



News from the Foundation for Healthy Communities

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Commission to prevent childhood obesity unveils policy recommendations

A state commission, with staff support from the Foundation for Healthy Communities, charged with studying legislative and policy strategies to prevent childhood obesity presented its [recommendations](#) to Governor John Lynch at the State House last month. The list of 14 recommendations includes items such as designing statewide guidelines for food sold in schools, restaurant menu-labeling, and creating more opportunities for children to be physically active in and out of school.

House Bill 1422 established the New Hampshire Commission on the Prevention of Childhood Obesity in 2008. Its members are made up of lawmakers, doctors and other professionals representing varied disciplines in health and education. After more than a year of research and public testimony, the commission put together its recommendations based on current national guidelines and strategies modeled in New Hampshire communities and other states. The recommendations are meant to benefit children statewide.

One of the commission's recommendations resulted in [HB 1479](#), introduced in the legislature this session, to have schools record the body mass index of children in selected grades in order to screen for health risk. The bill has received public support from First Lady Dr. Susan Lynch, the [NH Hospital Association](#), the NH Department of Education and many others.

Among the other recommendations is that New Hampshire implement children's menu-labeling in chain restaurants. This would provide

consumers with information to make informed choices. Another recommendation suggests that the New Hampshire Board of Education approval new rules regarding the sale of nutrient-dense foods in schools. Other recommendations address issues of physical activity programs for children in pre-school and after school, screening for health and fitness, farm-to-school food purchasing, and dietician visits paid for by all medical insurance if a child's doctor refers him or her.

The report also highlights success stories from some New Hampshire communities, which have put their own policies in place to promote healthy lifestyles. The Gilford School District, for example, already has implemented health guidelines when it comes to food sold in schools that all schools in the district follow. CATCH Kids Clubs, which promote physical activity and healthier snacks in after school programs, are operating in more than 50 locations statewide.

In 2006, the Foundation for Healthy Communities announced results from a [study](#) which showed that nearly one third of New Hampshire's kids are overweight or obese. The report focused on more than 1,400 children across the state between the ages of 6 and 12. The data gave doctors, parents and educators

NOTES & CALENDAR

- Call for nominations for the 5th annual Clint Jones NH Nursing Award coming in March!
- March 31: [NH Comprehensive Cancer Collaboration annual meeting](#)
- June 1-7: [Walk NH Week](#)
- September 26-28: [FHC/NHHA annual meeting](#)



Gov. John Lynch and First Lady Dr. Susan Lynch pose with members of the Commission on the Prevention of Childhood Obesity, who presented their recommendations in Concord

information that they'd never had before about childhood obesity prevalence in our state.

Funding to support the staff and printing of the report was generously provided by the Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation. Staff support for the commission's work was provided by the Foundation for Healthy Communities. The full report also is available at www.healthynh.com



Hospital systems have major impact on state economy

Hospitals in New Hampshire have a significant impact on the state's economy, generating billions of dollars annually in economic activity and directly employing more than 37,500 people in communities throughout the state. That's according to a new study, *The Economic Impact of Hospital Systems in New Hampshire*, released by the New Hampshire Hospital Association and the Foundation for Healthy Communities. The report quantifies the substantial economic impact of New Hampshire's 26 hospital systems, which are defined as the variety of health care services available from a hospital, such as primary care and specialty physician practices, ambulatory surgery centers, nursing homes, or health clinics.

Key findings of the study include:

- Health care accounts for almost 13% of New Hampshire's private-sector employment.
- New Hampshire's hospital systems employees earn about \$2.3

year in wages, salaries and benefits.

- More than 28,000 New Hampshire citizens work in secondary jobs that are related to their community hospitals, earning \$1.3 billion a year.
- The total employment impact of hospital systems in New Hampshire is 65,651 direct and secondary jobs, earning \$3.7 billion.

Secondary economic impacts are created from jobs in other businesses and industries which support hospital systems. Examples of those are the oil company which sells fuel to a hospital, landscapers who tend hospital grounds and provide snow plow services, and companies which provide computer maintenance and services.

While the estimates of economic impact are substantial, they are only a partial accounting of the benefits to New Hampshire. According to the study, a strong health care network, in which hospitals play a key role, also adds to the attractiveness of a community as a place to live, locate a business or retire.

As "baby boomers" age, more families will base their decision on where to retire on the availability of quality health care. New Hampshire consistently is number one in the country among all other states in health care quality.

In rural communities, attracting and keeping highly-skilled professionals can be a challenge. Hospitals in rural areas are a source of high-tech jobs for young people who otherwise might leave small communities. Hospitals provide services that contribute to a high quality of life and a productive workforce.

