

Alliance for A Healthier Effingham County Accomplishments 2010

Background

St. Anthony's partnered with local agencies in 2005 to conduct a Community Health Assessment. The goal of the assessment was to determine the physical, emotional, and safety needs of Effingham County residents and develop strategies to address the identified needs. A year after the initial study, the Checkup 2005 steering committee and the members of the Healthcare Spoke of Vision 2020 merged to form the Alliance for a Healthier Effingham County. This merger was completed as a result of shared health priorities for Effingham residents. Additional information about the Alliance can be found under the Health Resources section of St. Anthony's website, www.stanthonyshospital.org.

Identified Priority: Exercise, Nutrition, and Healthy Lifestyles

Accomplishments

TREC (Trail Recreation Effingham County) [2005 – 2010]

Alliance members continue to promote the importance of daily physical activity and encourage support of TREC (Trail Recreation Effingham County) which will establish walking trails for the health and enjoyment of all residents. This initiative is moving forward with the first two phases of construction completed. A recent financial award from the City of Effingham has enabled Phase III of the project to begin ahead of schedule.

Summer Lunch Program [2006 – 2010]

Area children receive free lunches during the summer months of June and July as a result of the development of the Summer Lunch for Kids program. Since the program began in 2006, over 5,700 children have received a free lunch and had the opportunity to participate in educational programs and activities provided by several local organizations. In 2010, the continuation of the program was threatened by a drastic reduction in funds due to the State's budget crisis. However, through the support and encouragement of St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, Unit #40 received \$5,000 in grant funds from the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis Foundation to continue the program. The Summer Lunch Program was offered from June 1 – July 16, Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at West Side School.

Plant A Row Initiative [2009 - 2010]

This initiative encourages community members to plant an extra row of produce in their gardens that they will then donate to area food banks for those in need. A kick-off event was held in April at the U of I Extension Center.

Identified Priority: Affordable Healthcare for Uninsured and Underinsured Patients

Accomplishments

Illinois Breast & Cervical Cancer Program Awareness [2008]

According to information taken from Checkup 2005, female breast cancer was one of the four leading causes of cancer deaths in Effingham County. To significantly increase awareness of the need for early cancer screenings and the programs available to uninsured women in our area, St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital, in partnership with the American Cancer Society and the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP), initiated an awareness/promotion campaign focusing on women's wellness and the availability of the IBCCP.

This community outreach initiative was tremendously successful with nearly 800 new women enrolling in the program (compared to less than 300 previously). Two dozen of these women were diagnosed with cancerous or pre-cancerous conditions. This program's success is due in part to the promotional support provided by St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital. Through direct mail, advertising and promotion of the program at various community events, awareness of the program was increased which helped to increase the number of women using the program, and ultimately saving lives.

The Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP) offers free mammograms, breast exams, pelvic exams and Pap tests to women between the ages of 35 and 64 who cannot afford these important cancer screenings. The IBCCP is available to women in every county in Illinois. Screening and diagnostic services are coordinated through a number of lead agencies. Locally, the East Central Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (ECIBCCSP) serves a 10-county area, including: Coles, Clark, Crawford, Cumberland, Douglas, Edgar, Effingham, Jasper, Moultrie and Shelby counties.

Identified Priority: Access to Dental Care

Effingham Health Center [2010]

Providing affordable and accessible care for uninsured and Medicaid patients has been a goal of St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital for several years. The establishment of the Effingham Health Center, a federally qualified health clinic allowed Effingham to address this need. In April, the Effingham Health Center moved to a new location to allow for expansion of needed services. The Effingham Health Center is now located at the Effingham Medical Center at 900 West Temple Avenue.

Alliance members identified access to dental care as a new priority during a goal-setting meeting early in 2010. Ongoing communication between the Alliance members and the administration of the Health Center, coupled with additional space, led to the offering of dental services for children and young adults up to age 20. In July, the Effingham Health Center began providing preventive care, general cleaning, fillings, extractions, x-rays, and school dental exams Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Identified Priority: Make Effingham an Occupational Destination for Healthcare Professionals

Accomplishments [to date]

- St. Anthony's continues to secure opportunities for healthcare professionals to receive their clinical education and experience in a hospital setting through its affiliation with over 20 colleges.
- The number of students enrolled in the high school based Health Occupations Program has steadily increased since the program began in 1992. Over 725 students have participated in this course which allows them to get real healthcare experience in a hospital or other health care provider setting of their choice. St. Anthony's has worked with area high schools and colleges to increase the number of classes offered to accommodate the number of students interested in adding this program to their high school schedule.
- St. Anthony's awarded 15 scholarships to high school graduates, returning students, and hospital colleagues interested in a variety of health care fields.

Identified Priority: Mental Health Access/Awareness for Youth & Families

Accomplishments

Heartland Human Services Hires Psychiatrist - [2010]

The Checkup 2005 health assessment identified the need to recruit a psychiatrist specializing in child and adolescent behavioral and mental health issues. Success in meeting this need has been slow mainly due to the difficulty in finding psychiatrists for rural areas and issues of reimbursement. The ongoing relationship between Alliance members and Heartland Human Services recently led to the successful recruitment of Dr. Manny Bearley a career psychiatrist who has specialized in child and adolescent psychiatry. Dr. Bearley began seeing patients in June and was treated to a social at St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital where he met members of St. Anthony's administration and medical staff.

Mentoring Program at Effingham Unit #40 [2010]

Alliance members recently became aware of the impact that Effingham Unit #40's mentoring program has on the students, parents, and mentors who participate in the program. The program's purpose is to find adult role models (mentors) for children in grades three through high school who are identified as needing additional support due to behavioral, social, or academic issues. Currently, 125 children and mentors participate in the program which is offered at five locations.

Recent budget cuts threatened the continuation of the Mentoring Program; however, support and encouragement through the St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital assisted Unit #40 in receiving \$9,500 from the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis Foundation. Ongoing

fundraising efforts by mentors of the program ensure that this program continues to help children and families in need.

Expansion of Alliance Membership

The Alliance recently expanded membership to gain the expertise of new representatives in order to more effectively address re-defined health priorities and goals. New members include:

Linda Brissenden	Gr8Fitness
Jeff Bloemker	Heartland Human Services
Connie Horn	Effingham Health Center
Charles Horin, D.D.S.	Self employed, dentist
Kim Varner	Effingham Unit #40

Please contact Dan Woods, Chairperson of the Alliance, at 217-347-1495 if you are interested in becoming a member of this group.

Future Priorities/ Goals

1. Exercise, nutrition, and healthy lifestyles.

Focus on:

- Reducing obesity of youth and adults.
- Continue/expand summer lunch program.
- Support/create opportunities for improvement of health and fitness through daily physical activity with specific support of TREC (Trails Recreation Effingham County), Effingham Community Sports Complex, and YMCA programs.

2. Affordable healthcare.

Focus on:

- Assured access to nutritious meals of area youth (as well as seniors).
- Provide access to application assistance to available programs and services.
- Evaluate what transportation is available and what is still needed.
- Identify homelessness problems and needs.

3. Suicide and depression.

4. Drug and alcohol prevention/awareness for youth and families.

5. Mental health access/awareness for youth and families.

6. Dental care access.