



PA Healthy Kids

Pennsylvania's Strategy for Balancing
Nutrition and Exercise in Kids

EDWARD G. RENDELL, GOVERNOR
2006 GOVERNOR'S CABINET ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

pennsylvania
STATE OF INDEPENDENCE



Table of Contents

Governor Rendell's Letter of Introduction	3
I. Pennsylvania's Challenge	4
II. Pennsylvania's Plan in Action	6
Healthy Families	7
Healthy Schools	8
Healthy Communities	10
Health Care	11
Healthy Futures	12
III. Success Stories: Seeing Results	13
HEALTH for Families	13
Team Nutrition	14
Keystone Color Me Healthy	15
Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	16
IV. Resource Guide:	18
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Resources	18
Community & Other Supports for Individual Choices	21
Linking Policy Statement	



Dear Pennsylvanians:

Pennsylvania is committed to ensuring the good health and well being of every child in the Commonwealth. In today's world, that means addressing the very important issue of childhood obesity.

According to a recent study by the Rand Corporation¹, treating obesity costs more than smoking or drinking and can cause disability at any age. Obesity in the U.S. has increased steadily over the last 20 years—with severe obesity hitting more people at an alarming rate. To stop these startling trends, we must teach Pennsylvania's children how to lead a balanced lifestyle.

State agencies, advocacy groups and public/private partners are using fun and innovative methods to educate and support families about the importance of eating right and exercising regularly.

We are tracking elementary school children's height and weight through our growth screening program so we can detect unhealthy developments sooner and provide information to help families treat the problem. For example, Keystone Healthy Zones recognizes and rewards schools for working to improve nutrition and physical activity. Pennsylvania is working with schools to ensure that the food available to students throughout the school day is healthy and nutritionally balanced.

Pennsylvania is supporting the location of supermarkets and fresh food retailers in our urban and rural communities. And, the Commonwealth's Safe Routes to School and Hometown Streets programs are improving the walking routes to and from local schools that are safe and also offer a built-in physical fitness routine for our kids.

Our Keystone Active Zone is creating partnerships between those in the recreation, health and education fields to promote lifetime exercise opportunities at parks and trails, which are great places for physical activity.

We have made great strides in our efforts to combat childhood obesity, but there is so much more to do.

As you read about the exciting and important activities we've developed, I invite you to consider how you can join us in these efforts. There are community resources listed here that will give you or your organization ideas about how to get involved. If each one of us does our part to improve the nutrition, health and physical activity of our youth today, we will be ensuring a healthier adult population for Pennsylvania tomorrow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ed Rendell".

Edward G. Rendell, Governor

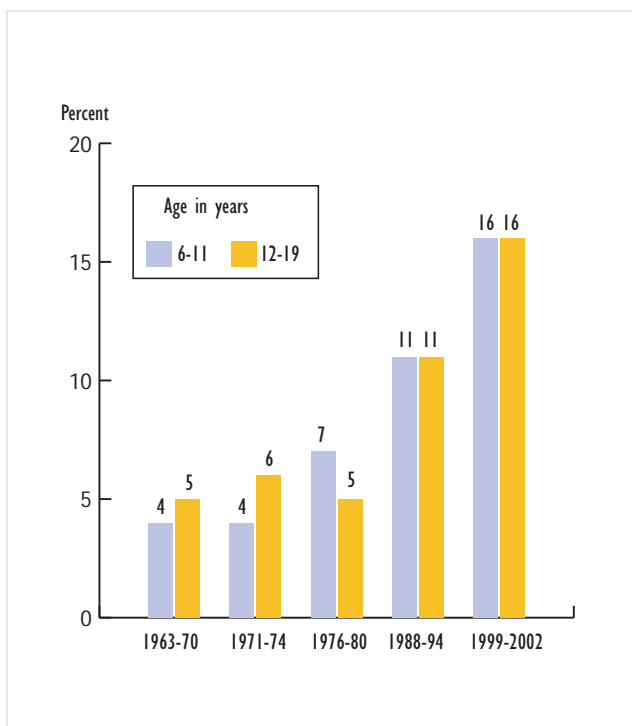
1. Rand Health. Obesity and Disability. The Shape of Things to Come. Research Highlights. Product of the RAND Corporation research brief series. RAND research briefs present policy-oriented summaries of individual published, peer-reviewed documents or of a body of published work.

I. Pennsylvania's Challenge

Pennsylvanians are facing one of the most complex, multi-faceted public health problems in recent years. The U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action notes that the "primary concern of overweight and obesity is one of health and not appearance." Truly, many of the consequences of childhood obesity, both for the individual and for society, are invisible. In the last few years, scores of data gathered throughout Pennsylvania and the U.S. have begun to unveil those invisible, and critical, consequences.

The statistics are staggering: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reports that 9 million children – 16 percent of U.S. children – are overweight¹. This is a burgeoning problem that is building steadily. In the last 30 years, the obesity rate for 2-5 year olds and 12-19 year olds has doubled. The obesity rate has tripled for children aged 6-11².

Percentage of Overweight Children and Adolescents: United States



Source: National Center for Health Statistics: Prevalence of Overweight Among Children and Adolescents 1999-2002.
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/publ/hestats/overwght99.htm>

The rate of overweight Pennsylvania children is 18 percent, which exceeds the national average³.

This is not only a childhood problem; overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults⁴. In 2001, only 40 percent of adults in Pennsylvania were considered at a healthy weight, far short of the Healthy People 2010 goal of 60 percent or higher⁵. In the same study, 20 percent of Pennsylvania adults were overweight. Incidence of obesity and overweight are usually measured by Body Mass Index (BMI.) Body Mass Index is a calculation using a person's height and weight, and the resulting number is considered a reliable indicator of whether a person's weight is in a healthy range. Adult BMIs are based on height and weight and categorized according to an absolute number (i.e. an adult BMI of 25-29 is considered overweight, and 30 or above is considered obese). Children's BMIs, however, are calculated by graphing height and weight on age and gender-specific growth charts. Children's BMIs are usually discussed in percentiles, which describes an individual child's BMI relative to children or the same age and gender.

Overweight and its risks and complications affect both urban and rural Pennsylvania. Results of a recent survey show that the percentage of Pennsylvania adults who are overweight is significantly higher than the statewide average⁶ in Philadelphia, Berks and Schuylkill counties.

The problem is exacerbated by demographic disparities. Twenty-seven percent of low-income 2-5 year olds in Pennsylvania are overweight, or are at risk for becoming overweight⁷, compared to the 18 percent statewide-average number of overweight children. Nationwide, up to 24 percent of African-American and Hispanic children are obese⁸. In Pennsylvania, 12 percent of the children enrolled in the WIC Program (Women, Infants and Children) were overweight in 2001⁹. These disparities continue into adulthood. In Pennsylvania, over time African-American women have a much higher prevalence of obesity (40 percent) than white women and African-American and white men (22, 26, and 25 percent respectively)¹⁰.



1. News Release: HHS Secretary Leavitt, NIH Director Tell Paernts: Together "We Can" Prevent Childhood Obesity." United States Department of Health and Human Services. June 1, 2005.
 2. Institute of Medicine. Childhood Obesity in the United States: Facts and Figures. Institute of Medicine Fact Sheet. September, 2004.
 3. Pennsylvania Department of Health. Pennsylvania Assessment of Overweight Children and Youth.
 4. Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity, as cited in Pennsylvania Assessment of Overweight Children and Youth.
 5. Pennsylvania Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan. 4.
 6. Pennsylvania Department of Health. Behavioral Risk Factors for Pennsylvania Adults: Regional Differences. <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwbp/view.asp?a=175&Q=201862>
 7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and Obesity: State-Based Programs: Pennsylvania. www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/state_programs/pennsylvania.htm.
 8. Institute of Medicine. Childhood Obesity in the United States: Facts and Figures. Institute of Medicine Fact Sheet. September, 2004.
 9. Pennsylvania Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan. 4.
 10. Pennsylvania Department of Health 1995-2005 BRFS.

**Percent of Pennsylvania Adults Who Are Obese
(BMI of 30 or more)**



95% confidence rating

These statistics tell only part of the story. Behind the numbers are silent consequences that put Pennsylvanians' lives in danger and put a serious strain on the health care system. Serious health problems associated with overweight and obesity include, but are not limited to: Type 2 diabetes, hypertension, orthopedic problems, emotional and social difficulties. All of these health problems put people at high risk for even more serious disease¹¹.

