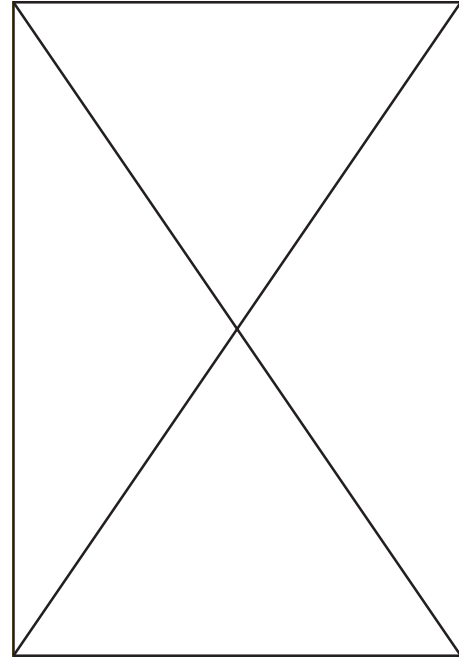


From Table to Tush.
Weighing The Truth About Portion Size and Obesity

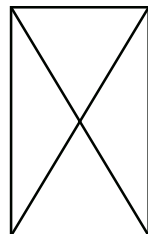
Lisa Young, Ph.D., RD will be the keynote speaker at the M-HPRC's second annual workshop on **December 9, 2002 at the Augusta Civic Center**. Dr. Young is from New York University and completed her dissertation on the subject of the contribution of increasing portion sized to the US obesity epidemic. Her research on this topic has been published in a number of public health journals and quoted in many popular magazines.

Dr. Young found that marketplace food portion have increased and, compared to just 15 – 25 years ago, companies are using larger sizes as selling points (e.g. Double Gulp, Supersize, etc.). She also found that restaurants are using larger plates, pizzerias are using larger pans and fast food restaurants are using larger drink and french fry containers. Dr. Young will have many more interesting facts to share on December 9th. To find out more about the workshop or to sign up, go to the MCPH website at www.mcph.org, and search under Conferences & Trainings for the month of December or our M-HPRC link.



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**MAINE CENTER FOR
 PUBLIC HEALTH**
 12 Church Street
 Augusta, Maine 04330
 Phone: 207-629-9272
 Fax: 207-629-9277

MAINE CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Improving the Health of Maine Communities

Fall 2002

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Maine Center for Public Health

12 Church Street

Augusta ME, 04330

207.629.9272

www.mcph.org

From the President

This is certainly a challenging time to be a public health advocate in Maine. We are facing a tremendous conflict between serious health issues and declining resources, both public and private.

Dr. Dora Mills has made us well aware of our chronic disease epidemic and the need to address both smoking and obesity, especially among our youth. We have not resolved our infectious disease problems (e.g. HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis, West Nile), or substance abuse, mental health and domestic violence issues. I don't have the space to be comprehensive. No matter how long our list of public health problems has been it has now been lengthened by the serious threats of war and bioterrorism.

Meanwhile our legislature is about to meet to decide how to deal with a projected one billion dollar deficit during the next two fiscal years. Many people have pointed out that budgets are the real policy statements; they reveal our shared values more than any speech or written document. Make sure that your voice is heard during the next session, through the Maine Public Health Association, the Coalition for Smoking or Health, or some other vehicle. We need your leadership, and we need to work together.
 Paul Campbell

Building Evaluation Capacity for HIV Prevention

Michele Polacsek, at the Maine Center for Public Health, has been working with the state BOH HIV/STD program for the past several years on building evaluation capacity for HIV prevention. Initial work focused on drafting an evaluation strategic plan for the state program using CDC evaluation guidance documents and local needs assessment information provided by the state HIV Community Planning Group. Implementation of the evaluation strategic plan began this year.

A needs assessment was designed and distributed to HIV prevention service providers around the state and subsequently a series of four trainings were developed and delivered for service providers between January and June 2002. These trainings were designed to build skills in the areas of evaluation planning, design, indicator development and data collection.

A workbook was developed to accompany the trainings. Capacity-building sessions were also held with program staff who articulated other areas of need around evaluation which have since become part of the work plan. A web-based reporting system was developed during the same period and is currently up and running. Our work with the HIV program is ongoing.

