



Ohio Department of Health
246 N. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

www.odh.ohio.gov

News Release

John R. Kasich / Governor
Theodore E. Wymyslo, M.D. / Director



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2013

Contact: Office of Public Affairs 614-644-8562

Ohio Kicks the Fight Against Childhood Obesity into High Gear With New Initiative

Ohio Department of Health Announces \$1 Million for State and Local Partnership

COLUMBUS - The Ohio Department of Health today announced a new initiative to combat the epidemic of childhood obesity across Ohio. The early childhood obesity prevention grant program will fund high-need communities and build on existing community-based obesity prevention efforts. The state will provide \$500,000 for the program in each of the next two years.

“More than one third of children are overweight or obese in Ohio,” said Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director at the Ohio Department of Health. “Ohio is ranked as the 12th worst state for childhood obesity. Chronic diseases and their risk factors- such as obesity- are estimated to cost Ohio nearly \$60 billion annually in health care costs and lost productivity. Without significant change these costs are projected to increase by nearly \$100 billion by 2023.”

The program will take a holistic approach to early childhood obesity prevention by coordinating messages around physical activity and nutrition for children birth to 5 years of age. Evidence shows that efforts to reverse the upward trend of childhood body mass index should focus primarily on preventing obesity in those who are not yet overweight, specifically in the youngest age groups as nutritional and physical activity habits are being developed.

Funded counties will work with their early childhood education centers, healthcare systems and providers (both public and private), public health providers (such as Head Start), and other community partners (like YMCAs) to coordinate parent-centered education around physical activity and nutrition.

“These tools currently exist in several forms with similar information, but they are often presented in disconnected and disjointed ways,” said Dr. Wymyslo. “This initiative will allow Ohio to coordinate messaging regarding healthy habits beginning at birth.”

Because childhood health and behaviors are directly influenced by parental health and behaviors, the program will also focus on identifying those parents at risk for or currently diagnosed with a chronic disease such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Parents will be referred to community resources to reduce their risk for or improve their control of their chronic disease, including the evidence-based Chronic Disease and Diabetes Self-Management program and the Diabetes Prevention Program, as well as community providers including patient-centered medical homes and Federally Qualified Health Centers.

more

This proposal will increase Ohio's ability to reach the state's highest-risk populations within their community and elevate the success of other activities designed to reduce obesity.

Funding for the early childhood obesity prevention grant program is supported by Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act (CHIPRA) bonus funds, which Ohio has received for enrolling and retaining eligible children in Medicaid. Ohio has invested CHIPRA grant funds in various initiatives to advance Ohio's health system modernization strategies and improve care for all Ohioans. Funded projects include efforts to expand presumptive eligibility for pregnant women and children, improve the early identification of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), and provide better access to patient-centered medical homes (PCMHs), among others.

###

Initiatives made possible through previous CHIPRA grants:

http://www.healthtransformation.ohio.gov/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=H_pcojHFFoY%3d&tabid=136

Ohio Department of Health's Creating Healthy Communities Initiatives:

<http://www.healthyohioprogram.org/healthylife/createcomm/chc1.aspx>