Approximately 60 percent of obese children in the US had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease; 25 percent had two or more risk factors¹². In the past, physicians considered Type 2 diabetes an adult affliction that was rare in children. Now, US children born in the year 2000 have a 30 percent (girls) or 40 percent (boys) lifetime risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. The risk is higher for minorities¹³. Childhood obesity also quickly increases the severity and prevalence of asthma¹⁴.

Nationwide, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 300,000 deaths a year may be attributable to obesity¹⁵. There were approximately 22,000 preventable cardiovascular disease-, cancer-, and stroke-related deaths in Pennsylvania related to poor diet and inactivity in 2000¹⁶.

Obesity's costs can also be measured in dollars. One study notes that obesity-associated annual hospital costs increased from \$35 million during 1979-1981 to \$127 million during 1997-1999¹⁷. Compared to overall costs for discharges, this represents an increase from 0.43 percent in 1979-1981 to 1.7 percent in 1997-1999¹⁸.

Behind these statistics lay a grim reality: less healthy and happy children and families, and growing costs for an already strained health care economy. These alarming trends forecast an unhealthy future for Pennsylvania, so we must act now to stymie them.

Most experts avoid establishing a single and direct causality. The problem is too intricate. Experts agree that a variety of social, behavioral and environmental factors contributed to the childhood obesity crisis, and that multi-faceted responses involving the state government as an important component are the most promising approaches. National foundations, state, local and federal agencies, local schools, health care providers, community organizations, businesses, community planners and advocacy groups have heeded the irrefutable call for change in Pennsylvania. Our best chance for good health and full lives for our children relies on our dedication to altering our public environment and private lives in holistic and systemic ways.

11. Institute of Medicine. *Childhood Obesity in the United States: Facts and Figures*. Institute of Medicine Fact Sheet. September, 2004.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

14. Shaheen et al. *Birth weight, BMI and Asthma in Young Adults*. *Thorax* 1999. 54:396-402.

15. United States Department of Health and Human Services. *Overweight and Obesity: Health Consequences*. www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity/calltoaction/fact_consequences.htm.

16. *Pennsylvania Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan*. 4.

17. Wang, Guijing and Dietz, William; *Economic Burden of Obesity in youths Ages 6-17 Years: 1979-1999*. *Pediatrics*, May 2002: 4 of 6.

18. *Ibid.*

II. Pennsylvania's Plan in Action

To counter increasing childhood obesity in the Commonwealth, families, neighborhoods, schools, governmental and non-governmental entities have recognized this serious problem and are pro-active in supporting our children so that they lead active, healthy lives. Pennsylvania's solutions successfully combine promoting healthier food and beverage options while encouraging walking or biking to school or in the community. Our solutions promote activity and exercise, increase knowledge and understanding, and encourage healthy eating.



Healthy Families - Families are a crucial link in teaching healthy behaviors beginning at birth. It is important that those behaviors involve good nutrition and physical activity as the cornerstone of preventing obesity in children and adolescents. Often, families are challenged both by time constraints and economic barriers to provide or prepare solid, balanced and nutritionally viable meals to their children. Pennsylvania programs work to provide nutritional outreach and resources to help children develop proper eating habits at home, keeping families healthier.



Healthy Schools - Both inside and outside of the classroom, schools present opportunities for students to learn healthy eating habits and the benefits of physical activity. A healthy school environment provides children with nutritional meal choices during their time at school; encourages them to participate in activities that provide physical benefit; and incorporates learning about science, nutrition, and health. Pennsylvania's programs illustrate a wide variety of approaches that schools have taken to improve student quality of life and the development of policy to change approaches to childhood nutrition and activity.



Healthy Communities - Communities provide essential opportunities to promote wellness. Healthy communities can foster and reinforce individual efforts to achieve and maintain good health. From food purchase programs that help families struggling to fill in nutritional gaps in their diets, to improving sidewalks and hiking trails for outdoor activity and enjoyment, these community programs are a collective effort to create a healthy environment for young people that provides opportunities for healthy decision-making.



Health Care - As childhood obesity rates continue to climb, its long-term impact will be realized in chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and stroke. In an effort to educate our state's physicians and healthcare providers in recognizing the signs and eminent problems that compound childhood obesity, Pennsylvania has established programs that teach children and their families how to live healthier, more productive lives and result in lower health care costs.



Healthy Futures - Stimulating the market for healthy foods and produce allows innovative approaches to provide businesses, food producers and farmers the resources needed to bring their products to market at lower costs. Certain populations and citizens living in urban areas often find limited access to fresh produce and foods of good nutritional value and when it is available very often it is expensive. Pennsylvania has programs that provide the means to bring fresh foods to market cost effectively and to the areas that need them the most.

Healthy Families

Families are a crucial link in teaching healthy behaviors at a young age. It is important that those behaviors involve a balance of physical activity and nutrition as the cornerstone of preventing obesity in children and adolescents. Often, families are challenged both by time constraints and economic barriers to provide solid, balanced and nutritionally viable meals to their children. The following programs work to provide nutritional outreach and resources to keep families healthy and to help children develop proper eating habits at home.

Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

Sponsor: Department of Agriculture

This commodity donation program is designed to help 1) balance market prices for agricultural producers through United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases of food products; and 2) supplement food available to those in need. Schools participating in the National School Lunch Programs, as well as regional food banks, receive and distribute the food available through TEFAP, reaching at least 2.7 million individuals annually.

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program (FMNP)

Sponsor: Department of Agriculture

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides fresh, unprepared, locally-grown fruits and vegetables to low-income pregnant women and children under the age of five (i.e. WIC recipients) and seniors, while helping to increase the awareness, use of, and sales at farmers' markets. There are more than 850 FMNP participating farmers at 469 farm stands and 156 farmers' markets in Pennsylvania. Approximately 250,000 individuals benefit from this program each year.

The rate of overweight Pennsylvania children is 18 percent, which exceeds the national average.

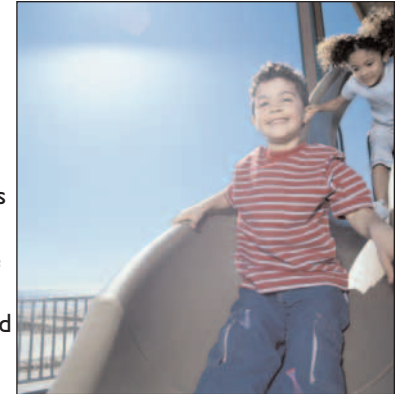
Simply Delicious...

Simply Nutritious

Sponsor: Department of Agriculture

The Simply Delicious . . . Simply Nutritious program is a promotional effort for Pennsylvania-grown produce in season. This initiative raises awareness of fruits and vegetables as a healthier alternative to other food

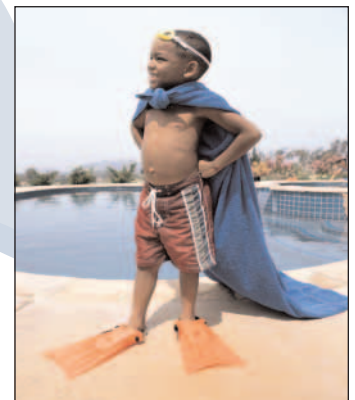
choices; it also raises awareness that buying produce locally means getting it not just at the peak of freshness and flavor, but at the height of its nutritional value, as well.



Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Sponsor: Department of Health

The Pennsylvania WIC program is committed to improving the health of eligible pregnant women, new mothers, and children by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and referrals to health and social programs during the critical stages of fetal and early childhood development. The WIC Program in Pennsylvania has an obesity prevention educational effort used throughout the state for families with children above the age of two to assure helpful, useable information and action to promote healthy child feeding practices. Over 240,000 women, infants and children benefit from the WIC program each month.



Healthy Schools

Both inside and outside of the classroom, schools present opportunities for students to learn about healthful eating habits and the benefits of physical activity. A healthy school environment provides children with nutritional meal choices during their time at school; encourages them to participate in activities that provide physical benefit; and incorporates learning about science, nutrition, and good health. Pennsylvania's programs illustrate a wide variety of



approaches that schools have taken to improve student quality of life and the development of policy to change approaches to childhood nutrition and activity.

