

IMPLEMENTING THE STATE PLAN TO PROMOTE HEALTHIER WEIGHT

New Mexico plan guides partners to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases

Public Health Problem

- Almost two-thirds of New Mexico adults are obese or overweight as well as a quarter of high school students and one fourth of the young children who participate in federal food programs.
- Preventing overweight and obesity reduces the chance that children will develop chronic diseases such as diabetes at an early age and delays or prevents the onset of these diseases for many adults.

Program

- The New Mexico Department of Health Physical Activity & Nutrition Program for Healthier Weight partnered with key stakeholders to develop the New Mexico Plan to Promote Healthier Weight (www.HealthierWeightNM.org).
- The New Mexico Healthier Weight Council, formed from the state plan stakeholder group, leads the effort to implement the plan objectives, has established a leadership structure, operational guidelines, and an annual action plan and is increasing awareness around the issue of healthy weight through brochures, postcard mailings, and an on-line resource directory.

Impact

- Examples of Healthier Weight Council partner implementation activities include:
 - Implementation of a new policy for all public schools in New Mexico to eliminate sugar-sweetened and caffeinated soft drinks, eliminate vending machines in elementary schools, require middle and high school vending machines to stock only low fat and low sugar foods, and to provide healthier choices when selling food as a fundraiser
 - Addition of a mandatory physical fitness program for corrections officers in Bernalillo County and implementation of a pilot wellness program in county government departments
 - *Prescription Trails*, a pilot physical activity prescription program to provide health care professionals with prescription pads and walking trail guides to use to increase walking and wheelchair rolling by their patients in Albuquerque
 - Leveraging of funding from the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices for the *Healthy Las Cruces, Healthy Kids* project and from the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors for the ACHIEVE initiative in Albuquerque, which includes the YMCA
 - Participation by three elementary schools from the Las Cruces Public School District in the Walk and Roll to School Day with a substantial increase in walking and rolling to school on the event day in at least one school
 - Creation of a Senior Advisor position in the New Mexico Department of Health's Office of the Secretary to provide guidance to the New Mexico Interagency for the Prevention of Obesity, a collaborative effort across eight state government departments and more than forty programs
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention presented the New Mexico Healthier Weight Council with a "Partner in Advancing Public Health Award" recognizing them as the state's first comprehensive network of partners working together to prevent and control obesity.

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