



County of Riverside Department of Public Health

Healthy Riverside County Initiative

January 2013



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Introduction

The health challenge of the 21st Century impacting quality of life and productivity and driving increases in health care costs is chronic disease. More than 60 percent of early deaths in Riverside County are caused by cancer, heart disease and stroke, type 2 diabetes and respiratory conditions like asthma. These deaths can be prevented by addressing the risk factors of obesity, physical inactivity, poor nutrition and tobacco use.

The County of Riverside's *2013 Community Health Profile* illustrates the scope of the chronic disease problem and suggests opportunities to change behaviors and improve health. Local and national evidence suggests that three health behaviors, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity and tobacco use, contribute to four chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes, lung disease, and some cancers), which in turn result in more than 50 percent of preventable deaths around the world (3four50.com). In Riverside County, heart disease, cancer, lung disease, and stroke account for 63 percent of all deaths.

The Department of Public Health (DOPH) continues to leverage existing community partnerships to address the growing burden of chronic disease and their disproportionate impact on the poor, communities of color, and other minority groups. Not all residents are affected equally and we must address this in order to ensure health for all.

Scope of the Problem

As described and illustrated in the *2013 Community Health Profile*, seven out of 10 deaths in the U.S. are caused by chronic disease. Poor health behaviors have been associated with obesity and other health problems. These health problems are leading causes of preventable death. Poor nutrition is a well-documented risk factor for chronic disease. In a recent survey in Riverside County:

- 75% of residents ate fast food at least once per week;
- 53% of children ages 2-11 ate less than five servings of fruits and vegetables per day;
- 16% of children and teens age 2-17 drink more than one glass of sugary drink per day.

Physical activity, more specifically, exercise of at least 30 minutes each day has been found to reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, diabetes, obesity, and premature death. In Riverside County:

- 40% of children are active outside of school for at least one hour per day 5 or more days a week;
- 60% of children are active outside of school for at least one hour per day 4 days or less per week;
- 25% of adults walk for transportation, exercise or fun, while 75% of adults report no physical activity.

Tobacco use greatly increases the risk of illness and premature death. While the rate of smoking has declined in California, Riverside County has experienced increases in smoking rates since 2005. In Riverside County:

- 60% of adults have never smoked and of the 40% of adults who have smoked
 - 23% are former smokers and
 - 17% currently smoke

Economic Costs and Return on Investment

Addressing the causes of chronic disease in Riverside County and implementing effective prevention and management strategies will reduce health care costs. Chronic disease is driving health care costs in the U.S., comprising 18 percent of the GDP and representing more than one-sixth of the economy. In 2003, chronic disease cost the U.S. \$1.3 trillion annually. Of this, \$277 billion was attributed to direct treatment and \$1 trillion to lost productivity. According to State Controller John Chiang, in California, “the economic cost to California of adults who are obese, overweight and physically inactive is equivalent to more than a third of the state’s total budget” (reference: California’s Cost of Obesity Climbs to \$41 Billion).

http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/_PDFs/Costofobesity_PressRelease_070909.pdf

Funding proven community-based and environmental interventions to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent smoking is more cost-effective than clinical approaches alone. (Chokshi & Farley, 2012). Within five years, prevention investments of only \$10 per person per year could result in a national savings of \$16.5 billion annually. For California, this translates to a potential annual net savings of \$1.7 billion within five years (DeVol & Bedroussian, 2007).

Establishing chronic disease prevention priorities in Riverside County is the first step in addressing the problem. Once these priorities are identified, an analysis of current programs and services will reinforce community-based work and identify gaps in services and funding.

Setting Priorities to Improve Health and Promote Livable Communities

When setting priorities to improve health and promote livable communities, a review of key national, state and local chronic disease initiatives, grants, and programs is necessary. The key

priorities outlined below follow the national Community Transformation Grant initiative, Communities Putting Prevention to Work, the National Prevention Strategy, the California Nutrition Education and Obesity Plan, National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) subcommittee on chronic disease prevention, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Triple Aims for national health, the Chronic Disease Prevention Framework produced by the CCLHO-CHEAC Chronic Disease Prevention Leadership Project (November 2012) and "Let's Get Healthy California" Task Force final report (December 19, 2012).

Additional influences helping to set Riverside County health and chronic disease prevention priorities include the results of the County Department Head Survey on Livable Communities, the California Endowment Building Healthy Communities (BHC) initiative and Kaiser Permanente HEAL Zone initiative.

The California Endowment Building Healthy Communities (BHC) is a project to improve health in the City of Coachella and the surrounding unincorporated county areas, funded by the California Endowment. Public health along with youth and adult residents, leaders, organizations, schools, business, health care, law enforcement and others are working on a holistic approach to improve both community and individual health. The project has an ultimate goal to build communities where children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The three main outcomes are that: 1) residents live in communities with health-promoting land use, transportation, and community development; 2) communities support healthy youth development; and 3) neighborhood and school environments support improved health and healthy behaviors.