Better Care, Better Health for our Youth

Sponsor: Department of Public Welfare

Youth attending the Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps are directly involved in developing and tasting new healthy menu items. After the menus have been re-developed, the youth development centers and youth forestry camps will begin focusing on reducing calorie levels to within recommended levels for the student population. This initiative is benefiting about 600 youth.

Body Mass Index (BMI) Screening

Sponsor: Department of Health

Due to the higher-than-national percentage of overweight children in the state, Pennsylvania revised its Growth Screening Program to require the BMI screening of all students in kindergarten through 4th grade in the 2005-06 school year; kindergarten through 8th grade in the 2006-07 school year; and through 12th grade in the 2007-08 school year. Each school district and charter school receives materials that provide guidance on properly measuring children's heights and weights, calculating and plotting BMI and notifying parents/guardians of the screening results.

Governor's Institute for Educators on Health, Safety and Physical Education

Sponsor: Department of Education

The Governor's Institutes for Educators offers professional development for teachers throughout Pennsylvania. The Governor's Institute on Health, Safety and Physical Education provides scholarships to 60 physical educators and 40 health

educators for this six-day, residential professional development institute, which provides an in-depth understanding of the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education, standards-based instruction, instructional practices, and classroom assessment. The institute currently focuses on teachers in elementary settings and uniquely pairs a focus on children's literacy and reading development with health education content.

Health Education Assessment Project

Sponsor: Department of Education

Each year, 75 teachers participate in intensive professional development that allows them to fully understand the National Health Education Standards (NHES), as well as the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education, and use these standards in teaching health education. This project is conducted in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Division of Adolescent and School Health and the Council of Chief State Schools Officers.

Healthy Beverage Toolkit

Sponsor: Department of Agriculture

The Healthy Beverage Toolkit shows how nutrition advocates convinced the City of Philadelphia and oversight officials to change the school district's beverage policy so only low-fat milk, 100-percent fruit juice or water could be offered. The toolkit is available on the Marketplace for the Mind Web site (see resource directory), where teachers and other school officials often turn for agriculturally-based curriculum that is indexed to the Department of Education's K-12 academic standards. The information in the kit is designed to help in developing a model healthy beverage policy tailored to a school district and community, with additional information on how to develop a Healthy Beverage Coalition.

Keystone Color Me Healthy

Sponsor: Departments of Public Welfare, Education, and Health

The Keystone Color Me Healthy Program provides early childhood programs with a research-based curriculum that helps to promote fruit and vegetable consumption and age-appropriate physical activity. Through a partnership with the Heinz Endowments, this program is being made available to early childhood programs in all Pennsylvania counties over the next two years. Nearly 1,200 programs participated in 2005-06 and reached approximately 13,000 preschool children from low-income families.

Keystone Healthy Zone

Sponsor: Department of Health and the Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity

The Keystone Healthy Zone (KHZ) recognizes and rewards schools

for making a commitment to improving policies and environments related to nutrition and physical activity. KHZ provides online toolkits and statewide satellite training to help schools make sustainable changes; organizes special “Enter the Zone” events throughout the year; and awards 100 mini-grants to schools that demonstrate a commitment to nutrition education and development of physical activity programs. All schools must complete an assessment of their nutrition, physical activity, and physical education policies and environments each year to enable the monitoring of trends. Surveys are administered after training, and an “Enter the Zone” event is held to evaluate participation and usefulness.

Safe Routes to School

Sponsor: Department of Transportation

This program improves the walking routes to and from K-12 schools. Managed by PennDOT, Safe Routes to School works in conjunction with school districts, local governments, and pedestrian and bicycle safety advocates. Funds are used for physical improvements that promote safe walking and bicycling passages to our schools, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes or trails and traffic diversion improvements, with 39 projects statewide in 2005 and another 36 for 2006.



School Local Team Nutrition and Local Wellness Program

Sponsor: Department of Education

Through its Team Nutrition and Local Wellness Program, the Pennsylvania Department of

Education is helping all local school districts develop sound practices that support the availability of healthy school nutrition plans, known as wellness policies. This work is supported through a partnership between the Department of Education and Project PA (itself a collaboration with Penn State University), the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA), and Pennsylvania Action for Healthy Kids, with additional support from other organizations.

The Department of Education and the school boards association developed a wellness policy template. Once the plans are received, the Department of Education will provide training support to local schools to assure implementation, and will work with districts to assure that specific steps are taken to support implementation. Web-based information, as well as a statewide Wellness Policy Summit, will support local school actions to best meet the nutritional needs of Pennsylvania’s schoolchildren. Working with Penn State University, the Pennsylvania Department of Education

has just completed a three-year research study with superintendents, food service directors, and other key stakeholders at the local school level to assess the impact and effectiveness of local school wellness policies.

Team Nutrition & Environmental Nutrition Training Program

Sponsor: Department of Education

To help local schools make healthy foods available for children, Pennsylvania’s school districts competed for resources to help them encourage children to eat fruits and vegetables, healthy beverages and make healthy food choices. A total of 15 school districts are participating and designated schools within the districts also participate in the school lunch program. Local teams with representatives from school food services, administration and faculty, as well as school nurses, parents and students oversee these projects. Among the innovative projects now underway are the School Market program that improves eating habits by selling fruit and vegetable products to students and teachers. In addition to the benefit of eating healthy, students develop management and entrepreneurial skills and they learn about issues that affect their health and the health of their communities. Students are encouraged to participate in pricing strategies, tracking sales, and determining the products that will be sold.

Healthy Communities

Communities provide essential opportunities to promote wellness. Healthy communities can foster and reinforce individual efforts to achieve and maintain health. From food purchase programs, to helping struggling families fill nutritional gaps in their diets, to the improvement of sidewalks and hiking trails for outdoor activity and enjoyment, a collective effort to create a healthy environment for young people fosters positive reinforcement and healthy decision-making.

Community Champion Center **Sponsor: Department of Health**

This online center enables citizens who are committed to supporting healthy eating and physical activity in local communities to get involved with statewide obesity prevention efforts. The center is located at the non-profit Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA) Web site. Check out the resources section on page 18 for the web link.

Keystone Active Zone **Sponsor: Departments of Conservation and Natural Resources and Health**

Keystone Active Zone (KAZ) promotes close-to-home parks and trails as great places for physical activity. KAZ encourages partnerships between health, education, and recreation professionals to increase opportunities for physical activity through improved environments and public awareness. Schools can create their own passport programs, tailored to their counties, to encourage students to remain active throughout their summer vacations. KAZ counties can apply to receive \$5,000 and \$2,000 mini-grants to implement the Keystone Active Zone (KAZ) campaigns. The winning counties submit plans for building countywide, multi sector teams that focus on increasing awareness of local parks and trails as great places for physical activity.

State Food Purchase Program **Sponsor: Department of Agriculture**

The State Food Purchase Program helps counties purchase wholesale or better-priced food they can use to reduce hunger among very-low-income children, adults and seniors. Food is available at food pantries, shelters for the homeless, soup kitchens and regional food banks feeding programs.

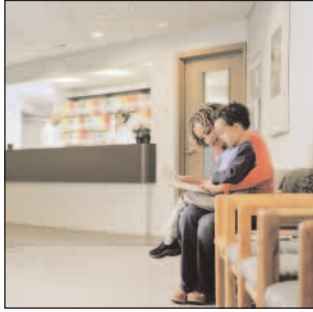
Youth Field Days **Sponsor: Pennsylvania Game Commission**

Youth field day provides children between the ages of 10 and 16 with the opportunity to learn about nature through a one-day, round-robin-style event. Youth field days encourage hands-on participation which sparks an interest in outdoor recreational pursuits, which can be developed by parents, grandparents or other friends or relatives long after the event concludes. Fifty to 60 field days are held each year, with up to 300 children participating in each event.



Health Care

As childhood obesity rates continue to climb, long-term effects will emerge as chronic health conditions like heart disease, diabetes and stroke. To help our physicians and health care providers recognize the signs and problems that compound childhood obesity, the following state programs have been established to provide support to the health care system.



