

SCHOOL HEALTH: ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Three national organizations collaborate to advance coordinated school health programs

Public Health Problem

- Recent surveys reveal that most school-age youth don't eat recommended amounts of daily fruits and vegetables or attend daily physical education classes; about a fourth of them are smoking and over thirteen percent are overweight.
- These risk behaviors lead to diseases such as cardiovascular disease and cancer which by themselves account for well over half of all deaths among people over age twenty-five.
- Students benefit most from their education when they are healthy - and are not absent because of chronic conditions such as asthma or diabetes or hungry and tired from a lack of activity and healthful food.
- Every day state health and education agencies are working together to prevent these risk behaviors among youth through coordinated school health programs.

Program

- The **National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, Directors of Health Promotion and Education, and the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation** formed a unique partnership to support school health efforts.
- With funding and support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health these three national, non-governmental organizations held workshops with a total of fifteen state teams to enhance state-level collaborative efforts between health and education agencies.
- The organizations worked intensively with the state teams during the workshops and provided individualized technical assistance with teams for up to year afterward.
- *School Health Programs: Achievement through Partnerships* workshops provided a forum for open dialogue on challenges of and best practices for implementation of state and local school health programs.

Impact

Evaluation results show the substantial workshop benefits to states:

- The partner-sponsored workshops stimulated inter-agency team planning and strengthened team relationships.
- Nearly all participating states achieved one or more of the three intended outcomes - thirteen reported engaging in joint planning, eight worked on coordinated school health policies, and six shared resources in support of coordinated school health-related activities.
- Participants credit the workshops with the initiation of new collaborative actions in their state that improved the pace and quality of collaboration and created conditions that support it.

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