Project Overview:

Angelina is a rural, but more specifically, “frontier” county located in the Pineywoods of Deep East Texas. It is comprised of six small cities, with seven or fewer people per square mile. Living in remote areas often poses several challenges such as traveling long distances to acquire goods and services. Along with barriers in access, socioeconomic conditions also pose a challenge to the average family, with children being the most affected, over 30 percent living in poverty. The Angelina County & Cities Health District (ACCHD), through the collaboration with the Community Partnerships for Healthy Mothers and Children project, has implemented policy, systems, and environment change by developing community strategies with the dual purpose of increasing awareness of how and where to access healthy foods and beverages, as well as cultivating community partnerships in various settings who help to facilitate the message of Choose Fresh; ultimately changing the community environment in order to increase the number of chronic disease prevention and management resources in the community. The goal of the project is to make choosing fresh fruits and vegetables as well as healthy beverages the norm in our community. In addition, community partnerships will provide the mechanism to ensure sustainability of the Choose Fresh message for years to come.

Objectives Pursued:

Increase new tools or resources to create awareness of how to access healthy food options in the community at Angelina County & Cities Health District’s Primary Care clinic; Immunization office; WIC office; Little Panthers Headstart; Little Britches daycare; Just Kidz daycare; Kiddie Land daycare, Tiny Town daycare, Headstart; Family Crisis Center; Pregnancy Help Center; Huntington Loper’s Pharmacy; Zavalla Independent School District; Burke Primary Care Clinic; Dr. Fercowitz office.

A “Healthy Food Access” resource guide has been developed and implemented in over 13 settings with more than 20 employees trained on how to screen for healthy living and distribute the guide. We predict that this resource guide will reach over 5000 people in Angelina County.

Increase the number of grocery stores participating in the Share Our Strength Cooking Matters at the Store program in the community at five Brookshire Brothers locations; the local H.E.B; and the local Wal-Mart.

With the implementation of this program we were able to exceed our reach of 400 participants, engage 7 grocery stores, and train several employees and community members. One of our partner organizations, The Junior League of Lufkin, applied for the Cooking Matters at the Store grant and is planning to continue tours throughout Angelina County.

Increase the number of food banks that offer healthy food and beverage options in the community.

By partnering with a regional food distributor East Texas Food Bank and representatives from local food pantries including rural food pantries a new produce delivery system has been established in Angelina County. The added route will provide fresh produce to over 16,000 food pantry clients, scheduled for delivery once a month at a rural pantry.

Increase settings signing clients up for the WIC program at ACCHD Primary Care Clinic; Immunization office; ACCHD Texas Health Steps; Daycares: Little Britches, Little Panthers, Just Kidz, Kiddie Land, Tiny Town, Headstart; Family Crisis Center; and Pregnancy Help Center.

The development of a WIC referral program has made it possible for community partners to be able to refer clients to our WIC offices and provide them with information about WIC services. The referral system is being used in ten settings across Angelina County. As a result of this referral system, WIC enrollment has increased.

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Angelina County Public Health Coalition
Angelina County & Cities Health District
Lufkin, Texas

Increase the number of new tools or resources to improve awareness of available chronic disease prevention and management services in the community at ACCHD WIC office; ACCHD Primary Care Clinic; Daycares: Little Britches, Little Panthers, Just Kidz, Kiddie Land, Tiny Town, Headstart; Huntington BB Pharmacy, Zavalla Food Pantry, and Huntington Food Program.

A “Guide to Healthy Living” has been developed and implemented in over 10 settings by training employees on how to screen for healthy living and distribute the guide. This guide is often distributed with the “Healthy Food Access” resource guide. With website access and other media outlets such as billboards and newspapers, we predict that this resource guide has reached the entire population of Angelina County.

Increase settings at ACCHD and Burke Center that make “prescriptions” for non-pharmaceutical interventions like exercise in the community.

The “Choose Fresh” Rx Program has been developed in partnership with a primary care clinic and a local grocery store. Primary care providers are able to screen patients for chronic disease risk and food access and provide patients with a prescription to purchase fresh produce from the local grocer. The prescription also includes goal setting and provider follows up over time to monitor goal progress.

Increase ACCHD; Burke Center; Dr. Fercowitz’ office; Dr. Caskey’s office; Dr. Hafernick’s office; Little Panthers Daycare; and Headstart Daycare settings that create and implement policies to assess for healthy behaviors, including access to fruits and vegetables and neighborhood walkability, during the medical history intake with patients, in the community.

Healthy behaviors are being assessed in three primary care sites as a result of implementing simple screening questions in the medical history programs at these settings. When low-food access or risks for chronic disease are present providers have been trained to provide our newly developed resource guides to the patient. In the future, the local headstart will also screen for healthy behaviors during their client intake.

For more information contact:

Kristina Childress, MPH
936-633-0607 kchildress@acchd.us

Shanelle Stewart, RN, BSN
936-633-1412 sstewart@acchd.us

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