Umatilla County Plan4Health Initiative: Planning for health in rural Oregon

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SUMMARY
Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. The Umatilla County Plan4Health Coalition aims to build a county-based network of partners responsible for making policy, systems, and environmental changes and incorporating strategies to promote healthy lifestyles in rural Oregon.

CHALLENGE
Umatilla County ranks 26th out of 34 counties in Oregon in health outcomes and 31st in both quality of life and health behaviors. Umatilla County has high rates of obesity (33 percent) and low rates of adults who reported participating in physical activities (24 percent). Only 65 percent of residents report having access to exercise opportunities, which is well below the state and national rates. These indicators are worse for Latino/Hispanic residents, where nearly 76 percent reported being overweight or obese. Umatilla County has the highest childhood obesity rate in the state. Children in Umatilla County also reported high rates of screen time and soda consumption as well as low rates of fruit and vegetable consumption. Only 18.7 percent of children consumed the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY
To learn more about Plan4Health check out the project website (www.plan4health.us) and join the national conversation by using and following #plan4health.

“...The path along the river has already been used extensively and appreciated by a variety of community members. We are currently in partnership communications with the City of Umatilla to collaboratively expand it even further. It’s wonderful to see another resource in place to encourage our community members to stay active and healthy.”

-Heidi Sipe, Superintendent, Umatilla School District
**SOLUTION**
The Umatilla County Plan4Health Initiative will expand membership by building partnerships to increase physical activity and access to healthy food. The coalition will conduct a community needs and readiness assessment to inform the selection of project strategies. When ready, the selected strategies will be implemented and evaluated to determine the impact on the community. The coalition will focus on ensuring adequate resources, deploying media to provide policy education, collecting baseline data, and working to address and reduce identified barriers.

**RESULTS**
The Umatilla County Plan4Health Initiative set aside a portion of the funding to kick-start implementation projects that coalition members were involved in. The funded projects include: 1) Weston-McEwen High School will construct a chicken coop in order to improve student involvement and increase egg use in school food service and the community. The district is pursuing a pilot project with ODE to develop USDA approved egg production. 2) The Umatilla School District will formalize a walking/jogging path to be constructed on school grounds. The path will be available to students and citizens of Umatilla and will create additional physical activity opportunities, host community walking events, and be utilized for PE class and other classroom lessons. 3) OSU Extension SNAP-Ed created time lapse recipe videos using Food Hero recipes in order to overcome barriers in reaching community members. The SNAP-Ed Coordinator worked with a local middle school TV club to produce the videos in both English and Spanish. 4) Hermiston High School’s Advanced Welding Class, Student Business Club, and the City of Hermiston partnered to create signs and marketing for a new disk gold course coming to the city. Welding students will create the signs and the Business Club will develop marketing and promotion.

**SUSTAINING SUCCESS**
One of the most significant ways in which the Umatilla County Plan4Health Initiative will ensure sustainability of our efforts is to align policies and change our processes. Based on recommendations received as a result of our Community Needs and Readiness Assessment, we will be working with the County to formally adopt a Health in All Policies approach and a review process for current policies. Additionally, all land use and development codes will be reviewed over time through a HiAP lens and revised to yield better health outcomes.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.