

Partner Collaboration and Plan Implementaton

The Strategic Goals of The New Mexico Plan to Promote Healthier Weight

Partnerships and Resource Development:

Mobilize a network of community and statewide partners.

Policy:

Develop, implement and enhance policies that support healthful nutrition and physical activity.

Information:

Boost the use of media and educational activities.

Behavioral Management Skills and Social Support:

Increase the use of behavioral and social strategies among individuals and groups.

Evaluation, Surveillance and Research:

Contribute to building the evidence base of effective strategies to prevent and control obesity.

Partner Collaboration

The New Mexico Plan to Promote Healthier Weight is a tool to address obesity and related conditions in multiple settings. The NM Department of Health's Physical Activity & Nutrition Program for Healthier Weight (referred to here as the Healthier Weight Program) will promote the plan's use by supporting, guiding and encouraging the development of programs and activities that support the goals, objectives and strategies of the plan itself.

The New Mexico Healthier Weight Council

In order to promote collaboration among a broad range of partners, the New Mexico Healthier Weight Council will begin operating in the summer of 2006. Through this council, partners will begin engaging in organized cooperative efforts designed to facilitate integration of the plan's strategies with those of their own organizations. The main function of the council will be to oversee implementation of the plan through partner collaboration.

New relationships in particular will be sought in those plan settings where fewer partners have been identified and engaged, such as food systems and for-profit business and industry. Specific ways of partnership-building and communication with tribal entities will also be developed to maximize information and resource sharing, and to reach more Native American communities in the state. The development of a directory to identify resources and help all partners communicate more effectively is in progress.

Members of the council will include partners who participated in the plan's development and new partners committed to the plan's overall aim and strategic goals. The council's leadership will include at least one representative from each of the six settings described in the plan, the plan's evaluation team, and representatives from the Healthier Weight Program.

The council will provide a forum for partners to discuss relevant issues and learn from each other's experiences. Results of their activities will be included in the New Mexico Healthier Weight Plan Annual Progress Monitoring Report, a new system being developed for this purpose. Council members will present the new plan to policymakers at the state and local levels and work within each setting to determine where policies can impact obesity issues. They will also work to engage organizations in all areas to align their prevention, education and service delivery efforts with the state plan. Finally, the council will coordinate opportunities for partners to receive training on related topics, such as behavior management skills and evaluation of interventions.

Plan Implementation

In 2006, at least 40 partners statewide will conduct activities in alignment with the plan's objectives (see Appendix B for the 2006 Implementation Plan). Each of these partners has committed to carrying out a piece of the plan in this first year, and to providing both intervention results and 'lessons learned' to inform subsequent year's efforts.

The annual implementation plan will list the plan's intermediate and short term objectives and will identify supportive activities, target populations, key partners, and indicators to denote progress or completion of activities.

As the plan's steward, the Healthier Weight Program will work to identify, develop, pilot, and evaluate interventions, which subsequently may be replicated in other communities and modified as necessary to ensure cultural and regional appropriateness.

Pilot Intervention

Planning for a physical activity and nutrition pilot intervention is underway. The community of Grants, NM, and the target audience of adolescents and their families were selected based on state level data of populations at greatest risk. Grants is an ethnically diverse community located in the northwest part of the state. Grants sits in Cibola County, and is surrounded by Native American pueblos and Navajo communities. Forty percent of county residents are Native American, and 30% are Hispanic, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. This community has had fewer health promotion or obesity-related interventions compared to others in the northwest region. Early

discussions with key community members indicate a strong interest in and realistic capacity for piloting the intervention and possibly broadening it to reach other county residents at a later time.

Social marketing principles will be used to tailor this intervention to the needs and wants of Grants, ensuring an intervention that is useful, sustainable, provided in an accessible place, with pleasing and comprehensible promotion, and with enough value to result in high participation rates.

A partnership has been formed with local health and community groups to involve the population in developing the intervention. A statewide survey to be conducted in 2006 coupled with focus groups conducted with members of the populations of interest in Grants will provide the critical information to design an effective and meaningful intervention. Information will be sought about residents' knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs relating to nutrition and physical activity. Environmental factors and readiness to change behaviors also will be explored by these interviews. The intervention will be designed to include an environmental or policy component and address at least two levels of the socio-ecologic model (i.e., individual, interpersonal, organizational, community and society).

Updates to the Plan

The plan will be updated regularly. The Healthier Weight Council will be responsible for monitoring progress and reviewing strategic goals to ensure they reflect the best approaches to achieve the plan's outcomes. Decisions to alter the plan will be made based upon the experiences of partners and new evidence emerging in the scientific literature regarding effective and promising population-based approaches to prevent and control obesity and overweight. As a living document, the plan will be improved with each update. Subsequent annual implementation plans are expected to demonstrate greater collaboration and refined approaches to implement the most effective strategies for New Mexico. The stakeholders who contributed to the plan and the partners listed in the Acknowledgements and 2006 Implementation Plan are prepared to begin working together, and building relationships with new partners to achieve the outcomes outlined in this plan.