



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Health Dept. Launches 3 > 4 > 50 Vermont to Reverse Epidemic of Chronic Disease



News Release: May 27, 2016

Media Contact:

Vermont Department of Health
Communication Office
802-863-7281

HealthVermont.gov/3-4-50 shows how small changes can make a big difference



WATERBURY, VT – Vermonters are more likely to die from preventable chronic diseases than from all other causes of death combined. To reverse this epidemic, Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD today launched a new statewide initiative called 3- 4-50.

3-4-50 signifies the fact that three behaviors – lack of physical activity, poor diet and tobacco use – contribute to four chronic diseases – cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and lung disease – resulting in more than 50 percent of all deaths.

Standing with leaders from around the state representing business, health care, schools and municipalities, Dr. Chen called for action, saying the simplest changes can often have the greatest impact.

"As humans, our actions are not entirely based on our own free choice, but are influenced by our education, income, cultural norms and expectations, and how easy or how hard it is to make healthy choices in our daily lives," said Dr. Chen. "And our environment is very often stacked against us. 3-4-50 is our call to action to intentionally make changes in our workplaces, businesses, schools and communities to make the healthy choice the more attractive and convenient choice."

Vermont's experience with tobacco control is proof. Policies that limit exposure to secondhand smoke, restrictions on tobacco advertising, moving cigarettes behind the counter, and raising the cigarette tax have added up to an environment that favors not smoking, and far fewer Vermonters who choose to smoke.

To support the cause of 3-4-50 by giving Vermonters the information and resources they need to take action, the Health Department has launched a new website at www.healthvermont.gov/3-4-50. The site includes statewide data and information on how chronic disease disproportionately affects different groups of Vermonters, toolkits, guidance, tip sheets and success stories.

Four leaders at the gathering today spoke in support of 3-4-50, and told of actions already underway: Don George, president and CEO of Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Vermont; Jonathan Billings, VP for planning and community relations at Northwestern Medical Center; Ken Page, executive director of the Vermont Principals' Association; and Seth Jensen, senior planner at the Lamoille County Planning Commission.

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Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
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