Introducing Kim Dube MCPH Office Manager

The Maine Center for Public Health has a new Office Manager. Kim Dube took over administrative responsibilities on September 25.

Kim lives in Auburn and is taking classes toward a business degree at Husson College. We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of her experience, expertise and energy; please help us welcome her to Maine's public health community when you call or visit the Center.

Maine – Harvard Prevention Research Center Update

The Maine-Harvard Research Center is completing its second year under the guidance and leadership of an active Steering Committee (see list of Steering Committee members.) With a focus on youth overweight (the term obesity is no longer used by CDC to describe youth) the M-HPRC has sought to improve dissemination of information on evidence-based strategies to address the problem, provide technical assistance to plan, implement and evaluate effective strategies and assist in building the infrastructure necessary to track the problem.

Some accomplishments in the past year:

Preventing Childhood Obesity. The Skinny on TV and Soda.

This December 5, 2001 Workshop brought two Harvard Prevention Research Center researchers to Maine to talk about the relationship between TV viewing and obesity and soda consumption and obesity. The research was very compelling and audience members developed a list of potential next steps. As a result of receiving this important information, a number of individuals and organizations have taken steps to increase awareness, pass policies and develop interventions to reduce TV viewing and soda consumption. Some of these communities include the Franklin Healthy Community Coalition, the Blue Hill Coalition, Healthy Futures and Hampden.

Info Monthly

Beginning in January 2002, the M-HPRC has been sending out monthly emails to subscribers with links to research and information related to youth overweight, physical activity and nutrition. The project began with 48 subscribers and now includes close to 90 people. Some examples of the research and information provided each month include: "Use of a mass-media campaign to improve physical activity", "Raising heart-smart kids takes a coordinated family effort", "A primary care-based intervention to improve physical activity and dietary behaviors among adolescents", and "Tips for raising a healthy eater". The purpose of providing this information is to assist organizations and community coalitions with planning and evaluating programs and policies to address youth overweight.

Training for School Nurses

The most effective way to determine if a child is overweight or at risk for overweight is by calculating the Body Mass Index (BMI). New guidelines for CDC on calculating BMI have come out in recent years. Height and weight measurements are often done incorrectly giving an inaccurate BMI. The M-HPRC has worked with the Dept. of Education and the BOH in providing training for school nurses on the importance of proper technique for height and weight measurement as well as understanding the problem of youth overweight. These trainings were conducted as part of the Bureau of Health's child health survey trainings and at the School Nurses Summer Institute last August.

Soda/Snack Vending Machine Policy Initiative

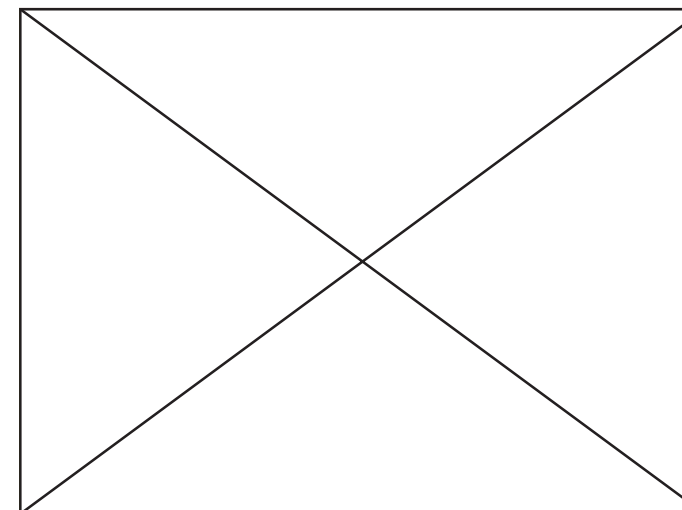
Our schools have a vital role in promoting health by modeling healthy behaviors. Across the state many school groups and organizations have begun to examine the foods and drinks that are available through vending machines. To help promote better vending machine policies, the M-HPRC, BOH Oral Health Program, Maine Nutrition Network and USM took the lead to work with a group of about 25 individuals to develop a model policy for school vending machines. The policy uses CDC guidelines for school vending machine foods and eliminates sodas and other drinks that are not 100% fruit juice. The policy is being piloted by several communities around the state and will be evaluated, revised and disseminated statewide next year.

