

2011-12 PFT Successes

Title: Walk Kansas PFT: Nutrition, Food Safety and Health

The Situation

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that:

- 52% of people living in Kansas do not meet the minimum goal for physical activity – 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity per week.
- 81% of adult Kansans report not eating fruits and vegetables five or more times daily.
- 65% of adults are overweight or obese and 75% have high blood pressure.

Nationally, chronic disease is responsible for more than 70% of health care expenditures. Poor diet and physical inactivity have been linked to many health conditions – including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, certain cancers, respiratory disorders, joint problems and osteoporosis – as well as to psychosocial problems.

Healthy lifestyle choices such as being physically active, eating more healthfully, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing stress more effectively, can delay onset of chronic disease and even prevent it. Lifestyle habits also play a key role in managing symptoms of these diseases.

Public Value:

Participants in Walk Kansas are challenged to lead a healthier life by being more physically active, making better nutrition choices, and dealing with stress more effectively. The public value of this program is realized when Kansans adopt healthy lifestyle habits which will lead to fewer weight-related chronic and acute diseases and improved quality of life. This will benefit other community members by lowering the public cost of health care and health insurance and increasing the number of productive contributing citizens.



What We Did

K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) Family and Consumer Sciences professionals provided leadership in working with local partners (community task forces, agencies, service groups, schools, faith based groups, employers, etc.) to offer Walk Kansas in 2012. This program is an evidence-based model that is adapted each year to reflect current nutrition and physical activity guidelines and research findings.

Participants in the program (co-workers, family members, friends, neighbors) formed teams of six people. If each member reached the minimum goal for physical activity during the 8 weeks the team would – collectively - walk 423 miles, which is the distance across the state of Kansas. Teams had the option of setting a goal that goes beyond this minimum.

Participants logged minutes of activity each week, and the amount of fruits and vegetables they ate. Team progress was reported weekly by captains and recorded at www.walkkansas.org.

Each participant received a weekly newsletter and most had the opportunity to attend health and nutrition related classes and activities, offered by KSRE and partnering organizations, in their community. The Walk Kansas website continues to provide current information on healthy lifestyle habits including “how to” videos for selecting and preparing nutritious foods, walking technique, strengthening exercises, and more.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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Outcomes

In 2012, this program reached 18,653 participants. Through program evaluation surveys, the following outcomes were reported:

- 78% reported being more physically active as a result of the program and 84% met goals for physical activity during the 8 week program. 58% were confident or completely confident they would continue this amount of activity during the next 6 months.
- 76% increased fruit and vegetable consumption during the 8 weeks. 62% were confident/completely confident they would continue this habit over the next 6 months.
- As a result of healthy lifestyle practices during the Walk Kansas program, these changes were reported:
 - Increased energy - 52%
 - Increased endurance – 42%
 - Improved sleep – 29%
 - Decreased weight – 29%
 - Increased muscle strength – 25%
 - Better able to manage stress – 25%
 - Increased flexibility – 24%
 - Lower blood pressure – 11%
 - Lower blood cholesterol – 6%
 - Better diabetes control – 4%

Success Stories:

Four years ago, at almost 46 years old, I started Walk Kansas. I was a very heavy smoker and quit smoking 1 week into the program. I went through a major weight issue and it was very hard to adjust to weight gain and eating habit issues along with the quitting. I have only missed one year of Walk KS, I am 128 pounds now and did my first 5k, placing 2nd, just before turning 50. My five granddaughters cheered me on!

Geary County

My entire family began to eat healthier and exercise more because of Walk Kansas.

River Valley District

I became aware of the impact of prolonged sitting and how it affects my back pain. It became very clear to me that when I moved more, I hurt less.

Leavenworth County

I was so happy to see my blood pressure go down to a normal range. I ate more fruits and veggies, and lost 10 lbs. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be because I wanted to be a really good team contributor.

Wildcat District

My husband and I worked out 6 days a week together the entire time and have continued to do so. We are both stronger and have increased endurance and strength. It has had a benefit on our health and our marriage!

Rolling Prairie District

Walk Kansas helped me be more aware of how many vegetables & fruits I was consuming. I have increased my weekly consumption, and still have more improvements to make. It was definitely motivating to know that my team was counting on me to meet my personal goals so that we could meet our goals as a team.

McPherson County

I believe our office is happier and more productive because of Walk Kansas.

Grant County

I walked in the Oklahoma City Marathon recently. It was Walk Kansas that prepared me for the 4 hours 17 minutes of walking!

Ellis County

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