Future positive outcomes will help to lower healthcare expenses and teach children and their families how to live healthier, more productive lives.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) Courses for Physicians

Sponsor: Department of Health

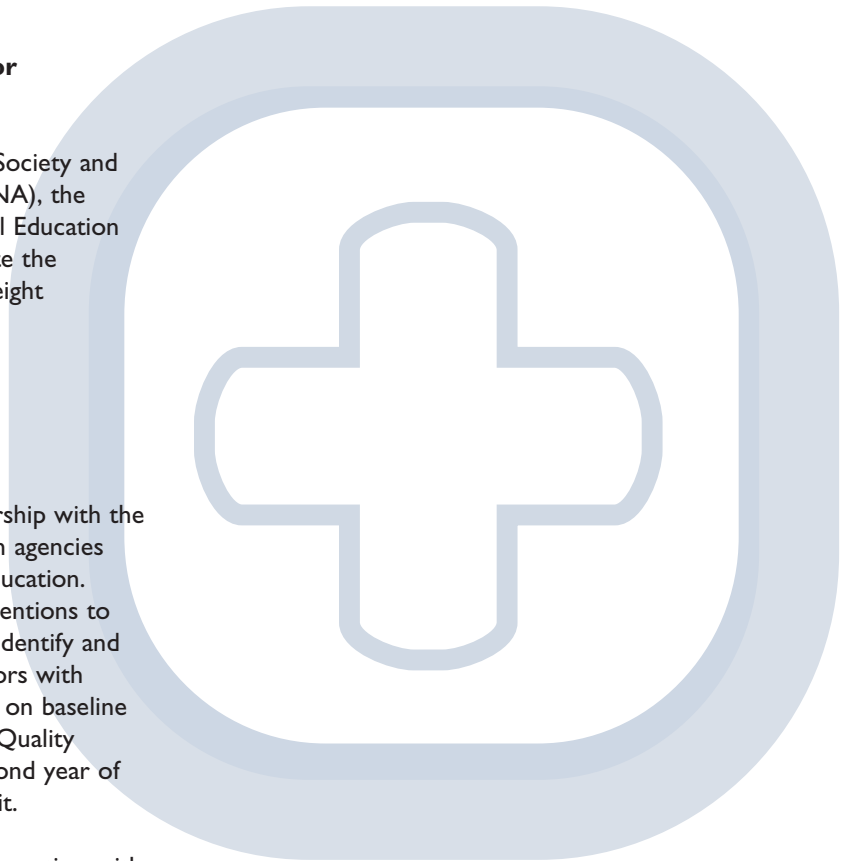
Working in Partnership with the Pennsylvania Medical Society and Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA), the Department of Health is developing Continuing Medical Education (CME) courses to teach physicians how to communicate the important message of nutrition, physical activity and weight management to children, adolescents and their families.

Developing Resources and Support for Medicaid Providers and Consumers

Sponsor: Department of Public Welfare

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) – in partnership with the Pennsylvania Medical Society and other Commonwealth agencies including the Departments of Health, Insurance, and Education. Medicaid and managed care plans, has developed interventions to increase the number of doctors who regularly screen, identify and treat overweight children. New tools to provide doctors with information and resources are now available that focus on baseline assessment of Body Mass Index (BMI) and Health Plan Quality Improvement activities. This year also marked the second year of the successful Childhood Obesity Best Practices Summit.

Two projects are targeting special populations. In collaboration with the Heinz Endowments, the Department of Public Welfare is working with its partner, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, on a pilot project involving a group of families receiving nutrition support and guidance. DPW is also working with Congreso de Latinos Unidos in Philadelphia on a project that targets the Latino community with media messages about healthy lifestyle choices.



Healthy Futures

Innovative approaches provide businesses, food producers and farmers the resources needed to bring their products to market at a lower cost. Special populations and citizens living in urban areas often find access to fresh produce and foods of nutritional value limited and costly. The following programs provide a catalyst to bring those products to market in cost effective manner.

First Industries Program

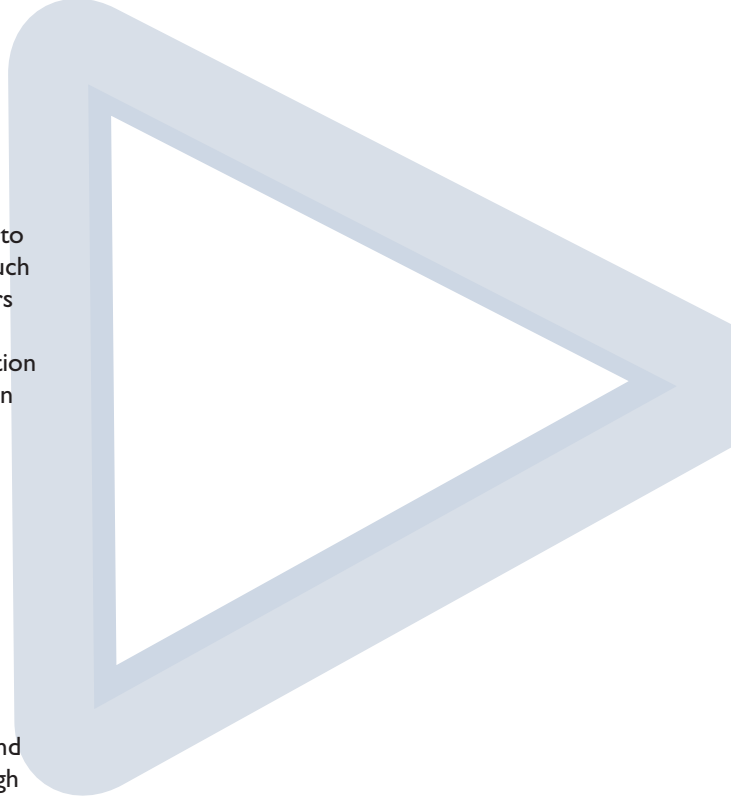
Sponsor: Department of Community and Economic Development

The agriculture component of the First Industries Program helps to promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as the sale of farm commodities at wholesale; support for Farmers Markets; and the sale of farm commodities at retail by urban and rural supermarkets located in underserved areas. Since its inception in 2005, six agriculture projects have been approved that fit within the whole farm commodities, Farmers Market, and farm commodities urban-rural supermarket components of First Industries.

Fresh Food Financing Initiative

Sponsor: Department of Community and Economic Development

The Fresh Food initiative supports the development of supermarkets and other fresh food retailers in urban and rural communities that lack adequate access to supermarkets in underserved areas in Pennsylvania through a program of grants and loans. The Reinvestment Fund, the implementing partner, through a public-private partnership will raise a minimum of \$60 million to leverage the state funds for a total program of \$80 million.



III. Success Stories: Seeing Results

Children and families living in rural, suburban and urban areas alike have seen benefits from Pennsylvania's broad-based approach to preventing childhood obesity. Programs are available to educate families about nutrition and activity as well as provide materials and venues to help them. Our work reaches children and families in their homes, schools, workplaces and communities. The following success stories describe how Pennsylvanians are making lifestyle changes as a result of four programs: HEALTH for Families: Healthy Eating & Activity for Lifetime Habits; TEAM NUTRITION: Environmental Nutrition Program; Keystone Color Me Healthy Program; and, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program.

HEALTH for Families: Healthy Eating & Activity for Lifetime Habits

HEALTH for Families: Healthy Eating & Activity for Lifetime Habits is a program developed by the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) as part of its Medical Assistance Managed Care Plan for children in southwestern Pennsylvania. The program is available to "UPMC for You"¹⁹ members with an overweight child between the ages of four and 10. Currently the program is supported through the Heinz Endowments. Nearly 20 families have participated in the pilot phase, with a goal of helping 40 families.

"The program seeks to teach these families healthier eating habits; to show parents and caregivers how to help their children make healthier food choices; and to help families limit the amount of time they spend watching television," said Linda Ewing, associate director, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Behavioral Medicine Program, UPMC.

Enrollees in the HEALTH for Families program receive two home visits from a nutritionist. During these visits, the family makes food and activity goals that they will agree to work towards over the next six months. In addition, a dietician joins the family for one shopping trip to a grocery store in their area and helps the family shop for healthy foods. Five weekly telephone calls are also included in the HEALTH for Families program. During these calls, staff members talk with the family about ways to make eating and activities healthier.

"Upon completion of the program, families receive a \$25 gift card redeemable at a grocery store in their area and up to \$90 in gift cards for saving weekly grocery store receipts," said Ewing.

Zevola Family:

In January 2006, a HEALTH for Families representative contacted Linda Zevola, her husband and three children for the first time. The Zevola family – Linda and her husband Andre, daughters Amanda, 15; Amber, 11; and son Jareth, 6 – was eager to accept the charge of eating healthier and becoming more active.

