

MEDIA BROADCASTS THE MESSAGE OF STEPS TO A HEALTHIER PENNSYLVANIA

Increasing awareness and educating county residents about preventing chronic disease

Public Health Problem

- Obesity increased by fifty percent in Pennsylvania's Luzerne County over ten years.
- Risk factors associated with overweight and obesity are also on the rise – for example, one fourth of Luzerne County residents get no regular physical activity.
- The numbers of adults diagnosed with asthma has increased by a third since 2000. Asthma is one of the top three causes of preventable hospitalization.
- Steps to a Healthier Pennsylvania–Luzerne County educates residents to increase awareness about nutrition, physical activity and smoking habit changes that will prevent asthma, obesity and other chronic diseases.

Program

- Steps to a Healthier Pennsylvania–Luzerne County established a partnership with the local ABC affiliate to create public service announcements promoting healthy lifestyles.
- The station donated booth space during their Home and Backyard Show reaching over 5000 residents; highlighted the Steps program in a major newscast; and featured a Steps intervention school in a major news story.
- Over six months, Steps to a Healthier Pennsylvania was mentioned in an additional 45 newscasts or print articles in thirteen different media venues. To date, 255 television public service announcements ('spots') have aired on WNEP in Luzerne County.
- Steps to a Healthier Pennsylvania is an active member of the stations regional advisory board and a station staffer works with the Steps Community Consortium.

Impact

- Up to two free television spots have been provided by the WNEP station for every paid spot that airs, at least doubling viewer exposure at no additional cost to the program. The station continues to air the educational spots even without additional Steps funding.
- Government funding was leveraged by six hundred percent to \$145,000 through sponsor donations covering production and airtime costs. Additional money was contributed as in-kind services by the television station.
- Media coverage keeps the county's healthy lifestyle initiatives and messages in the public eye to boost local prevention activities.
- Survey results suggest this is an effective approach - over a third of respondents have heard of Steps to a Healthier Pennsylvania.

Contact

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