



Strategic Plan

Clermont County General Health District

November 2010

Who We Are

The Clermont Coalition for Activity & Nutrition (Clermont CAN) was formed in 2008 in an effort to address the epidemic of obesity in Clermont County, Ohio. The coalition is composed of a diverse group of representatives who share the common concern about the impact obesity is having on county residents. Representatives from all aspects of health, education, and government, as well as organizations and individuals concerned about the health of county residents, have joined forces to work toward improving nutritional awareness and promoting physical activity in the county. The Clermont County General Health District serves as the lead agency for Clermont CAN as part of its mission to protect and improve the health of all Clermont County residents. The focused mission of Clermont CAN is to create opportunities and promote action to support the coalition's simple but powerful vision; "Be Active, Eat Smart".

Challenges

Clermont County is located in southwestern Ohio just east of the City of Cincinnati. The county has a population of approximately 196,000 people living in a challenging blend of rural and suburban communities. There is only one small city actually located in the county which is Milford, population 6,284. Although the county is still designated as the western most Appalachian county in the state, the two most western townships have become extended suburbs of Cincinnati. The remaining 12 townships are comprised of small villages, farms and clusters of residential areas spread less and less densely the farther east you go. In 2008, the median household income was \$60,735; but with the slowing economy and the closing or downsizing of several local businesses, many residents are experiencing financial hardships.

Before the establishment of Clermont CAN, there was no local comprehensive health data that was specific to the residents of Clermont County. Most of the data concerning weight, nutrition, or physical activity that was collected was grouped with counties that didn't match the same community profile of Clermont County. In 2009, a grant received, from the Office of Healthy Ohio, made it possible to collect this important data. The Clermont Health District, on behalf of Clermont CAN, partnered with Wright State University to conduct a community health assessment. There were actually two assessments: an adult version and a youth version. The adults were contacted by phone and answered survey questions. The adult assessment revealed several areas of concern that related to physical activity, nutrition, and the prevalence of chronic diseases. The youth assessment was conducted in May of 2009, through the school system, on all of the fourth grade students in Clermont County. Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements were taken for each student, and they answered surveys pertaining to physical activity and nutrition.

The data from the Clermont County Health Assessments as well as data from state and national studies show that Clermont County residents have a higher rate of unhealthy behaviors. Based on BMI measurements, 67% of the adult residents were considered overweight or obese. There are also high

rates of smoking, 27.6%, and lack of physical activity in adults, 33.4% of adults do not get any physical activity. The *2010 County Health Rankings* prepared by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin ranked Clermont County 82 out of 88 counties based on health behaviors. Health Behaviors include factors such as diet and exercise, tobacco use and alcohol use.

Initial Actions

Clermont CAN utilized the data from the County Health Rankings, the Healthy Ohio Community Profiles, and the Clermont County Health Needs Assessment; and recognized the opportunities in these challenges to try to help improve the overall health of the residents of Clermont County. The growing epidemic of obesity, the chronic diseases which are associated with obesity, inadequate physical activity levels, the lack of adequate nutrition, and smoking are all health behaviors that need to be addressed. Clermont CAN wants to ensure that all residents have access to information to enable them to make healthier choices. The Clermont General Health District has developed a website to support these efforts. The coalition has developed a publication, *Places and Spaces*, which provides information on proper nutrition and areas around the county that promote physical activity. Clermont CAN has also been instrumental in assisting in the grant writing process for grants that promote community involvement in activities that encourage physical activity and nutritional awareness. Many of the coalition members represent CAN at county-wide events such as health & wellness fairs, farmer's markets, and various schools and community awareness functions.

Priorities

Clermont CAN organized a planning session in April 2010, and invited coalition and community members to discuss health behaviors, identify priorities, and rank priorities based on participant knowledge of the challenges in the community. This session also provided CAN the opportunity to recruit new members to join in on the efforts to improve the health of county residents. During the planning session, many health behaviors were discussed that helped to guide development of goals and objectives. Participants worked to identify the top reasons why residents did not engage in more physical activity, why eating healthy was problematic and why residents experience such high levels of smoking. The group then ranked the top issues in each area which became the focus of the group and established the top priorities for action.

- Physical Activity
 - Parents assume children are getting what they need elsewhere (e.g., at school).
 - There is a perceived lack of time/energy in adults which impacts adult and youth physical activity.
 - Adults are missing the benefit of incorporating physical activity into daily routines.
- Nutrition
 - People do not have knowledge of appropriate portion size.
 - Perception that preparing nutritious food is more time consuming.

- People need education and/or resources on cost effective and convenient nutritious meal planning.
- Smoking
 - Youth give in to peer pressure and start smoking.
 - Need to do more to educate youth early to understand the consequences of smoking.
 - Families that use tobacco products provide easy access and acceptance for youth to start and it is considered a “norm”.

Objectives

The goal of Clermont CAN is to have all Clermont County residents being active, eating smart and making health choices when it comes to health behaviors to allow residents to live longer, be healthier and have an increased quality of life. In order to meet this goal the following objectives listed below were developed. Data from the 2009 Health Assessment was looked at and compared to state and national data to provide a starting point for improvement. Initial objective measurements were chosen to align Clermont County with state and national averages. In the future, objective measurements will be set to exceed state and national averages.

- Objective 1: Decrease the percentage of Clermont County residents who participate in no physical activity by 9% by 2015.
- Objective 2: Decrease the rate of overweight and obese residents by 4% by 2015.
- Objective 3: Decrease the smoking rate of Clermont County residents by 5% by 2015.
- Objective 4: Improve the coordination of policy and increase resources dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles.

Activities

Objective 1: Decrease the percentage of Clermont County residents who participate in no physical activity by 9% by 2015.

- Promote places for low cost and no cost physical activity in the county through the “Be Active, Eat Smart, Clermont County’s Guide to Places and Spaces for Activity and Nutrition”.
- Increase access and opportunities for physical activity in Clermont County.
- Provide information on incorporating physical fitness into daily activities.
- Increase physical activity education in the workplace.

Objective 2: Decrease the rate of overweight and obese residents by 4% by 2015.

- Increase physical activity through activities outlined in objective 1.
- Promote awareness of the amount of physical activity recommended and encourage families to conduct personal health inventories of the amount and type of physical activity they receive.
- Promote locally grown produce and nutritional values of fruits and vegetables.

- Provide resources on how to prepare cost effective, convenient nutritious meals.
- Provide information and increase awareness of portion sizes and caloric needs for adults and children.
- Provide educational information on nutritional value of fast foods.

Objective 3: Decrease the smoking rate of Clermont County residents by 5% by 2015.

- Offer/promote smoking cessation classes in Clermont County.
- Ensure education is provided to youth on the consequences of tobacco use.

Objective 4: Improve the coordination of policy and increase resources dedicated to promoting healthy lifestyles.

- Continue to seek alternate funding sources for CAN activities.
- Continue to work cooperatively through Clermont CAN and continuously recruit new members that have an interest in promoting healthy lifestyles.
- Continue to expand the resources of health information available.
- Continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss CAN involvement in the community and future opportunities.