

Title V/Maternal and Child Health Success Story: October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

MCH Grantee (check box):

- Bismarck-Burleigh Public Health
- Fargo Cass Public Health
- Grand Forks Public Health Department
- North Dakota State University
- South East Education Cooperative

North Dakota Maternal and Child Health Priority Area (check box):

- Increase the rate of breastfeeding at 6 months
- Reduce overweight and obesity in children

In a sentence or two, describe the problem you were trying to solve or the reason why your intervention is needed.

Childhood obesity continues to be an issue at the state and national levels. North Dakota surveillance data has shown that children are not meeting the recommendations for vegetables, fruits, physical activity and other key lifestyle factors linked to healthy weight. Research has shown that overweight children are more likely to become overweight adults more prone to diabetes, heart disease, stroke, cancer and other chronic diseases.

In a brief paragraph, please share what you implemented and how it made a difference.

NDSU Extension seeks to improve the environment and processes that promote optimal health and nutrition of youth and families. Nutrition education, physical activity opportunities, and systemic or environmental changes address capacity gaps that exist in rural and western ND. Transformational education programs utilize evidence-based or practice informed curricula coupled with non-traditional delivery methods to allow for a broader and deeper reach into North Dakota communities. Five contractual workers received training to facilitate nutrition education programming in McKenzie, Morton, Stark, and Williams counties, reaching nearly 1,115 youth that otherwise would have gone unreached. The curricula integrate healthy lifestyle choices, family involvement, education, goal setting, and systemic or environmental changes to encourage behavior change.

To specifically address capacity challenges in Bismarck, the state's largest school district, On the Move was facilitated by all 4th grade teachers in the district. Previously, the school nurses delivered the program, as their workloads increased and school enrollments increased, teaching the curriculum was more of a challenge for the school nurses to get into all 4th grade classrooms to deliver the program effectively. The change in facilitator meant that the teachers could incorporate the lessons into their own class time with no need to make schedule changes, it also meant that the teacher could utilize more of the content in all areas of their teaching, which provides some overlap and application of content into other subjects.

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A training was provided to the school nurses to then train their respective 4th grade teachers. At the end of the school year, teachers and nurses were surveyed to determine the successes, challenges, and needs. Responses indicated that the curriculum was a bit cumbersome and confusing, especially if nutrition/health was new content for the teachers. Teachers also asked for more training on the curriculum and content. As a result, the curriculum was refreshed to streamline the lessons and make it all a bit more concise, while maintaining the fidelity of the program. A training for the refreshed curriculum is set for the new program year so 4th grade teachers have essential tools and skills to appropriately facilitate On the Move. In addition, some technology-based review sessions for children have been released to enhance learning.

Are there any specific NUMBERS or OUTCOMES you can share as a result of your work?

Post-surveys were used with 885 4th grade students, who tracked their behavior while participating in the five-week “On the Move” classroom programming in McKenzie, Morton, Stark, and Williams counties. According to the results, about 60% drank more water, 52% drank less soda, 44% chose healthier snacks, 43% increased their amount of physical activity, and 43% increased the amount of fruits and vegetables they ate. Overall, 66% met their health goals. About 86% of parents participating in the post-survey read the newsletters, and 37% of parents reported increasing the amount of vegetables their family consumed. The teens leading efforts in the On the Move afterschool programs and camping programs became part of a statewide data collection process. Overall, the teen leaders reported that they had leadership opportunities in health education (85%), learned why it is important to eat a healthy diet (84%), paid attention to sugary drinks they consumed (82%) and were able to teach others what they learned about nutrition (79%).

Were there any “AHA” or “lightbulb” moments you can share?

Online modules for individual training are not as ideal as in-person training. Efforts to facilitate training during an all-staff day for all 4th grade teachers would be ideal; however, a training for On the Move is not as high of a priority to the District, making it difficult to get on a schedule. An online, live training is scheduled for next program year to meet some of the training needs.

Are there any “quotes” from anyone benefitting from this that you can share?

From teachers: “Keep offering it! The kids thoroughly enjoyed it and it checked off so many of our health standards.”

“It was nice to be flexible within the classroom since I was teaching it – didn’t have to schedule time for someone else to come.”

Is there anything else you want to share?

As it was the first year delivering On the Move with a new cadre of instructors, it has affirmed our thoughts about the need for sufficient and effective training in a variety of offerings.