

Walking College Independent Study Project

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Regional Planning Commission

September 2015

09.11.15

- Identify one short-term and achievable goal for completion within the next 2 months, that will be the goal for your Independent Study Project
 - Meet with 8 community hospitals and 6 county public health to coordinate a November 2015 gathering to explore partnership with NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (FFI) to promote walking in our communities in rural NE Iowa.
- Project Goal
 - Connect health care stakeholders to long-term regional work facilitating changes in community conditions to increase daily access to physical activity and healthy, local food (FFI). Seek to create regional partnerships with schools, early childhood, public health, community hospitals and other stakeholders to collaboratively promote walking and advocate for walkability to address childhood and adult obesity in our region.
- Background
 - This project presents an opportunity to build on nearly 9 years of work in this region to address childhood obesity through policy, system and environmental change. The overweight and obesity rates for children in our region are significantly above national averages. Access to daily physical activity and healthy food for children, their families and community members is a big challenge.
 - The NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (FFI) has focused on 5 Strategies using a comprehensive systems approach to change community conditions in the following areas; Food Systems, Active Living/Transportation (SRTS), School and Early Childhood Wellness and Youth as Partners in this work. Specific to the Walking College opportunity, the FFI Active Living work group and Regional SRTS Coordinator have developed a robust, regional, rural model for SRTS over the last 5 years that is unique; we are not aware of any other rural models in the country.
 - We are at a crucial time in this work where we are strategizing re how to sustain the work and momentum to shift the culture to embrace children walking and biking to school and advance the efforts to include the entire community. We need to broaden our engagement of community leaders and health care stakeholders to promote walking and walkability to reinforce and build on the foundation that's been created.
- Potential Partners
 - NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative with following Core Partners:
 - Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
 - Iowa State University Extension & Outreach
 - Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities

- Northeast Iowa Community College
 - Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
- Regional School Districts
- Regional Early Childhood including HeadStart
- 6 County Public Health Departments
- 8 Community Hospitals
- Community stakeholders/champions
- Strategies & Action Steps
 - “Make the case” for sustaining the work to address obesity (physical activity & healthy eating)
 - FFI Year 6 Evaluation to W.K. Kellogg Foundation – Summer 2015
 - FFI School BMI data project – Summer 2015
 - Connect FFI evaluation and data collection to the Iowa Department of Public Health – Community Health Needs Assessment – Health Improvement Plan process – Fall 2015; contact regional public health directors
 - Present Walking College DRAFT plan to FFI Regional Leadership on Sept. 2, 2015
 - Present Walking College DRAFT plan to FFI Active Living Work Group – September 11th 2015
 - Engage Public Health and Community Hospitals
 - Meet 1:1 with Public Health directors and Community Hospital administrators in August and early September 2015
 - Present current FFI evaluation and regional school BMI data
 - Learn about the plan/timeline for the CHNA-HIP for each hospital/public health partner
 - Learn about changing reimbursement environment with ACCA shifting from fee-for-service to population health focus.
 - Seek commitment to participate in a Fall 2015 regional discussion
 - Collaboratively work with above partners including schools, early childhood, public health and hospitals to create a November 2015 workshop/convening to understand readiness and willingness to work together on a regional campaign (or learning community) to promote walking and walkability; offer programming options and create a 1 year time line with action steps.
 - Inform public health and hospitals of Surgeon General’s Call to Action and Iowa Healthiest State Initiative October Walking events
 - September 9th – Call to Action – Media outreach
 - September 15th – Call to Action Webinar – public hosting
 - Meet with regional school nurses and administrators to determine what kinds of community health efforts will align and build on their school wellness efforts – maintaining community/school

driven vision while reinforcing, augmenting focus on healthier environments for children – Sept. 9th

- September and October: Work with FFI Regional Leadership, FFI Work Group leaders and above partners to design an engaging and inspiring workshop focused on a regional campaign to promote for all residents:
 - Walking/Walkability– Building on current SRTS model
 - Healthy eating – Increase F&V consumption
- Attend National Walking Summit in D.C. October 28-30th to learn from and network with walking experts/advocates; explore ideas/strategies to inspire a regional campaign with leadership from community health institutions and providers. (Will bring back ideas to present at November 2015 workshop.)
- Anticipated Barriers
 - Competing priorities in rural communities; schools, early childhood, public health and community hospitals; it will be a challenge to create and maintain engagement
 - Will utilize network of existing relationships to **keep focus on easiest and most affordable strategies to address obesity;** Walking and increased consumption of Fruits & Veggies.
 - Limited resources to convene and support an expanded regional group
 - Will leverage current FFI healthy community outreach efforts to create partnerships and seek in-kind resources from public health and hospitals to support collaboration.
- Project Timeline
 - Dates included in Action steps above
- Next Steps
 - I hope this 8-week independent study lays a foundation for the development of a regional network or alliance with many diverse partners/community members addressing childhood and adult obesity by focusing on walking/walkability and access to healthy food in our communities.