

News from the Physical Activity and Nutrition Program



Summer 2014

Happy Summer!

We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of the Physical Activity and Nutrition newsletter from the Vermont Department of Health. You are receiving this publication because a colleague at the Department thought you would be interested in these updates. Our goal is to keep you informed of our work, and the national trends that inform it. Each quarter we will report on the initiatives we are leading in communities, worksites, schools/child care programs and the clinical setting that will help Vermonters to make healthy food choices and be more physically active.

One such initiative was our recent **Spring into Action** project. With the help of our District Offices, we provided ideas for ways to eat healthier and be more physically active after the long winter we experienced. One page idea sheets were created for [municipalities](#), [schools](#), [child care programs](#), [worksites](#) and [individuals](#), along with a pledge form. While spring has become summer, it isn't too late to make this your moment and pledge. Click [here](#) for a pledge form- fill it out and post it to remind yourself of your pledge!

Please be in touch with [me](#) with suggestions for this newsletter. I look forward to hearing from you. Get out and enjoy this glorious summer weather and bounty!

Sue Kamp

Physical Activity and Nutrition Program Administrator

This just in!

The Vermont Department of Health achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB). Vermont is among the first five state health departments to achieve the rating. For over 125 years, the department has worked to protect the health of Vermonters. Congratulations on a legacy of health leadership and distinction!

Healthy Communities

The goal of the Physical Activity and Nutrition program's communities initiative is to create and promote places where people have access to physical activity and healthy food - where making the healthy choice is the easy choice. Our work is based on strategies recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/community_strategies_guide.pdf.

Beginning July 1, 2014, ten community coalitions will begin work under three year grant awards aimed at increasing access to physical activity and healthy eating



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Please forward this newsletter to interested colleagues!

Upcoming events

Active Living Workshop - [Save the Date](#)

AARP is hosting an active living workshop in September for Burlington's South End.

Check out our website [My Moment](#)

Stay Connected



within municipalities, using the Vermont Department of Health's Healthy Community Design Guidance: <http://www.healthvermont.gov/family/fit/obesitypreventionplan.aspx#community>

As a kick-off for the new awards, the Health Department is hosting a two day Healthy Community Design Action Institute for grantees and their partners, facilitated by nationally recognized "built environment" expert, Mark Fenton <http://www.markfenton.com/>. There will also be broad representation from Vermont partners and experts, who will be presenting from transportation, planning, food access, parks, trails, recreation, land use, and economic development.

Check out the [Healthy Community Design](#) grantees and their projects. See a [Full list](#) of the Vermont Department of Health's Combined Community Grants for FY15-17 (includes physical activity and nutrition, tobacco and alcohol and drug abuse prevention grantees).

School Wellness

Nutrition and physical activity in schools has been front page news as we collectively work to raise a healthier next generation.



Food service workers are on the front lines of food change- often in the middle of federal/state policy mandates and both happy and disgruntled students and school staff. In life most of us are rarely prepared for change, yet many food service workers have seen their job change from serving "heat and serve" meals to cooking from scratch with local foods. Steve Marinelli, Director of Vermont School Nutrition Association (SNA) and also Director of Food Service for the Milton Town School district said of SNA (a Vermont Department of Health grantee from the federal Community Transformation grant monies) "through the grants and trainings we conduct, we can educate our food service professionals to provide locally produced nutritious meals." Through their summer conference and year around trainings, newer employees can learn basic skills that increase their food preparation skills and awareness about healthy food. In the summer conference, more seasoned employees can sharpen their skills in workshops such as "Cost Control: *Making Your Child Nutrition Programs Work through Identifying Revenues, Managing Expenditures, and Increasing Productivity*" as well as round table legislative discussions.

In 2010 Congress passed the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, legislating healthier "competitive" foods sold at school. These foods are outside of and compete with the federally reimbursable food program. With the new Federal a la carte guidelines just 8 weeks away, Steve thinks that public health professionals can help by "continuing to provide opportunities for food service workers to have the proper training."

