



Virginia Department of Health – Obesity Prevention Efforts

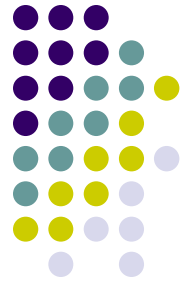
Presentation to HJR 637 Joint Subcommittee Studying Childhood Obesity in Virginia’s Public Schools

Joseph Hilbert

Executive Advisor to the State Health Commissioner

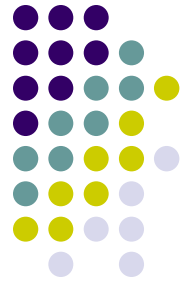
July 11, 2007

Childhood Obesity – Why Do We Care?



- **Major risk factor for the development of debilitating and costly chronic illnesses such as diabetes and heart disease.**
- **These diseases are very expensive to treat and impair the quality of life of the affected individuals.**
- **Obesity is to a significant extent a preventable condition**
- **Preventing obesity in children, through efforts such as improving their nutritional environment and increasing their physical activity levels, helps to protect public health and reduce overall health care expenditures over the long term.**
- **Healthier children perform better in school.**
- **School-based prevention efforts make it easier to reach large numbers of children**

VDH Performance Measure – Obesity Prevention



- **The percentage of adults in Virginia who are obese will decrease 15%**
- **Baseline – 24.1% as of CY05**
- **Target – Maximum of 20.5% (15% reduction) by end of FY09**
- **Data Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System**

VDH CHAMPION Initiative



- **Designed to help diverse stakeholders equip Virginia's communities with the tools they need to reduce obesity rates.**
- **During 2005, approximately 700 people participated in nine separate focus group/planning meetings**
 - **Provided feedback on community strategies and ideas for increasing physical activity and improving nutritional habits**
- **Four common themes for solutions: media intervention, nutrition education, community involvement, and public policy.**
- **VDH staff are evaluating existing programs and interventions that address these four themes, and that have demonstrated positive outcomes and that have been proven to be cost effective.**

VDH CHAMPION Initiative



- **VDH will present recommended programs to the Governor's state wide advisory committee which is expected to meet later this year**
 - This additional review will determine which initiatives will be included in the final CHAMPION Plan
- **CHAMPION website includes a comprehensive searchable database of obesity prevention programs in Virginia, and will continue to be updated.**
 - <http://www.vahealth.org/wic/champion.asp>
- **The final CHAMPION Report is expected to be released in the spring or summer of 2008**
 - Will be a five year plan of which specific programs should be implemented
- **Upon release of the final plan, VDH also hopes to provide funding opportunities on the community level to implement CHAMPION approved programs**

Chronic Disease Prevention Grants to Local Health Districts



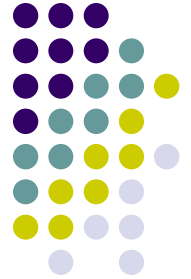
- **Create new or expanded chronic disease prevention and control capacity in the local health districts.**
- **Consistent with, and supportive of, the Board of Health Chronic Disease Initiative, as well as the prevention objectives of the Governor's Health Care Reform Commission.**
- **12 projects funded in FY07 – some are specific to obesity prevention**
- **Additional grants planned for FY08**

Roanoke City



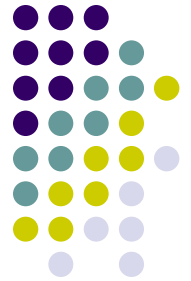
- **Childhood obesity prevention in Hurt Park section of the city**
 - 94% of school children on free or reduced price lunch
- **Focus on increasing physical activity, promoting healthy eating, and increasing family involvement in healthy lifestyles**
- **Roanoke City public schools, Roanoke City parks and recreation, Virginia Tech, and Carilion Health System are partners**

Cumberland Plateau



- **Target population – 250 children enrolled in Head Start in Dickenson and Tazewell counties, and their parents**
- **Instill healthy physical activity and eating habits at an early age**
- **Expansion to Buchanan and Russell counties in FY08**

Rappahannock Area



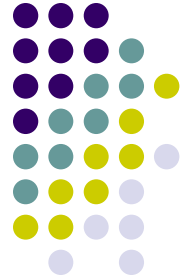
- **Implement Caroline County Wellness Campaign, which has already been designed by Caroline Health Advisory Commission following two years of work**
- **Goals: Reduce incidence of obesity, reduce tobacco use**
- **Curriculum: Healthy Weights for Healthy Kids; Families Eating Smart and Moving More**

Chesterfield



- ***Get L.E.A.N.!* (Lessons on Exercise, Activity and Nutrition)**
- **Obesity prevention in low income adult females**
- **Programs will be held at county libraries**
- **Recruitment will target residential areas that have a high minority or underserved population**

Coordinated School Health Program



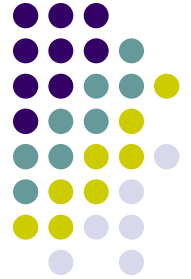
- **A coordinated school health program model consists of eight interactive components. These components are: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environment, health promotion for staff, and family/community involvement.**
- **The model involves families, health care workers, the media, religious organizations, community organizations that serve youth, and young people themselves.**
- **However, schools provide a critical facility in which many agencies might work together to maintain the well-being of young people.**

