Childhood Obesity Efforts
Increasing capacity in Western ND | 2018

Public Value Statement
Improving health behaviors for youth can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective healthcare costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

The Situation
Youth in North Dakota generally do not meet daily recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption (5 – 9 servings per day) or minutes of physical activity (PA) (60 minutes/day). On average, 90% of ND youth eat less than 2 fruits and vegetables per day. Moreover, 48.7% and 36.7% of high school and middle school students, respectively, are not active most days of the week (2015 YRBS). As a result, ND childhood overweight and obesity rates are concerning (37%); childhood obesity tends to equate with adult obesity and high chronic disease prevalence.

Extension Response
NDSU Extension seeks to improve the environment and processes that promote optimal health and nutrition of youth and families. Grant funding through the Maternal and Child Health grant from the ND Department of Health, nutrition education, physical activity opportunities, and systemic or environmental changes address capacity gaps that exist in rural and western ND. Transformational education programs utilize evidence-based or practice-informed curricula coupled with non-traditional delivery methods to allow for a broader and deeper reach into North Dakota communities. Five contractual workers received training to facilitate nutrition education programming in McKenzie, Morton, Stark, and Williams counties, reaching nearly 400 youth that otherwise would have gone unreached. The curricula integrate healthy lifestyle choices, family involvement, education, goal setting, and systemic or environmental changes to encourage behavior change.

Impacts
Participants from On the Move Jr. reported increasing fruit and vegetable consumption (80%) and increasing PA (86%). On the Move participants report drinking less soda and increasing PA (44.7% getting 60 minutes/day before the program and 55% meeting recommendations after). Of On the Move to Stronger Bodies participants, 68% increased vegetable consumption. Cooking School participants increased food preparation and increased physical activity (42.9% active 5+ days before, 53.2% after).

Increased Capacity

Feedback
From an On the Move participant in Western ND: “I think this is a great program and in my experience with this program, it really helped me eat healthier and exercise more. I think we should continue this program.”

Collaborators
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Non-Extension Collaborators
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