

Family Activity and Nutrition Task Force

Health Eating Active Living-Community Health Initiative

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On February 1, 2006, the Family Activity and Nutrition Task Force received a five-year, \$1.5 million grant award from Kaiser Permanente to implement a Healthy Eating Active Living-Community Health Initiative in South Park and Southwest Santa Rosa.

Healthy Eating, Active Living is a Kaiser Permanente Community Health Initiative (HEAL-CHI) designed to reduce the incidence of obesity and improve the health of community members. The goal of the Healthy Eating Active Living-Community Health Initiative (HEAL) is to empower communities with the capacity to support healthy eating and active living through sustainable policy and environmental change across four sectors – schools, workforce, healthcare and neighborhoods.

This five-year, prevention-oriented initiative seeks to create conditions that make it easier for community members to eat healthy foods and to be physically active. In this way, the growing trend of overweight and obesity, and the rise in preventable diseases such as diabetes and heart disease can be reversed.

Background

According to the California Department of Health Services (DHS), poor diet and lack of activity are the second leading causes of death and disability, resulting in nearly 30,000 deaths each year in California. DHS statistics also indicate that the prevalence of overweight children in California has increased from 38 percent in 1984 to 57 percent in 2003.

With obesity comes associated health risks, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis-related disabilities, sleep disorders, some cancers, depression, and other mental health problems. Root causes of the obesity epidemic include increased access to low-cost high calorie foods, as well as environmental surroundings that contribute to physical inactivity. Change at multiple levels, including individual behavior, public policy and the physical and social environment, along with access to appropriate medical care, will be needed to reverse this epidemic.

Program Overview

HEAL-CHI seeks to significantly and measurably improve the health and well being of communities utilizing behavioral, public policy and environmental change strategies that will enhance or create access to affordable, healthy foods, physical activity, and healthy lifestyle choices.

The HEAL-CHI approach will:

- ◆ Involve four sectors within the community: residents, worksites, schools/after-school, and health care in a nine-month planning process that will result in the creation of a Community Action Plan for Southwest and South Park
- ◆ Focus on sustainable policy and environmental changes
- ◆ Empower community members to drive changes in their own physical and social environments and/or advocate for policies that promote healthy eating and active living
- ◆ Focus on efforts that reduce racial and ethnic health disparities associated with poor nutrition and inactivity

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The FANTF HEAL initiative will be conducted in two phases over five years. The first phase of the project will include a nine-month planning process (February-October, 2006) followed by four years of implementation and evaluation activities.

During the planning period, FANTF members, Health Department and Kaiser staff, and local residents, school and business representatives within the project area will identify opportunities that will promote long-term changes in school and community environments to support healthy eating and active lifestyles. The outcome of the planning phase will be the development of a comprehensive Community Action Plan. The Community Action Plan will describe the specific strategies to be implemented during phase two. Upon successful completion of the planning process and a Community Action Plan, FANTF will receive an annual award of up to \$400,000 for four years to implement the Plan in the project area.