Coordinated School Health Program



- **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides funding to build state education and state health agency partnership and capacity to implement and coordinate school health programs across agencies and within schools.**
- **The expected outcome of this effort is to help schools reduce chronic disease risk factors, including tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity.**
- **23 states including NC, TN, WV, and KY currently receive CSHP funding**
- **VDH staff have discussed CSHP with DOE staff and offered guidance on ways to address this issue in Virginia. VDH is aware that a funding opportunity from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be emerging in the next year and that DOE has decided to apply. VDH anticipates providing assistance as requested.**

School Health Leadership Institute



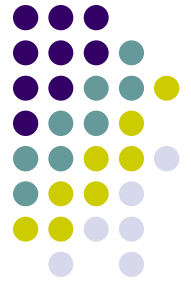
- **This is a two-year process of training school personnel regarding coordinated school health education. Teams from school divisions develop a work plan to support the implementation of a coordinated school health program. The training includes meetings, workshops, and phone conferences.**
- **The SHLI planning team is composed of representatives from DOE, VDH, American Cancer Society, and the Virginia Comprehensive Health Education Training and Resource Center. VDH staff have provided workshops and helped with planning. VDH has also provided financial support for the SHLI.**

Health for Success



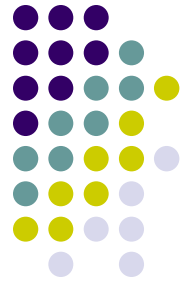
- **Four-day conference held annually at Longwood University. The training sessions are marketed to school and community personnel, school health advisory board members, college and university staff members, and parents interested in strengthening state and local health programs that address educational and developmental needs of children and adolescents.**
- **Designed to improve educators' knowledge, skills, and comfort level in delivering instruction related to health education, chronic disease prevention, Family Life Education, suicide prevention, and violence prevention. Additional health-related workshops are scheduled to help educators increase awareness about general health topics and strategies for implementing coordinated school health programs at the school division and building levels.**
- **VDH staff has provided workshops, helped with planning, and minimal financial support has been provided. This year's four-day session begins July 16.**

National Governors Association (NGA) Healthy Kids Grant



- **Virginia has been awarded a grant from the NGA in order to support implementation of collaborative programs activities designed to help prevent childhood obesity. DOE and VDH worked together to develop and submit the grant proposal on behalf of the Governor.**
- **DOE and VDH will use the grant funds to support the creation and implementation of plans, strategies, policies and practices at the local level to increase physical activity and promote healthy eating for children at highest risk of obesity, including those who live in low-income communities. Grant awards will be made to those localities that demonstrate their interest in and desire and ability to achieve specific results.**

NGA Healthy Kids Grant



- VDH and DOE will issue a “Request for Results” to qualifying local school divisions. The results sought by VDH and DOE are specific improvements in performance relative to the Governor’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard and to the Virginia Wellness Related Fitness Test.
- ***Governor’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Scorecard (Scorecard).*** The Scorecard was developed in 2005 as an incentive program intended to drive best practices and local policy change, enhance student health, and improve academic achievement. The Scorecard addresses best practices in physical education, nutrition education, standards for all foods and beverages sold or offered during the school day, and other activities designed to promote student wellness. Schools are encouraged to use this tool identifying existing policies and practices and to measure their progress towards meeting the nutrition and physical activity needs of students. The Scorecard can be accessed at <http://www.virginia.gov/doe/login.html>.

NGA Healthy Kids Grant



- ***Virginia Wellness-Related Fitness Test (VWRFT).*** To implement the physical fitness strand of the Health Education Standards of Learning, DOE has developed the VWRFT, which includes protocols for physical education teachers to use in testing their students' fitness. The five major components of the test are aerobic capacity, upper body strength and endurance, abdominal strength and endurance, flexibility, and body composition (i.e., body mass index).
- The grant funds will be used to provide support for the development and implementation of local plans, policies and practices necessary to achieve these results. VDH and DOE will also provide technical assistance to grant recipients.

NGA Healthy Kids Grant



- **Qualifying school divisions will be those that have at least one school meeting each of the following criteria:**
- **Previously submitted a Scorecard for a Governor's Award but did not achieve award status;**
- **At least 40% of their students receive free or reduced price lunch; and**
- **Located within a local health district that has an adult obesity rate higher than the State average of 25.1%.**
- **Proposals in response to the RFR must be submitted jointly by the local health district director and the superintendent of the local school division.**

Governor's Healthy Students Summit



- **Will be held on September 20 in Richmond. DOE and VDH are working together to plan and implement the summit. Nearly 400 representatives of local school divisions and local health departments are expected to attend.**
- **At the summit, participants will learn about recent collaborations between public education and public health for prevention of childhood obesity in various Virginia school divisions, and how those collaborative efforts can be replicated in other school divisions.**

Governor's Healthy Students Summit



- **Participants will also learn 1) how federally-required Local Wellness Policies can serve as an important tool to guide the development of childhood obesity prevention efforts at the local level; and 2) how the Governor's Scorecard for Nutrition and Physical Activity can serve as a significant motivator for the development of childhood obesity prevention efforts at the local level.**
- **Participants will begin to develop action plans for the prevention of childhood obesity in their respective localities.**

Conclusion



- **Obesity prevention requires a multi-faceted, sustained effort over the long term.**
- **Public health and public education are working together to prevent childhood obesity by promoting healthy eating and physical activity and seeking to instill these habits at an early age.**