"In the first communication we had with our representative, she gave us pamphlets and other information for us to review as a family," said Linda Zevola. "The reading material introduced us to portion control, the stoplight program – which teaches kids how to quickly identify good foods and bad foods – and how to increase our activity level."

Through meetings and mailings every two weeks, the family continued to learn how to monitor their food intake and control their TV watching and other "screen time." As part of the HEALTH for Families program, the entire family met with a nutritionist at their local grocery store to learn how to choose the right foods.

"The help we received from the nutritionist was awesome," said Mrs. Zevola. "She went aisle by aisle with us and explained how to read each label. I was able to point out specific products that my family enjoyed and she showed us healthy alternatives."

During their time in the program, the Zevola family faced a transition. Linda, a nurse's aide at a local nursing home in South Park, was heading back to work for the first time in six years.

"The family recognized that my working would be a lifestyle change," said Mrs. Zevola. "Through the HEALTH for Families program, I was able to learn time management skills that allow me to provide healthy meals for my family even when I'm working 16 hour days. When I get home at midnight, I know how to make the right choices about what to eat."

The Zevola family successfully completed the program in June 2006, but the results of the six-month program are long lasting.

"I've noticed a change in my family. We all have more energy; the program has contributed to my children's development," said Mrs. Zevola. "They really were reading the pamphlets and listening to our dietician."

Many of those pamphlets are still hanging on the walls in the Zevola household as a constant reminder of the lifestyle change they've made.

Murray Family:

Veronica Murray, a Penn Hills mother of quadruplets, also benefited. Murray and her four, eight-year-old boys, Garrison, Benjamin, Jarrell and Nathan, were visited by a nutritionist who taught them how to make the right food choices.

"On her first visit, our nutritionist came to the house and weighed and measured everyone in the family," said Veronica Murray. "She then took us to the grocery store and began teaching us about

¹⁹ UPMC for You is the name of the UPMC Health Care plan that insures medical assistance recipients.

portion control and healthy eating.”

The nutritionist used the example of bagged apples to illustrate portion control. When purchasing apples individually, you are often buying larger apples, which may equal two servings.

“I had always thought that an apple was an apple,” said Mrs. Murray. “The nutritionist showed the whole family how we could be overeating and not even be aware of it”

Similar to the Zevola family, the Murray’s now have literature decorating their refrigerator that helps them decide what they will eat when they open the door. The four boys now make these decisions for themselves. They use the chart to monitor everything they eat – even their school lunches.

“It’s wonderful,” said Mrs. Murray. “I don’t have to tell them what to eat; they’re making the right decisions on their own. When they do stray, I ask them what our nutritionist would think about the decision they made and they usually go back and choose something healthier.”

Mrs. Murray, a recent gastric bypass surgery recipient, has used the program as well as instruction from her physician to monitor her portions as well.

In addition to eating a healthier, balanced diet, the boys have more energy. The family plans to ride bikes, run and swim this summer.

“This is a great program and a wonderful way to be proactive in the nation’s struggle with obesity,” said Veronica Murray. “I think it should be made available to everyone.”

TEAM NUTRITION: Environmental Nutrition Program

In 2004, 15 schools were selected by the Department of Education to receive \$6,000 grants for the purpose of developing programs to encourage students to eat fruits and vegetables, drink healthy beverages and make healthy food choices.

“Grant applicants had to show they had support from a variety of people in their school and community,” said Vonda Fekete, a Department of Education nutrition education supervisor. “Each grant application included a strategy team made up of school foodservice personnel, administration, faculty, school nurses, parents and students.”

Three members of the team participated in an Environmental Strategies workshop at Penn State University. Approved programs were implemented during the 2005-2006 school year.

Mount Carmel School District:

Kristen Millard, a high school teacher and recent Master’s degree graduate, submitted a grant application on behalf of the Mount Carmel School District.

“As a graduate student, I was required to write a grant,” said Ms. Millard. “After the application was approved, I was asked to oversee the program.”

The mini-grant was used to develop Project CHOICE (Creating Healthy Options Involving Children’s Eating). Project CHOICE included an array of opportunities to increase awareness and consumption of fruits and vegetables by students at Mount Carmel Elementary. The primary feature was a portable fruit market. Two times each month, the fruit cart would travel from classroom to classroom selling healthy snack options at a very low price.

“By selling the fruit at a discount, all the kids were able to take part in the program,” said Kristen Millard. “Many of them took large quantities of fruit home with them to share with their families.”

Enrollment at Mount Carmel Elementary School is 900, but the food market sold between 900 and 2,100 items each time it operated.

In addition to bringing the children healthy food, the cart also brought nutritional education materials. Coloring sheets and brochures were used to educate children about the importance of eating five fruits or vegetables each day.

“The impact of the program was more than we could imagine,” said Ms. Millard. “Each time, we took the cart around, we sold more fruit than the time before. Each month, we would arrange to purchase more fruit, and each time we sold out.”

In addition to the fruit cart, the Mount Carmel School District found other ways to bring nutrition education into the school day. At the beginning of the year, each wing of the school was assigned a fruit. Throughout the year, teachers incorporated the fruit into their lessons and activities.

“Each wing or grade level decorated their hallway with picture and wrote poetry about ‘their fruit’,” said Millard. “Instead of celebrating Fat Tuesday with doughnuts, students participated in Fruit Tuesday. Each student decorated masks in the shapes of fruit and pulled shoebox floats decorated with pictures



of fruit through the hallways in a Mardi Gras parade.”

During their holiday celebrations in December, students and teachers created Christmas tree ornaments using fruits and vegetables.

In April, the school held the “Great Fruit and Vegetable Challenge”. Students were taught the importance of eating five fruits and vegetables each day, and completed forms indicating days on which they reached this goal. These forms were deposited into a box from which names were drawn to win prizes.

Although the grant extended for only one year, the program was such a success that the school district plans to continue it in the coming year. It will use the money it earned on the fruit cart last year to stock up for the coming school year and the district expects students to remain excited about eating their fruits and vegetables.

Wayne Highlands School District:

At the Wayne Highlands School District in Honesdale, School Foodservice Director Karen Carlson, along with six teachers from the district’s Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) department, used an Environmental Nutrition Grant to create “Produce Express: Putting Honesdale’s Nutrition on Track.”

The Wayne Highland School District serves 3,300 students in a rural setting where nearly 25 percent of the county is farmland.

“The goals of our project were to not only educate our students about nutrition, but to reach out to our community as well,” said Karen Carlson. “We wanted to show residents the many ways they can prepare fruits and vegetables and we wanted to give our students an opportunity to try new things.”

Hospital dieticians and nutritionists and the food columnist for the local newspaper came to the school to share information with students in their FCS classes. Students learned new ways to prepare food. They also visited a local apple orchard and a tomato farm to learn how to select produce. Later, they brought their purchases back to the classroom to prepare fruit kabobs, fruit smoothies and sauces.

Since FCS instructions are only available in the middle and high schools, the strategies team got creative in order to reach students in elementary and preschool programs.

Using what they learned in FCS class, middle school students planned and oversaw nutrition fairs for preschool and kindergarten students several times throughout the year. At the fairs, middle school students shared their knowledge of food preparation and nutrition with younger kids.

“Watching the kids interact is amazing,” said Carlson. “Prior to doing this project, middle school students often prepared cakes or pies to share with the younger kids.”

Despite the higher cost to purchase nutritious foods, the district has promised to continue this practice.

“Wayne Highlands School District values nutrition and this opportunity to educate the students more than they value the financial bottom line,” said Ms. Carlson. “Through this program, we’ve changed the environment of the school.”

Keystone Color Me Healthy Program

Keystone Color Me Healthy is a fun, interactive education program that teaches low-income preschoolers about the importance of healthy eating and movement. The program targets low-income four- and five-year-olds with colors, music, imaginary trips, and activities that stimulate all the senses and can be integrated easily into existing lesson plans. The program is designed to work well in child care programs, Head Start, and family literacy programs. It started as a pilot program in Adams, Allegheny, Chester, Luzerne and Mercer counties and is now available in 34 counties due to a unique public-private partnerships involving the departments of Education, Health, Public Welfare and the Heinz Endowments. By the end of the 2006-07 school year, the program will be available statewide.

“During the study, parents received printed materials with recipes and information about the health benefits of the ingredients and free bags of fresh fruits and vegetables to try out the new recipes on their own,” said Jennifer Kenny, program evaluator, Pennsylvania Department of Health.

