

Lorain County

Putting Wellness at the Top of the Agenda

Summary

The Coordinated School Health (CSH) Workshop Series provides professional development for teachers, administrators, and other school employees committed to improving the health, academic success, and well-being of students. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) CSH process is used to guide schools in the development of wellness initiatives, aimed at addressing the connection between health and academic performance. Schools that invest staff time in attending the workshop series are able to move forward with school-specific wellness objectives more efficiently and effectively.

Challenge

The health of young people is strongly linked to their academic success. It is not reasonable or realistic to expect schools to know how to integrate health and academics on their own because schools' focus has been centered upon the academic component of educating their students. However, when focusing solely on academics, the needs of the whole child are not addressed. Schools cannot achieve their primary mission of preparing students to be productive citizens if students and staff are not healthy. Schools have direct contact with more than 95% of children ages 5–17 years, for about six hours a day, and for up to 13 years of their development. Education professionals want to help their students achieve their maximum potential but have not been provided with the tools to integrate wellness into the school day.

Solution

The CSH Workshop series has been a product of the CSH Coalition, conducted through the Lorain County General Health District (LCGHD) Creating Healthy Communities program to meet the local need for resources, networking and planning. The resources provided develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to increase the degree of importance placed on school health and support the sustainability of school-based wellness efforts. The workshop series fills a gap in professional development for schools at the local level regarding low-cost/no-cost, school-based environmental system changes. This workshop series has taken place for the past 13 years.

The LCGHD has invested in the CSH process because schools are community hubs that influence the next generation's lifestyle choices. Improving student health attributes to an increase in students' capacity to learn, reduction in absenteeism, and improvement in physical fitness and mental alertness.



Your Involvement is Key

Administrators:

Your staff can identify areas for improvement, learn about and use proven practices, solve problems, develop skills, and practice new school-based strategies by attending the Lorain County CSH Workshops.

Teachers & Parents:

Be a role model by practicing positive social interactions and health behaviors such as healthy eating, active living and living tobacco-free.



Results

Although Wellington Exempted Village Schools, Clearview Local School District and the Constellation Schools serve different populations with both rural and urban areas, socio-economic diversity, and disparities in terms of access to resources, each have received benefits by attending the annual workshop series.

- The Clearview School District increased sales of reimbursable school lunches by 32% as a result of eliminating all a-carte candy/snacks.
- Westwood Elementary in Wellington leveraged several funding sources to start a school garden and school-based community walking path.

- The tri-county Constellation Schools updated their mission statement and school improvement plans to include wellness.

All three schools have completed CDC's School Health Index and developed school health teams in at least one of the school buildings within their district. Ideas, resources and technical assistance for these initiatives were received through the CSH Workshop Series and the Lorain County CSH Coalition.

“Attending the Coordinated School Health Workshops provides me with the tools and resources to push the integration of health and academics with my school’s administration.”

- Kimberly Stanislo, RN, BSN, CPNP, Supervisor of Health Services at Constellation Schools & Member of Coordinated School Health Coalition

Future Directions

The Lorain County CSH Workshop series is just one component of a multi-faceted delivery system for professional development in Lorain County. The CSH coalition provides instructional materials, links to online courses and other resources through its website resource center as well as scholarships to attend state conferences.

In 2013, the Coalition will continue to conduct two workshops and will add an additional event designed to specifically support school food service staff. The continued professional

development to front-line staff within schools will create healthier learning environments for students who are being educated as the next generation of employees. The LCGHD CHC efforts will also facilitate four coalitions, five local workshops for schools, farmers’ markets, worksites and faith-based organizations and nine community-based physical activity, nutrition and tobacco-free environmental systems change initiatives.

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