The Kaiser Permanente Eastside Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Zone initiative is an intervention program that targets both places and people to improve the health of a community. This program is focused on the Eastside neighborhood in the City of Riverside. HEAL Zones have three goals: 1) decrease calorie consumption; 2) increase consumption of healthy food and beverages such as fruit and vegetables and drinking water; and 3) increase physical activity. At the end of this initiative, changes are expected to occur in environments, policies, and community resident awareness, knowledge, skills, motivation, and utilization. The result of these efforts will be that residents in the Eastside will increase physical activity and eat better, leading to decreases in chronic disease prevalence. Initiatives such as these and additional frameworks are in line with national and state priorities, and have fueled chronic disease prevention priority setting for Riverside County.

The Healthy Riverside County Initiative will establish public health priorities and drive health promotion, policy and environmental change strategies and evidence based practices to improve health, reduce chronic disease, and promote livable communities for all. This comprehensive approach to improving health and promoting livable communities includes partnerships with schools, cities, health care providers, community based and faith based organizations, academic institutions and residents; policy development and implementation; improving service delivery systems; and providing chronic disease prevention initiatives and programs that are evidence-based. Through its leadership on policy issues and experience in developing and implementing evidence-based chronic disease prevention services, DOPH now has the opportunity to serve as a

model and health in all policies beacon not only for all County Departments, but all communities where county residents live.

Chronic Disease Prevention Priority in Riverside County: The Healthy Riverside County Initiative

Chronic disease prevention is now a priority for the Department of Public Health (DOPH) and the County of Riverside. Our county's new Chief Executive Officer, Jay Orr, has demonstrated an understanding and commitment to public health by placing Public Health as a top priority in his vision for developing Riverside County "as the safest, most business-friendly, and best place to live in America." One of three goals in his vision is to "improve health and promote livable communities through partnerships, policies, service delivery systems, and initiatives."

The Department of Public Health (DOPH) has positioned itself to lead countywide efforts by playing a catalytic role in accomplishing the following milestones: 1) County of Riverside Board of Supervisor's *Resolution 2011-025- Healthy Riverside County*, adopted in 2011, directed county departments and community partners to adopt preventive measures and develop initiatives to fight obesity and chronic disease; 2) County of Riverside General Plan – *GPA 1096 Chapter 10: Healthy Communities Element*, adopted in 2011, includes policies to address key health issues and challenges; 3) County of Riverside Strategic Workforce Plan 2010-2015 encourages departments to promote healthy work environments as modeled in DOPH Healthy Food Choices and Physical Activity Policy that was established in 2007; and 4) achieving voluntary national public health department accreditation where the *2013 Community Health Profile* will serve as the foundation of the Community Health Assessment, a prerequisite for the accreditation process.

Healthy Riverside County Initiative Priorities

1. Improve healthy nutrition for all Riverside County residents through partnerships, policy, systems, and environmental change that increase access to and consumption of healthy foods and decrease access to and consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages.

Rethink Your Drink

The Department of Public Health has been involved with the nutrition education "Rethink Your Drink" (RYD) initiative for the past several years through the *Network for a Healthy California*, *WIC program* and most recently the Public Health Institute (PHI). Funding has recently been awarded in the Coachella Valley through a PHI grant to unify beverage messages and create policies on vending, access and fundraising in youth and family locations throughout the desert community. Another key partner is the City of Riverside Parks & Community Services Department, which has adopted our RYD teaching model and materials. Lifeguard staff led children and families through a short lesson on sugary beverages and the importance of drinking more water, especially when exercising. Each of their pool sites has posted RYD posters and bulletin board displays, and have employee policies regarding beverages while on-duty.

2. Increase daily physical activity rates by expanding activity opportunities in community, workplace, school, and other settings, and accommodating all resident's needs.

Healthier Living Program for Seniors (HELPS)

The goal of the project is to increase participants' primary care access, self-management behaviors, and physical activity, while decreasing emergency room and urgent care visits. The project involves educational classes based on the evidenced-based, Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management model, and a community-based program that assists people with chronic illness developed by the Division of Family and Community Medicine in the School of Medicine at Stanford University. The model of patient education significantly reduces the number of hospitalizations and improves quality of life. Similar results occurred among the HELPS target population. The two-and-a-half-hour classes, led by a public health nurse and held at a local senior center, are offered weekly for seven weeks and are co-facilitated by a health services assistant, a trained lay senior specialist (an older adult from the community who has diabetes and/or asthma), and a nursing student; at least one facilitator represents the ethnicity of the group and may be bilingual.

