



## Benton County Community Health Board

During the first year of SHIP, Benton County Community Health Board has made significant progress implementing six evidence-based systems and environmental change strategies that improve nutrition, increase physical activity and reduce tobacco use and exposure across communities, schools, worksites and health care settings. These efforts lay the groundwork for improvements in the health of Minnesotans and reductions in health care costs. Following is a selection of key results from implementation of these strategies.

### COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP TEAM

- CentraCare Health Foundation (BLEND, Better Living Exercise and Nutrition Daily)
- Central Minnesota Council on Aging
- Foley School District
- Ministerial Association
- Reach-Up/Head Start
- St. Cloud State University
- Sauk Rapids/Rice School District
- Smoke-Free Communities Central Minnesota
- University of Minnesota Extension

### IMPROVE NUTRITION

*Increase access and availability of high-quality, nutritious foods through comprehensive nutrition initiatives such as Farm to School programs, healthy school meals/snacks, community gardens, grocery and corner stores, healthy vending and farmers markets to increase healthy eating, leading to a reduction in obesity.*

**Child Care:** Reaches ten children in one licensed child care and could reach 200 children in 20 child care homes.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Administered Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment of Child Care (NAP SACC) tool among participants to obtain baseline data. This research-tested intervention is designed to enhance policies, practices and environments in child care by improving the nutritional quality of food served, amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions, facility nutrition and physical activity policies, and practices and related environmental characteristics.

**Schools:** Reaches up to 1,516 middle and 2,953 elementary students in six Benton County schools.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Developing a “Walk-At-School” fundraising toolkit to promote walking instead of unhealthy foods in schools and to raise awareness among key decision makers (school superintendents) of the availability of unhealthy food choices in the schools.

### INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

*Increase opportunities for physical activity through changing the built environment to support walking, biking and access to community and school recreation facilities to increase physical activity, leading to a reduction in obesity.*

**Child Care:** Reaches 10 children in one licensed child care and could reach 200 children in 20 child care homes.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Collected baseline data using the NAP SACC assessment tool to measure changes in child care provider’s behaviors related to the physical activity environment in one child care facility.

**Communities:** Reaches up to 39,878 people, the entire population of Benton County.

#### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Working to improve local food environments through strategies such as providing access to culturally relevant, local and fresh food, affordable transportation, community gardening plots and an array of healthy food sources.
- Organized a community food assessment leadership team to provide input and direction on conducting a community food assessment, which will identify the greatest needs and priorities within Benton County’s community food environment.

## REDUCE TOBACCO USE

*Reduce tobacco use initiation, increase access to tobacco use cessation services and decrease places where tobacco use is permitted to reduce tobacco use.*

**Worksites:** Reaches employees at Coborn's Inc., which has 6,500 employees in 80 locations across six states, and Opportunity Manor, totaling 260 employees in 18 locations across three counties.

### HIGHLIGHTS:

- Coborn's began implementing a tobacco-free policy on July 5, 2010.
- Opportunity Manor is now working to adopt a policy as part of its overall company-wide wellness program that will address nutrition, physical activity, stress management and tobacco policy and cessation resources.
- Developed a toolkit to facilitate engagement and provide resources related to tobacco-free policies and cessation services to worksites.

## COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS INITIATIVES

*Increase opportunities to maintain healthy weight and healthy behaviors in the worksite and health care settings through strategies such as prohibiting tobacco use on worksite and health care facility grounds, changing systems to encourage employees to be more physically active, and actively referring patients to local resources for nutrition services, opportunities for physical activity and tobacco use cessation.*

**Health Care:** Reaches seniors' homes in Benton County (Note: specific reach will be determined by which health care facilities utilize the resource guide).

### HIGHLIGHTS:

Developing a resource guide for providers from different organizations to use to direct senior patients to the area of care they need regarding physical activity, nutrition and tobacco cessation.

## SUCCESS STORY

*In Benton County, a local coalition is working to develop policies to encourage healthier school fundraising efforts. Traditionally, schools have sold unhealthy foods like candy and cookie dough to raise money for school activities. Staff from the BLEND (Better Living: Exercise and Nutrition Daily) coalition are working with area elementary and middle schools to help them implement a healthier fundraising model.*

*The "Walk-At-School" fundraisers promote walking instead of unhealthy foods and allow 100 percent of the funds to stay at the school. Students actively seek donations, and for every dollar a student raises, they get to walk a certain distance. SHIP funding has helped staff to develop a toolkit that provides school staff with the materials they need to make Walk-At-School events easy to organize and successful.*

*So far, one school has implemented a Walk-At-School event and three others are planning events for spring 2011. At Rice Elementary School, which held their Walk-At-School fundraising event in November 2010, 333 children walked around the community to clean up yards and streets, meeting their goal of \$3,000.*

*SHIP staff is hoping that these efforts not only help to change the school fundraising model but also help create awareness about unhealthy food choices in school.*