



Department of Health  
Agency of Human Services



## Health Department to Award \$1.5 Million in Community Grants to Prevent Chronic Illness

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BURLINGTON – The Vermont Department of Health will award \$1.5 million in grants over three years to 18 community organizations around the state. The grants will be used to support smoke-free parks and housing, safe places to be physically active, better access to healthy foods, and programs to prevent alcohol and drug abuse.

“These grants will consolidate and strengthen public health efforts to prevent the major causes of chronic disease: smoking, overweight and physical inactivity, and alcohol and drug abuse,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD.

The **Rutland Area Prevention Coalition**, which will receive \$140,000 next year, and the **Winooski Coalition for a Safe and Peaceful Community**, which will receive \$99,712, are two organizations that are working to coordinate local efforts to make their communities healthier.

Rutland’s approach has been to combine the initiatives of community organizations such as the **Regional Planning Commission** and the **Rutland Area Physical Activity Coalition** to increase opportunities to exercise. The **Rutland Area Farm and Food Link**, also known as RAFFL, is a group dedicated to expand access to locally produced foods.

“RAFFL works with local farms and uses those harvested crops that maybe would have gone to waste. Volunteers go out and glean the harvest,” said Tina Coltey, executive director at Rutland Community Programs. “We want healthier foods to become the norm here, rather than having people reach for a lower cost, lower nutrition food item.”

The Winooski Coalition has worked with 13 young interns during the past two years to educate middle and high school students about the dangers of second-hand smoke using social media.

“We find students who are competent and interested in doing the work,” said Kate Nugent of the Winooski Coalition. “There is such a positive sense of momentum here, and there are so many great people working in the city and the schools right now.”

The Rutland coalition is also implementing a self-assessment and education tool called e-CHECKUP for students at local colleges. The Winooski coalition will also be working to enhance restrictions on alcohol advertising and promotion in the community.

For a full list of the grant recipients visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/local/grants>

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