Pre- and post-tests of all the parents studied provided the group with data that allowed them to measure participation and incentives. Of the 237 parents participating in the study, almost all increased the servings of fruits and vegetables they ate each day. They cited cost, preparation time and lack of availability as their largest barriers to eating more fresh produce.

“Parents also cited the impact of the program on their children,” said Kenny. “One mother reported that her children were now asking for fruit as a snack.”

Over 80 percent of the parents saw a positive change in their children’s eating habits and 58 percent saw a positive change in attitudes towards physical activity. But the children said it best:

“I didn’t know I liked Asian Pears, but I love them!”

“My mom and me made vegetable soup. We cut up the carrots and

celery and potatoes and put them in.”

Acorns to Oaks School:

Keystone Color Me Healthy can be found at the Acorns to Oaks School in Scotrun. Kelly Fitzgerald uses the program to teach students and parents about the importance of nutrition and activity.

During the school’s Fitness and School Spirit Week, students concentrated on one specific color every day. They were asked to wear that color and the day’s lessons were then built around that color. At the end of the week, they brought their favorite color fruit for a fresh fruit salad.

“The kids were delighted to have the hands-on experience of preparing a fruit salad and discussing the different colors,” said Fitzgerald.

To promote physical activity, Fitzgerald covered the outside playground fence with butcher paper and the students drew themselves doing something physical.

“I used their ideas to create fun, physical activities throughout the program,” said Fitzgerald. “We held potato sack races, obstacle course challenges and fitness races.

“By the end of the program, students and parents were responding to the program. Soon, students were coming with nutritious lunches and talking to each other about playing at the park instead of playing video games. Many parents contacted me and requested activity ideas and healthy recipes.”

Pitcairn Family Support Center:

At the Pitcairn Family Support Center in Allegheny County, program director Charles Darvis has used Keystone Color Me Healthy to introduce nutrition and activity to the families he works with.

If you ask him how he uses the program, he simply responds: “It gets kids active.”

But the truth is, Mr. Darvis is doing more than getting kids active. His efforts and the Color Me Healthy program are making eating healthy and being active fun for the children they serve.

The center, which is based in a church, works with kids to promote growth in social, emotional and cognitive skills.

“I use the program to increase their imaginations as well,” said Charles Darvis. “When I go into a home we often pretend that we are hiking in the mountains. The kids tell me what they see as we hike through their house. After playing the imagination game a few

times, I let them choose our destination and it’s amazing to see how their imaginations have developed.”

The Family Support Center has been operational for five years and it now serves more than 150 families – and hundreds of children ages newborn to 5. Darvis and his staff have been using tools from Color Me Healthy for more than a year and appreciate the newsletter that accompanies the program.

“We create our own monthly newsletter that provides parents with information about resources in the community,” said Mr. Darvis. “We use the Color Me Healthy newsletter to provide parents with healthy snack ideas, activities and ideas to get their children to go outside.”

By bringing all the families together for ‘Family Fun Night’ each month, the Family Support Center promotes nutrition and activity lessons to parents as well.

“Each month, we play Color Me Healthy Bingo, which is a program developed by the Family Support Center to help kids identify fruits and vegetables by color,” said Charles Darvis. “If we ever hear from a child that they haven’t tried a specific fruit or vegetable, we make arrangements for a tasting.”

Mr. Darvis reports that parents are very receptive to the program and often tell him that their children are trying new foods and are more open minded about food choices than they were before.

Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program

The Farmers Market Nutrition Program works in conjunction with the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman, Infants and Children (WIC) to provide nutrition education at no cost to low-income, pregnant, breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding, post-partum women, and to infants and children up to 5 years of age, who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Specifically, the Farmers Market Nutrition Program provides vouchers redeemable at participating Pennsylvania farm markets to eligible WIC recipients. These vouchers are to be used to purchase produce grown in Pennsylvania. Besides providing WIC recipients with an additional benefit, the program expands the awareness of farmers’ markets.

“Last year, more than 134,000 people benefited from the Farmers Market Nutrition Program through WIC,” said Sandy Hopple, Farmers Market Nutrition Program assistant.

Crespo Family:

For Cintia Crespo and her three children, the Farmers Market

Nutrition Program provided them with healthier snack options as well as an opportunity to shop together.

“I realized early that there are some vegetables that my kids will refuse to eat,” said Ms. Crespo. “I started taking them to the Farmers Market with me and found that when I gave them a choice of which healthy foods they wanted, they were much more likely to eat it when we got home.”

Ms. Crespo and her three sons – Elijah, 10; Nehemias, 4; and Jeremiah, 2 – quickly got into the habit of eating strawberries, oranges, broccoli and celery.

“Nehemias just loves vegetables,” said Crespo. “He’s always willing to try something new. I’ve tried a few things to encourage them to eat more fruit, like fruit smoothies and apple crisp. But, for the most part, they are excited about eating healthy.”

Jobe Family:

Like the Crespo family, the Jobe Family has used the Farmers Market Program as a family outing. Nankiene Jobe and her two children, Audrey, 5, and Brandon, 2, go to the Farmers Market together.

“The kids enjoy choosing their own fruit and vegetables,” said Ms. Jobe. “Their favorites are green beans, broccoli and almost any kind of fruit. They enjoy going to the farmers market because they usually have something for the kids to do. They get their faces painted or they visit the petting zoo.”

The Jobe family has always valued the importance of eating their fruits and vegetables.

“Our family has always eaten healthy,” said Nankiene Jobe. “The kids are used to eating fish, rice and vegetables and they are very active and full of energy because of that.”

Mong Family:

Sandra Mong and her 5-year-old son, Joshua, also use the program and the opportunity it provides for them to do something together.

“I take him (Joshua) around the market and explain the different kinds of vegetables,” said Sandra Mong. “He usually picks corn, peaches or green beans.”

The Mong family has also always valued a well-balanced healthy meal and prior to using the Farmers Market Program purchased their fruits

and vegetables from the grocery store.

Volpe Family:

Sunday Volpe and her husband used the Farmers Market Program last year when their son, Nathaniel, was still an infant.

“I purchased squash, eggplant, corn, tomatoes and pumpkins for myself and my husband,” said Sandy Volpe. “It was a great way for us to try new things and we were able to lose some weight as a result.”

“I was thrilled to qualify for the program last year and this year I’m excited that Nathaniel will be ready to try some of those types of foods.”



IV. Resource Guide

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA RESOURCES

Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture

Emergency Food Assistance Program

Phone: (717) 787-2940

Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us/PAfooddistribution

The Emergency Food Assistance Program coordinates shipments of commodities to schools participating in the National School Lunch Program based on their rate of free and reduced-cost lunches, and to regional food banks for redistribution to local soup kitchens and food pantries.

Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

Phone: (717) 787-2940

Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us/PAfooddistribution

Agriculture's Farmer's Market Nutrition Program provides WIC-eligible families with four, \$5 vouchers redeemable at participating Pennsylvania farm markets for produce grown in Pennsylvania.

Healthy Beverage Toolkit

Phone: (717) 705-9512

Web: www.marketplaceforthemind.state.pa.us

The Food Trust's Healthy Beverage Toolkit captures, in a handy "how-to" format, how to change a school's beverage policy. The kit is available on the Department of Agriculture's Marketplace for the Mind Web site.

Simply Delicious...Simply Nutritious

Phone: (717) 787-6041

Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us/PAsimplydelicious

The Simply Delicious...Simply Nutritious program is designed to raise awareness about fruits and vegetables as healthy food alternatives.

State Food Purchase Program

Phone: (717) 787-2940

Web: www.agriculture.state.pa.us/PAfooddistribution

The State Food Purchase Program provides cash grants to counties for the purchase of food at wholesale, competitively bid prices or better.

Team Nutrition Project (Project PA)

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: nutrition.hhdev.psu.edu/projectpa

A collaboration of the Department of Agriculture and Department of Education that works to prevent childhood obesity. 15 demonstration projects involve examining menu changes and school meal participation when vending.

Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development

First Industries Program

Phone: 1-866-466-3972

Web: www.newpa.com

The program is administered by the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and provides planning grants, loans, and loan guarantees for projects relating to the development and enhancement of tourism and agriculture activities and companies within Pennsylvania.

