



Building Healthy Communities:

Engaging elementary schools through partnership

2014–2015 Program overview

More information can be found at bcbsm.com/buildhealth

Introduction

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Fitness Foundation, United Dairy Industry of Michigan, the University of Michigan, and the Center for School Health at Wayne State University have joined together to fight childhood obesity.

We're Michigan's largest nonprofit mutual health insurer, Michigan's state agency dedicated to protecting, preserving and promoting the health and safety of Michigan residents, Michigan's only urban public research university, a community-university collaborative and two nonprofit organizations with statewide impact and leadership roles in fitness, nutrition and health initiatives. Together, we plan to reach more than 100 school buildings during the 2014-2015 school year to improve the health of Michigan's children.

Childhood obesity exacts too high a price across our state in terms of health, economic impact and academic performance. Without intervention, most overweight and obese children become overweight and obese adults, with higher incidence of many chronic diseases, including heart disease, stroke, Type 2 diabetes and some cancers. We aim to address a vulnerable time in a young person's development by partnering with schools to foster environments where healthy choices are supported, encouraged and expected.

Healthy habits start young, and Building Healthy Communities helps establish the knowledge and behaviors needed for a healthy lifestyle by:

- Educating students through curriculum
- Creating a healthy, supportive environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice
- Encouraging students to practice lessons learned in the classroom
- Increasing access to physical activity opportunities
- Increasing access to healthy, nutrient-rich food and beverages



Join our mission

To address childhood obesity in Michigan and improve the health of young people, their families and the communities by implementing a comprehensive, school wide network of physical activity and healthy eating opportunities and education.

Eligibility

- Public, charter or private nonprofit schools in Michigan are eligible.
- Building Healthy Communities is available to all schools regardless of their:
 - free and reduced-price school meals percentage
 - geographic location
- Schools that are taking part in other healthy eating, nutrition education, physical activity or physical education programs are eligible.
- Schools that applied in prior years but did not receive an award are encouraged to apply again.
- Schools that have received a previous award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan aren't eligible for the program.

Criteria for program awards

Participating schools are selected based on these criteria:

- Demonstrated commitment to putting the program into practice and sustaining it in future school years
- Administrative support for the application and full implementation of the program

Building Healthy Communities: Engaging elementary schools through partnership

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan, the Center for School Health at Wayne State University, the Michigan Department of Community Health, Michigan Fitness Foundation, and the United Dairy Industry of Michigan are partnering to improve the current and future health of elementary school students through school-based education and environmental initiatives.

Healthy school transformation

Building Healthy Communities is built on a comprehensive school health philosophy under which healthy eating and physical activity opportunities and education are embedded throughout the school environment. This healthy school transformation gives students, teachers and administrators the tools they need to change the school environment through healthy living activities and education. Successful programs involve a variety of people at the school and provide education and information for students at different times and places during the day.

The Building Healthy Communities model unites programs and resources that are:

- Homegrown in Michigan
- Theoretically sound and evidence-based
- Linked with state and national health and education standards
- School friendly



Participating schools will receive

- A hands-on coordinator to establish the program and work closely with your school to ensure that the program is successful and can be sustained over time
- All program materials, equipment and training necessary for successful implementation
- Access to vast expertise to assist with your healthy school transformation

The elementary school program

There are six core components in *Building Healthy Communities: Engaging elementary schools through partnership*. Interested schools must provide assurances that they're willing to enact all six components in order to be selected.

1. Principal engagement

For school-based health initiatives to be successful, school principals must be fully engaged. Principals will:

- Read the "healthy tip of the day" morning announcements
- Display the Building Healthy Communities banner
- Support their teachers, staff and students, as well as the assigned healthy school educator

2. Classroom education on nutrition and physical activity

Academic classrooms provide an ideal location to promote healthy eating and physical activity, and connect healthy living education with families.

Classroom teachers will:

- Integrate brief nutrition lessons provided by the USDA that reinforce the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. A healthy school educator will model a series of lessons and provide mentoring and guidance to support classroom teacher implementation.
- Conduct short physical activity breaks during school days to boost students' brain activity.
- Share healthy living resources and tip sheets with parents through email and take-home materials.



Building Healthy Communities: Engaging elementary schools through partnership

3. Quality physical education

Quality physical education lays the foundation for a lifetime of physical activity. The Exemplary Physical Education Curriculum, or EPEC, is an award-winning, evidence-based curriculum, developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation, that reinforces healthy eating activities. The curriculum is used by teachers throughout Michigan and across the U.S.

Physical educators will:

- Participate in one EPEC professional development workshop in October
- Receive the curriculum and all equipment necessary to implement EPEC
- Implement EPEC at all grade levels
- Receive regular at-school mentoring

4. Active recess

Physical activity equipment and play guidance at recess increases students' physical activity levels and learning readiness.

Schools will:

- Use a mobile cart fully stocked with fun physical activity equipment daily
- Share recess game packs to provide students with quick and easy activities
- Receive mentoring for physical educators to assist with teaching students high-activity recess games during PE classes

5. Student leadership

Getting students engaged in the school transformation process is an excellent way to help schools make and sustain change. Students build leadership skills and schools improve their environments and policies through Fuel Up to Play 60 (**fueluptoplay60.com**). The United Dairy Industry of Michigan will provide additional support for this component.

Schools will:

- Choose a team adult adviser(s) to guide students through a six-step process (**school.fueluptoplay60.com/tools/training-center/**)
- Recruit a team of students (grades 3-5) to meet at least twice monthly
- Complete the online School Wellness Investigation and hold a kick off event
- Implement fun activities focused on physical activity and healthy eating that help support school building policy and environmental change
- Apply for additional funds through Fuel Up to Play 60 to support the student leadership team
- Share success and program strategies with other schools

6. Healthy kids clubs

After-school programs can significantly increase students' physical activity and healthy eating behaviors to achieve national activity and eating guidelines. Schools will either initiate a new weekly after-school program or enhance the activity offerings in existing programs. Programs will receive support to implement a five-step formula.

Schools will:

- Provide a healthy snack
- Implement a mileage walking or running session that includes record-keeping and goal-setting
- Provide nutrition education
- Integrate fun and active games to increase physical activity

Evaluating the healthy school transformation

Evaluation is critical to understanding the success of this program. It measures changes to the school environment and the program's impact on students' physical activity and nutrition.

Schools are required to participate in evaluation by:

- Approving the evaluation plan
- Completing short surveys and interviews by students and school staff
- Completing program implementation reports

All data will be kept fully confidential, and project reports will not identify schools or individuals.

Participation expectations

To be considered for the program, schools must commit to:

- Implementing all components of the program in collaboration with the healthy school educator
- Identifying a staff member who will be responsible for leading each program component
- Participation by the leaders of all six components of the program in a training session to be held in November



We're committed to leading Michigan to a healthier future — and to investing in the next generation of Michigan citizens.



A partnership between



**Blue Cross
Blue Shield
Blue Care Network**
of Michigan

*Michigan Department
of Community Health*



Rick Snyder, Governor
James K. Haveman, Director

**MICHIGAN
FITNESS
FOUNDATION**

