and increased physical activity, reducing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, promoting breast feeding, and reducing screen time.

Accomplishments

- Partnered with UAF to revise the Physical Activity & Nutrition (PAN) Manual for ECE providers.
- Presented state regulations and national recommendations for ECE physical activity & nutrition to attendees at the annual Alaska Educators of Young Children (AYEC) childcare conference.
- Completed an environmental scan of current initiatives, infrastructure, and partners involved with ECE in Alaska.

Next Steps

- Complete and distribute PAN manual.
- Encourage child care providers to participate in the Let's Move Childcare initiative.
- Train providers on how to increase physical activity and improve nutrition.

Surveillance and Evaluation

Surveillance and evaluation are two complimentary but different components of the Obesity Prevention and Control Program (OPCP). They require similar skills however which is why they're often lumped together. Surveillance for the OPCP involves tracking, collecting, and analyzing available obesity data. The two primary current sources of obesity data are the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System for adult obesity and children's obesity data directly submitted to OPCP from school districts. Using statistics, this data is analyzed for meaningful trends and differences between groups of interest. Results from data analysis is then interpreted by program leads; the interpretations then informing OPCP actions. Assessing OPCP actions is where evaluation comes in. Again, using statistics on available data, (including surveillance data and other sources), OPCP actions and interventions are evaluated for their effectiveness answering the question, do OPCP actions lead to reduced obesity?

Recent successes and accomplishments

- Format developed for reporting school district weight status and obesity prevalence and first report published: [Student Weight Status: Kenai Peninsula Borough School District](#)
- Cleaned Anchorage and Mat-Su Borough school district height and weight data files for analysis.
- Trained school grantees to assist and improve in data collection and transfer to OPCP.
- Obesity Facts document final.

Next steps

- Clean-up and conduct detailed analysis of height and weight data transferred to OPCP from grantees.
- Report student weight status results to Anchorage, Mat-Su and grantee school districts.
- Formalize procedures to statistically analyze school grantee weight status over time to determine positive and negative trends.
- Approve and finalize report, Current and Future Medical Costs of Childhood Obesity in Alaska, OPCP commissioned ISER to complete.