

ABSTRACT

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Oregon's Public Health Initiative For Childhood Obesity Prevention

Background

The need for a public health action agenda specific to prevention of childhood obesity (0-8 yrs) emerged as one of three top priority areas from Oregon's Maternal and Child Health leadership retreat in March 2010. The vision that emerged from the retreat specific to childhood obesity was increased collaboration between state and local partners, local MCH is seen as experts on this issue in their communities, and that they are included in the planning and policy development related to childhood obesity. Since then, state and local MCH leaders have been engaged in synthesizing the work of the collaborative retreat, developing an action plan, and plan to present to stakeholders July 2011.

Project Goal

Through a state and local partnership, MCH leaders will develop an action plan for childhood obesity prevention.

Methods

At the two-day March retreat an overview of child health was provided: emerging trends and issues, public health approaches to improving health, and alignment of state and local MCH efforts to impact. Through a prioritization process childhood obesity was one of three topic areas selected. A work group of state and local staff formed to meet monthly, with the charge to develop an action plan by June 2011. The work group illustrated their 9-month charge via a logic model to track progress and be accountable to outcomes. Activities included reviewing the foundation of evidence, the policy landscape, the data, exploring the assurance function and reflect on models to frame the work for both state and local MCH needs. Meetings included reading to increase participant's knowledge and frame the discussion for that meeting. Another task is development of an MCH-specific survey that complements the assessment done via Healthy Communities work.

Results

The work group has fulfilled identified tasks to date and is currently deciding which model to frame childhood obesity efforts. The survey will be sent in April so that results can be used to inform the action plan. The group has increased knowledge about population and infrastructure approaches to impact child obesity.

Summary

This partnership has increased understanding of issues and capacity at state and local levels. Challenges have included local leadership since state staff often drive policy initiatives, and the breadth of work in child obesity so ongoing efforts are complemented.