Youth Overweight Surveillance System

The M-HPRC has been working with the Maine Bureau of Health, the Department of Education, community physicians and others, to develop a plan for youth overweight surveillance. The purpose of the system is to monitor trends in unhealthy weight among Maine children and youth in order to assist in planning, implementation and evaluation of statewide and local programs and policies. We hope that such a system will be operational in the next year.

Technical Assistance to Communities

The M-HPRC has provided technical assistance to several communities to identify evidence-based interventions, develop logic models and identify measurement tools. These communities are SAD 22 in Bangor, Blue Hill, Franklin Healthy Community Coalition and the Eastern Maine Medical Center's Move and Improve program. Presentations for communities around issues of obesity have also been completed.



Dora Mills, MD, MPH and Maine DHS Commissioner Kevin Concannon

State says "Enough is Enough" to soda

On October 22nd, and in front of 870 empty cans of soda which is the amount consumed in a single year by the average teen-age boy, the Department of Human Services, Bureau of Health announced the launch of a media campaign urging Maine families to cut back on their soda consumption.

Dr. Dora Mills announced that newspaper, TV, and radio advertisements aimed at educating Maine parents on soda consumption began statewide on Friday October 25, 2002. The soda campaign came five days after the Bureau of Health ran full-page 'Enough is Enough' ads in papers across the state.

Declaring that half of all Mainers are dying before their time from tobacco use, poor nutrition, and physical inactivity, these advertisements announced the state would be vigorously confronting these issues in the months ahead.

M-HPRC Steering Committee Members Acknowledged

The staff of the Maine-Harvard Prevention Research Center wishes to express sincere appreciation to its Steering Committee members for all of their efforts against childhood obesity.

Richard Aronson, Leah Binder, Maureen Clancy, Richard Cook, Thomas Downing, Jacqueline Ellis, DeEtte Hall, Nellie Hedstrom, Robert Holmberg, Wendie Lagasse, Janet Leiter, Barbara Leonard, Dora Anne Mills, Mary Moody, Brenda Obert, William Primmerman, Burt Richardson, Valerie Ricker, Christine Sady, Nancy Sonnenfeld, Meredith Tipton, Richard Veilleux, Dennise Whitley, and Debra Wigand.

What's New at the Center?

Strategic Planning Process will Address Opiate Addiction Deaths

Maine has been experiencing a rapid increase in the number of deaths due to opiate overdose. By June 30 of this year (2002), sixty Mainers had died. The Office of Substance Abuse (OSA) in the Department of Behavioral and Developmental Services (BDS) has joined forces with the Center, the Maine Public Health Association (MPHA) and other organizations to discuss the issue and draft a strategic plan.

The Center engaged Ann Conway to manage the project. Ann has conducted interviews with experts and is completing a literature search on the subject. She is staffing a task force composed of key stakeholders from around the state who are meeting at the Center during November and December to identify the causes of the problem and potential solutions. The stakeholders will include a broad range of participants including members of the public health, medical, law enforcement communities and many others. An initial plan will be developed by December 21, 2002, in time for discussions during this next legislative session.

Public Health Emergency Preparedness Training

In July 2002, the Maine Bureau of Health was notified that it will receive \$8.5 million for public health emergency preparedness from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The Maine Center for Public Health will work with the Bureau on this grant to provide training to health professionals. MCPH will be collaborating with the Harvard School of Public Health's Center for Public Health Emergency Preparedness to identify training needs, develop curriculum, and evaluate effectiveness.

MCPH.ORG is Reorganized, Updated

The Maine Center for Public Health has spent the better portion of the summer reorganizing our web site. Besides a new and cohesive "look", the site has a more user-friendly format and consistent links to get you where you need to go.

Soon the site will be expanded yet again with information related to our bioterrorism training efforts. The M-HPRC and Turning Point have been adding to their portions of the site on a regular basis and are full of useful information as well.

As always, user feedback is welcome.