Fresh Food Financing Initiative

Phone: 1-866-466-3972

Web: www.newpa.com

The Reinvestment Fund, a non-profit organization uses state funds to support and administer the Fresh Food Financing Initiative. The initiative supports the development of supermarkets and other fresh food retailers in urban and rural communities that lack adequate access to supermarkets in underserved areas in PA through a program of grants and loans.

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Keystone Active Zone

Phone: (717) 540-2633

Web: www.keystoneactivezone.com

Administered in partnership with Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity, the Keystone Active Zone promotes close-to-home parks and trails as great places for physical activity.

Pennsylvania Department of Education

Governor's Institute for Health, Safety and Physical Education

Phone: (717) 772-0067

Web: www.pde.state.pa.us/health_physed

The Governor's Institutes for Educators is a series of summer professional education programs sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education that are designed to ensure the creation of challenging learning environments; the Institute on Health, Safety and Education addresses these issues in the context of core academic subjects.

Health Education Assessment Project

Phone: (717) 772-0067

Web: www.pde.state.pa.us/health_physed

This project provides access to ready-to-use assessment

components for a comprehensive K-12 program.

Keystone Color Me Healthy

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: www.pde.state.pa.us
www.health.state.pa.us/keystonekids
www.dpw.state.pa.us

A joint effort of Health, Education, and Public Welfare, which is designed for four and five year olds to increase their awareness of healthy eating and physical activity through exposure to a variety of fruits, vegetables and physical activity.

Local Team Nutrition Grant

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: nutrition.hhdev.psu.edu/projectpa

The Team Nutrition Grant is a competitive federal grant from the United States Department of Agriculture available to state agencies that administer the National School Lunch/School Breakfast Program.

Local Wellness Grant

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: www.pde.state.pa.us/food_nutrition

The Local Wellness Grant supports local education agencies in successfully developing, adopting, implementing, maintaining and measuring implementation of local wellness policies.

Team Nutrition Grant – Environmental Nutrition Strategies Grant

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: nutrition.hhdev.psu.edu/projectpa

The Team Nutrition Grant- Environmental Nutrition Strategies Grant assists local schools in making healthy foods available for children. Pennsylvania's school districts compete for resources to assist them in encouraging children's consumption of fruits and vegetables and healthy beverages and encouraging "healthy" food choices.

Pennsylvania Game Commission

Youth Field Days

Phone: By region: Northwest (814) 432-3187; Northcentral (570) 398-4744; Northeast (570) 675-1143; Southwest (724) 238-9523; Southcentral (814) 643-1831; Southeast (610) 926-3136

Web: www.pgc.state.pa.us

Youth field days provide children between the ages of 10 and 16 with the opportunity to acquaint themselves with nature through a one-day, round-robin style event.



Pennsylvania Department of Health

Special Kids Network

Phone: 1-800-986-4550

Web: www.health.state.pa.us/skn

The Special Kids Network is a statewide system that connects children with special needs and their families with services in order to enrich their lives. In 2001, the Pennsylvania Department of Health created the PA Recreation and Leisure Line for Individuals with Disabilities to help locate accessible, inclusive recreational activities. This helpline functions as a statewide referral source for people of all ages and abilities.

Continuing Medical Education (CME) Courses for Physicians

Phone: (717) 540-2630

Web: www.panaonline.org

Working in partnership with the Pennsylvania Medical Society and the Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity, the Department of Health is developing CME courses to teach physicians how to communicate the message about nutrition and physical activity.

Community Champion Center

Phone: (717) 540-2630

Web: www.panaonline.org/connections

This online center enables citizens committed to supporting healthy eating and physical activity in local communities to get involved with statewide obesity prevention efforts.

Keystone Color Me Healthy

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: www.pde.state.pa.us
www.health.state.pa.us/keystonekids
www.dpw.state.pa.us

A joint effort of Health, Education, and Public Welfare, which is designed for four and five year olds to increase their awareness of healthy eating and physical activity through exposure to a variety of fruits, vegetables, and physical activity.

Keystone Healthy Zone

Phone: (717) 540-2630

Web: www.panaonline.org/programs/khz

Administered in partnership with Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity, the Keystone Healthy Zone recognizes and rewards schools for making a commitment to improving policies and environments related to nutrition and physical activity.

Keystone Active Zone

Phone: (717) 948-6315

Web: www.keystoneactivezone.com

Administered in partnership with Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity, the Keystone Active Zone promotes close-to-home parks and trails as great places for physical activity.

Women, Infants and Children

Phone: 1-800-942-9467

Web: www.pawic.com

The WIC program is committed to improving the health of eligible pregnant women, new mothers, and children by providing nutrition education, breastfeeding support, healthy foods, and referrals to health and social programs during the critical stages of fetal and early childhood development.

Department of Public Welfare**Better Care, Better Health for our Youth**

Phone: (717) 772-0759

Web: www.dpw.state.pa.us

The Youth Development Centers and Youth Forestry Camps are working on menu changes to help improve the nutritional quality of the meals at the Centers and Camps. Youth were involved in taste-testing healthy menu items. This initiative is benefiting about 600 youth.

Keystone Color Me Healthy

Phone: 1-800-331-0129, Ext. 33538

Web: www.pde.state.pa.uswww.health.state.pa.us/keystonekidswww.dpw.state.pa.us

A joint effort of Health, Education, and Public Welfare which is designed for four and five year olds to increase their awareness of healthy eating and physical activity through exposure to a variety of fruits, vegetables, and physical activity.

Developing Resources and Support for Medicaid Providers and Consumers

Phone: (717) 772-4646

Web: www.pamedsoc.org/obesity

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Medical Society, Medicaid

Managed Care Plans, and other Commonwealth agencies, such as the Departments of Health and Insurance, new interventions are increasing the number of doctors who regularly screen, identify and treat overweight children.

Pennsylvania Department of Transportation**Safe Routes to School**

Phone: (717) 787-2838

Web: www.dot.state.pa.us

PennDOT's Safe Routes to School program uses federal transportation funds to provide funding for infrastructure to improve the walking routes to and from K-12 schools.



COMMUNITY & OTHER SUPPORTS FOR INDIVIDUAL CHOICES

There are hundreds of organizations in Pennsylvania working to improve the odds of children living full, active, healthy lives. This section of the resource guide can help you access information and activities, free of charge, that can help you and your family make healthy choices. There are many resources not listed here that can help professionals in schools, workplaces, and the community design and implement programs that encourage and increase options for healthy living. Check out the Pennsylvania Advocates for Nutrition and Activity (PANA) at <http://www.panaonline.org/> for information about these resources in Pennsylvania and the U.S.

Federal Government

The federal government is a leader in the fight against childhood obesity and its complications and consequences. Several agencies offer unique and excellent programs for you to use in your school, community, and home.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity

Contact: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa

Web site targets parents, children, older individuals, pregnant women, and healthcare professionals. Links to tools and national campaigns including the VERB campaign, myPyramid.gov, We Can! Initiative, 5 a Day, BAM.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Division of School Health – Healthy Schools Healthy Youth!

Contact: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth

The Web site contains CDC statistics and reports and links to other CDC programs. The Web site also provides support on developing federally required local wellness policies.

Media-Smart Youth

Contact: www.nichd.nih.gov/msy

The Web site targets after-school care providers for young people 11 to 13 years old. An interactive after-school education program designed to teach kids about the complex media world around them, and how it can affect their health—especially in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

Max’s Magical Delivery DVD (Fit For Kids)

Contact: www.ahrq.gov/child/dvdobesity.htm

An interactive game to help teach parents and children 10 steps for healthy living, exercise and nutrition.

MyPyramid for Kids

Contact: www.fns.usda.gov/tn/kids-pyramid.html

The revised food pyramid to help parents, teachers, kids, individuals

with recommended food choices.

National Heart, Lung, Blood Institute

Contact: www.nhlbi.nih.gov

The Web site provides information about the National We Can! Campaign, and other obesity education initiatives.

National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Milk Matters

Contact: www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/milk.cfm

Targets health care providers, “tweens” and teens. Provides information for professionals and Web site for kids.

President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

Contact: www.fitness.gov

Web site targets individuals and organizations interested in starting physical activity programs. It also contains news about council activities, reports, resources, and press.

President’s Healthier US Initiative

Contact: www.healthierus.gov

Information includes the 2005 dietary guidelines, suggestions on physical activity, advice on preventative health practices.