Government and parents require that food be healthy, children demand that it be tasty and school budgets expect it to be economical. SNA, in partnership with VDH, works with school food service personnel to meet these often conflicting demands to help grow a healthier next generation.

For further information visit SNA's [website](#), where you will learn about SNA and see the multiple newsletters available for members and the public. Also see Vermont's guidance document for the new guidelines. "[Smart Snacks in School](#)."

Worksite Wellness

A workplace garden provides many benefits to a business and its employees. In addition to providing fresh, healthy and local produce, a workplace garden can increase employee engagement, camaraderie, and healthy behavior. The food can go to individual employees, be used for shared meals, or be donated to a local food shelf or service agency.



Garden at Trudell Consulting Engineers

That all said, a garden may engage a large number of employees in one workplace and none in another. A sustainable wellness program must fit the scale and culture of the organization. Lori Hennessey and Lindsay Kittell, of Trudell Consulting Engineers, appreciate this point fully. When asked what has contributed to the success of their wellness program they credit listening to employee suggestions, as well as owner support and involvement. Trudell Consulting Engineers, located in Williston, employs 21 people and was one of nine worksites awarded a "Green Thumbs at Work" grant, not to mention a gold level employer at the statewide Worksite Wellness Conference. "Green Thumb" awardees received funds and technical assistance from the Department of Health and the Vermont Community Garden Network for the installation of a worksite garden.

This was the second year Trudell Consulting Engineers planted a garden on their property. After their first years limited success they were happy to accept the help of garden expert Charlie Nardozi. They planned an afternoon in the garden when employees could come and help put up fencing, plant and weed. They keep a calendar in the break area where employees sign up for a week and are responsible for tending to the garden. The garden calendar hangs next to a poster highlighting several achievements of the wellness program and the employees who have participated.

In addition to the garden, Trudell Consulting Engineers offers monthly wellness challenges, a running club, activity days including skiing and hiking trips, and volunteering at Jim's House in Williston. Their wellness program focuses primarily on three areas; developing personal goals, planning monthly group activities and charity. Lori is sure to always give credit to an owner who was willing to invest in the program and has allowed it to grow over time; their program only began about three years ago. She also credits the entire staff and those who play a role on the wellness committee for reasons why they have kept their programming strong.

Though Lori notes there have been challenges between finding ways to fund these activities or fizzling interest in a certain offering, she overcomes these barriers by keeping things new and different, soliciting employee feedback, and finding what fits the needs and wants of the individuals working at Trudell.

For more information on how to get started on employee wellness or how to improve upon your program check out the Department of Health's ['Creating a Healthier Worksite'](#) toolkit.

Clinical News

Farm shares bring the bounties of summer onto our plates, and also provide an

opportunity to boost eating fruits and vegetables that help reduce blood pressure.

Recently the Vermont Department of Health Nutritionists collaborated to translate and simplify the famous DASH Diet (DASH = Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). Use this link to review the new tool: http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/diabetes/documents/dash_diet.pdf
If you have a population who would benefit from this resource, the Department can provide hard copies via mail, please send requests to [Jessie Curran](#).



Special Topic

Promoting Water!

Water is not just for summertime fun, we should drink water all the time and as public health proponents we should lead others to water.



The two attached articles provide guidance for promoting drinking water in a variety of settings.

[The State Agency's Role in Increasing Access to Drinking Water](#) is a PowerPoint focusing on promoting water consumption in the CDC Cooperative Agreement 1305 grant, food service, schools and early childhood education environments, as well as providing information from 6 states, including Vermont, on water promotional strategies.

Many School Wellness Award applicants during the past year hoped to purchase water bottle fillers to support water consumption by staff and students. This is just one of the strategies in the CDC toolkit, [Increasing Drinking Water Access in Schools](#).

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