

Public Health has helped add 25 of the additional 30 years of life we now experience – only five of those additional years are attributed to clinical medicine. ODH is dedicated to continuing to protect and improve the lives of Ohioans.

## Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant

### Obesity and Chronic Disease

#### Problem We Face



COSTING OHIO OVER  
**\$56 Billion**

Obesity and chronic disease are the most common causes of death and disability in Ohio, with an economic impact of approximately \$56.8 billion per year. <sup>1</sup>

Without significant changes in how we prevent and treat obesity and chronic disease:

- Almost half of all Ohioans will be obese by 2018.<sup>2</sup>
- Health care costs for Ohioans will quadruple by 2018.<sup>2</sup>
- Total economic costs associated with obesity and chronic disease in Ohio could increase by \$40 billion in just over 10 years.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Office of Healthy Ohio's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) Program is an example of an effective population-based health strategy to address obesity and chronic disease by mobilizing stakeholders at the county-level to create communities that support healthy living.

The financial savings of population-based, public health interventions can surpass that of traditional health care spending<sup>3</sup> and may be as high as \$6 returned for every \$1 spent.<sup>4</sup>

- The CHC program, active for more than 10 years, works in some of the most vulnerable communities in the state.
- CHC was awarded the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant 2010 Champion Award for Program Delivery from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- ODH funds 16 counties in Ohio to promote policy and system changes in schools, worksites, communities and health care settings to provide children and adults more opportunities to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and to prevent tobacco use and exposure.

In 2010, CHC counties adopted 65 policies and 227 environment and system changes, impacting almost 5 million high-need Ohioans, such as:

- 20 new workplace policies improved the food choices for more than 18,099 employees.
- 151 community gardens were established to provide affordable options for fresh fruits and vegetables in communities with limited access to grocery stores.
- 86 new Farmer's Markets were started in high-need communities to support Farm-To-Community initiatives and build a sustainable food system for low-income residents.
- 44 policy and/or systems changes were made to improve the way primary care physicians prevent and identify obesity in children, impacting over 100,000 consumers.
- 23 policies and 61 system changes were adopted by schools to improve nutritional choices and to increase physical activity for more than 230,000 students.
- 93 schools have adopted a 100% tobacco free campus.



## Prevention by Creating Healthy Communities

The Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant (PHHSBG) is critical for ODH to prevent obesity and chronic disease in high-need communities by addressing the environmental and systemic factors affecting the health of Ohioans, such as:

- **Lack of access to healthy foods at home and in the community**  
About a quarter of rural Ohioans live more than 10 miles from a store selling fresh fruits and vegetables.<sup>5</sup>
- **High availability of and exposure to inexpensive, unhealthy foods**  
Many Ohioans live in neighborhoods surrounded by fast food restaurants and corner stores selling low nutrient, inexpensive foods.
- **Lack of access to places for children to play and adults to be active**  
Only half of people in Ohio have parks or playgrounds, community centers, and sidewalks or walking paths available in their neighborhoods.<sup>6</sup>
- **Lack of access to healthy food and adequate physical activity in schools**  
Only about 25% of high school students in Ohio are physically active.<sup>6</sup>
- **Lack of ability to use active transportation to get to work or school**  
Ohio is one of only 13 states that does not have a transportation and travel policy to encourage active transportation to work and school.<sup>6</sup>



## Population Health to Reduce Obesity and Chronic Disease

Obesity is caused by the interactions between our genetics, behaviors, and the environments that impact health and health behavior where people live, learn, work and play. Experts agree that community-based population health is often more effective than individual interventions to improve health behavior to prevent obesity and chronic disease.<sup>7-11</sup>

Population health uses evidence-based public health strategies to address health behaviors with public-private partnerships working to transform communities through policy, system and environmental changes.

Through community-based population health strategies such as the Creating Healthy Communities Program, the PHHSBG helps ODH ensure all Ohioans have the opportunity to lead healthy lives.

For more information on the CHC program or other Office of Healthy Ohio initiatives, please visit our Web site at:

[www.healthyohioprogram.org](http://www.healthyohioprogram.org)

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