Each class incorporates a 10-minute break during which participants learn and participate in basic exercises performed to culturally appropriate music. The seven sessions incorporate food demonstrations by a registered dietitian. Optional follow-up home visits by a public health nurse and/or student nurse are available to all participants. The home visits provide case management services for seniors who are at risk of becoming medically compromised or institutionalized due to lack of access to information and health care services.

3. Reduce tobacco exposure through policy, systems and environmental changes that limit or discourage tobacco use where people live, work, play, and study.

Smoke Free Areas

The Department of Public Health Tobacco Control Project works with the Coalition for Tobacco-Free Communities to reduce the negative health, social and economic impact of tobacco use in Riverside County. Examples of smoke free area policies that have been adopted by Riverside County Cities include:

Smoke-free Parks Ordinance Adoption: The cities of Norco (2010), Banning (2009), Palm Springs (2011); Moreno Valley (2008); and Corona (2008) have all adopted smoke-free parks ordinances.

Smoke-free Outdoor Public Areas: The City of Palm Desert amended its no smoking ordinance to prohibit smoking within 20 feet from the entrances of all public businesses within the city limits and common areas of multi-family residential properties owned by the City of Palm Desert, except where permitted (2009).

Smoke-free Outdoor Dining Patios: To date, 132 restaurants in the cities of Moreno Valley, Corona and Riverside have adopted voluntary policies prohibiting smoking in their outdoor dining areas.

4. Create a healthy, safe physical/built environment that promotes walkability, bikability and active transportation.

Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs use a comprehensive approach to make school routes safer for children to walk and bike to school. Community leaders, parents and schools are using these programs to better the lives of children one step at a time.

Orrenmaa Elementary in Riverside is one school that exemplifies SRTS program efforts. With guidance from the Department of Public Health, school administrators, teachers and students successfully implemented an additional component to the benefits of walking to school called "Save a Gallon." Barcode scanners along with key tags, purchased with the help from the City and the Western Riverside County Clean Cities Coalition, allow students and parents to track:

- The date and time which their child arrived at school
- Total calories burned from walking
- Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions that were reduced (calculated in carbon lbs.)
- Amount of fuel saved by walking or biking with a dollar amount assessed (ex. \$4.50)
- Outdoor temperatures
- Individual classroom progress
- Participation by sending a text/email to all registered parents upon their child's arrival at school

Orrenmaa Elementary is the first school in Riverside County to implement this technology which increases the potential to improve overall health, increase traffic safety, and reduce emissions. DOPH and its coalition of partners are proud to be the first in California to implement "Save A Gallon" with the hopes that many other schools will follow.

Partnerships and Coalitions

The Riverside County Health Coalition (RCHC), established in 2009, has the mission to work collaboratively to identify and support broader solutions to combat obesity, poor nutrition and physical inactivity to improve the overall health of Riverside County residents and enhance the Riverside County community's collective capacity to address these risk factors. RCHC is a public/private partnership that gathers, supports and mobilizes partners from multiple domains; provides leadership and vision; and coordinates county-wide efforts in the promotion of healthier living throughout our county. Members represent both public and private sectors, including various county agencies, school districts and colleges, and local and regional foundations. Members also represent community businesses, local cities, local health clinics and medical organizations and local Medi-Cal managed care health plans.

RCHC, in collaboration with the Department of Public Health (DOPH), works to institutionalize policy change and establish sustainability of efforts for obesity, physical activity, and nutrition initiatives. DOPH and RCHC work to develop a long-term blueprint for generating major policy change that will be necessary to effectively deal with these public health concerns. The coalition has three active workgroups: Policy, Local Healthy Food and Community and Schools Active Living. These workgroups work to leverage existing efforts and make sustainable change within their domains. RCHC/DOPH has secured funding from Kaiser Foundation Hospitals to build capacity and sustainability of the coalition. A strategic planning process took place in late 2012 and two priorities emerged:

1. Mobilize at least 15 cities to adopt Healthy City resolutions within 12 months; and
2. Increase access and availability of healthy food outlets with fresh, nutritious, affordable food by 20% within 24 months.

Building Health Into Everyday Life

Our Goal is to *Build Health Into Everyday Life* and, in so doing, make the healthy choice the easy choice. By making better food and drink choices, building exercise into our day, not smoking, and changing how we get to work, we can make a difference not only for ourselves but for our friends and family.

Working together, we can make our communities healthier. Working together, we can increase access to healthy food and make our communities more walkable. Working together, we can reduce the incidence of chronic disease in our County and save health care costs. Working together, the County and community partners can adopt preventive measures and develop programs to fight obesity and chronic disease.

Together, we will build health into everyday life.