Recreation.gov

Contact: www.recreation.gov

For individuals and groups seeking outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the US. The Web site includes state-by-state search function for a variety of recreation activities, include wildlife viewing, cycling, hiking, and water sports.

Small Steps

Contact: www.smallstep.gov

Web site targets children, adults and teens. Basic information on the prevalence and consequences of overweight and obesity, success stories, making healthier food choices, fitting in physical activity, and a listserv for e-mail tips.

Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity

Contact: www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/obesity

Resources for individuals, schools and communities. Outlines obesity-prevention strategies for schools, research institutions, parents, employers.

Team Nutrition

Contact: www.fns.usda.gov/tn

Supports child nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating

and physical activity.

U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service

Contact: www.ers.usda.gov

Individuals and policymakers can use reports and research on factors that influence Americans' diet and health, tools for monitoring the quality of a diet, and individual misperceptions about diet and weight status.

U.S. Department of Agriculture: Center for Nutrition Policy & Promotion

Contact: www.usda.gov/cnpp

The Web site defines and coordinates nutrition education policy within the U.S. Department of Agriculture and provides materials geared towards consumers, policymakers and professionals in health, education, industry and media.

VERB

Contact: www.verbnow.com

A CDC site for kids featuring active games and a playground-finder. Companion site for parents. Spanish available at www.nafs.org.

Ways to Enhance Children's Nutrition and Activity (We Can!)

Contact: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan

WE CAN! is a national program designed as a one-stop resource for parents and caregivers interested in practical tools to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight. Tips and fun activities focus on three critical behaviors: improved food choices, increased physical activity and reduced screen time.

Weight Control Information Network

Contact: win.niddk.nih.gov

Includes up-to-date, science-based information on weight control, obesity, physical activity and related nutritional issues, with information useful to the general public, health professionals, the media and Congress.

Health Care Organizations

Pennsylvania health care organizations have a major stake in the health of our children, and have decided to adopt childhood obesity as a charge to reach out to families to provide education and support on these issues through both traditional and innovative healthcare interventions

Medical Assistance Providers

The Pennsylvania Medical Assistance Program has resources and help for families of overweight children. Medical Assistance enrollees can contact their plan for information. Medical Assistance is a health

insurance program of the Department of Public Welfare.

- ACCESS Plus Helpline, 1-800-543-7633 (TTD/TTY 1-800-654-5984)
- Keystone Mercy Member Services, 1-800-521-6860 (TTD/TTY 1-800-684-5505)
- Health Partners Member Services, 1-800-553-0785 (TTD/TTY 1-877-454-8477)
- AmeriChoice Member Services, 1-800-321-4462 (TTD/TTY 1-800-654-5984)
- Gateway Health Plan Member Services, 1-800-392-1147 (TTD/TTY 1-800-654-5988)
- Unison Health Plan/MedPlus+ Member Services, 1-800-414-9025 (TTD/TTY 1-888-616-0021)
- AmeriHealth Mercy Plan Member Services, 1-888-991-7200 (TTD/TTY 1-888-987-5704)
- Gateway Health Plan Member Services, 1-800-392-1147 (TTD/TTY 1-800-654-5988)
- Unison Health Plan/MedPlus+ Member Services, 1-800-414-9025 (TTD/TTY 1-888-616-0021)
- UPMC Health Plan, Inc./UPMC for You Member Services, 1-800-286-4242 (TTD/TTY 1-800-361-2629)

Pennsylvania Medical Society

Contact: www.pamedsoc.org/obesity

This Web site targets health care professionals with tools and forms to help physicians determine obesity and overweight. Much of the information may help support patients in dealing with these health issues directly.

Higher Education

Higher education institutions throughout Pennsylvania house clinical or research departments focusing on exercise, obesity, nutrition, and weight management. Check out the Web site of the college or university closest to your area.

If you are considering a career that supports healthy lifestyles for people, you should explore the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. Opportunities include majors/concentrations in the following areas: Exercise Science, Health Science, Health and Physical Education, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Moving Activity and Lifetime Fitness, and Wellness and Sport Studies. Check out the Universities section at <http://www.passhe.edu> for more information on these opportunities within the PA State System of Higher Education.

Community Non-Governmental Organizations

Community organizations are the 'foot soldiers' in Pennsylvania's fight

to keep our children healthy. The community organizations featured that you and your family can use in your lifelong journey towards health and balance.

Action For Healthy Kids

Contact: www.actionforhealthykids.org

Works to improve nutrition and increase physical activity in schools. Provides resources for parents, educators and community volunteers. Includes alternative fund raising activities, guidance for parents, snack/vending and a “what’s working” section.

America On the Move

Contact: www.americaonthemove.org

Offers groups tools and support (some with cost) for achieving fitness and nutrition goals. Information for individuals on how to take 2,000 steps and burn 100 calories per day as part of a healthy lifestyle. Opportunity for state affiliates to join.

American Cancer Society

Contact: www.cancer.org

The Great American Eat Right Challenge offers interactive tools to help people learn more about daily ways to improve nutrition and fitness.

American Heart Association

Contact: www.heart.org

The Children and Youth section of the Web site offers information about AHA-sponsored exercise programs, and information about children’s nutrition and exercise needs to maintain heart health.

Center for Health and Health Care in Schools (CHHCS)

Contact: www.healthinschools.org/students

Established to strengthen the well-being of children and youth through effective health programs and health care services in schools. Provides a Web site for kids and teens that includes nutrition, physical activity and sports. Provides links to other sites and information on nutrition and physical activity.

Community Food Security Coalition

Contact: www.foodsecurity.org

The “handouts” area of the publications section of the Web site offers resources for individuals who wish to advocate for food security in their communities.

ECELS-Healthy Child Care PA

Contact: www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org

Web site geared towards child care providers and early childhood professionals; offers a list of helpful links with resources to reduce the risk of childhood obesity.

Food Trust

Contact: www.thefoodtrust.org

Offers resources for people and professionals (especially teachers) interested in increasing access to healthy foods.

KidsHealth

Contact: www.kidshealth.org

Offers parents, kids and teens frank, topical, detailed information about nutrition and exercise.

Kidnetic

Contact: www.kidnetic.com

Contains interactive games to challenge kids to move more and eat healthier.

Learn To Be Healthy.org

Contact: www.learntobehealthy.org

Site targets educators and school-age youth. Student section contains interactive games and Web quests and an educator’s section contains lesson plans.

National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Contact: www.naspeinfo.org

Includes professional resources but also resources that can be used by parents. Publishes a monthly fitness calendar, a coloring book page and physical activity puzzle page. Provides administrators and parents with “Tools for Observing Physical Education.”

Pennsylvania Dietetic Association

Contact: www.eatrightpa.org

Web site offers links to government and community resources, child nutrition professional locator, and child nutrition and weight fact sheets.

Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network

Contact: panen.psu.edu

The Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Network (PA NEN) promotes healthful food choices to low income Pennsylvanians of all ages, and the Web site promotes activities of member agencies that serve Pennsylvania low-income individuals.

Rails to Trails Conservancy

Contact: www.railtrails.org

The Web site links to www.traillink.com, which provides guides to finding trails in your local community. Users can search for trails with specific characteristics, including accessibility.

Shaping America’s Health: Association for Weight Management and Obesity Prevention

Contact: www.obesityprevention.org

Offers facts, news and research summaries for professionals and policy-makers.

The National Center on Physical Activity and Disability (NCPAD)

Contact: www.ncpad.org

An information center concerned with physical activity and disability. Explains the various disabilities and provides exercise guidelines for each disability.

Women’s Sports Foundation

Contact: www.womenssportsfoundation.org

Web site offers a guide for individuals on “Changing Your Fitness Mindset” and embracing physical fitness at any level.

YMCA “Activate America”

Contact: www.ymcaofpittsburgh.org

The YMCA of Pittsburgh is a site for the YMCA of America’s Activate America Initiative. The Web site describes the initiative and local partners.

Linking Policy Statement

The Commonwealth provides links to other governmental agencies in Pennsylvania and the federal government. We also provide links to Web sites of other organizations in order to provide you with certain information. A link does not constitute an endorsement of content, viewpoint, policies, products or services of that web site. Once you link to a web site not maintained by the Commonwealth, you are subject to the terms and conditions of that web site, including but not limited to its privacy policy.





EDWARD G. RENDELL, GOVERNOR
2006 GOVERNOR'S CABINET ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