The contents of this economic impact report can be relevant in public policy discussions regarding access to care, community benefits and health care cost containment. Supportive state and federal policies will help hospitals continue to meet the needs of the communities they serve. The full report will be publicly released and available online soon. 🍏

New Hampshire Cancer Plan 2014 to be released

This is an exciting year for the [New Hampshire Comprehensive Cancer Collaboration](#) (NH CCC). NH CCC is kicking off 2010 with New Hampshire Cancer Plan, 2014.

The new plan will officially be released at the NH CCC's Annual Meeting, *Reduce Cancer Risk by Changing Behavior: What You Can Do*, on Wednesday, March 31, 2010. Executive summaries of the plan will be available to participants. The plan in its entirety should be available to the public in February on the NH CCC website, www.NHCancerPlan.org.

Each of the Collaboration's five workgroups (primary prevention, prevention and early detection, treatment and survivorship, palliation and emerging issues) will spend the next five years implementing the goals and objectives of the new plan. NH CCC's members and statewide partners worked long hours evaluating previous accomplishments and developing realistic objectives aimed at reducing the burden of cancer in NH.

Using existing data, and designed with an emphasis on measurable outcomes, the new plan is a road map for each of the workgroups. All the workgroups will prioritize activities with an emphasis on reducing/eliminating tobacco use, promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity, increasing screening rates, and improving access to quality treatment and palliative care for survivors.

Plans are underway to develop "issue briefs" targeting emerging issues in cancer in New Hampshire. For example, a recently released brief about cumulative radiation exposure from medical imaging focuses particularly on the exposure due to higher utilization of computed tomography (CT) scans.

The 2014 plan brings a new beginning to comprehensive cancer prevention and control in NH. This is an opportunity time for you to become a member of the NH CCC. Help us by collaborating to conquer cancer. 🍏



New resource available for families in Nashua area

The Family Resource Center of Greater Nashua is a collaboration of organizations which work together to offer programs and services to educate, support and promote positive family growth and development. It began with a conversation has grown into a wonderful resource. The key agencies which established the center are: the Greater Nashua Healthy Community Collaborative (GNHCC), the Adult Learning Center, Child & Family Services, UNH Extension Services, Prevention Makes Cents, Greater Nashua Birth to Six Mental Health Team, Southern NH Services, and the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Nashua.

During the summer of 2008, noting an increase in the number of cases in a local Emergency Room for suspected child abuse and neglect, the GNHCC conducted a survey of local agencies

that dealt with children and their families. It was found that although there were many programs being offered, they were frequently limited to treatment, rather than prevention, and were also restricted by time of day, location, and child care availability. Several survey respondents mentioned their dream to one day establish a neighborhood Family Resource Center - one location where agencies could pool their resources and offer families primary prevention materials and programming.

In October 2008 representatives from 12 agencies gathered together to explore the idea of establishing a certified Family Resource Center. Meetings continued for the following 11 months and in September 2009, with the generous support of space from the Boys & Girls Club of

Greater Nashua, and funding from the NH Division of Children, Youth and Families, the Center offered its first program.

Presentations at the center have since covered topics such as parenting in a tough economy, dating violence, managing money, and dealing with holiday stress. Ongoing programs include the "Circle of Parents" support group where parents build their parenting skills in a friendly, supportive way, and the "Ultimate Playgroup" for parents and children from birth to age 5. All programs are free of charge with child care, and transportation is available if needed. Contact Bernie Cameron at bcameron@healthynh.com for more information.

The FHC provides staff support for the GNHCC with funding from St. Joseph Hospital and Southern New Hampshire Medical Center.

Redesigned HEAL web site provides valuable tools and resources

Beginning in late January, visitors to HEAL's website, www.healnh.org, will find an array of tools and resources to help community leaders, grass roots champions, and state and local policy makers create healthier environments in places where people live, learn, work and play in New Hampshire. Healthier communities offer children and families convenient, affordable and safe access to opportunities for healthy eating and active living.

HEAL's tools and resources help partners in cities and towns increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods through policy actions driven by local policy-makers, community leaders and community partners. Results from such policy actions include convenient access to farmers' markets, improved opportunities for walking and bicycling, and accessible parks and open spaces for recreation.

School partners can find support from HEAL to promote healthy eating and active living for students and staff through policies, practices and programs that improve access to healthy foods and beverages, and opportunities for physical activity. Nutrition standards for all foods and beverages provided at schools, standards for daily physical activity, and

policies for before/after school and preschool/early child care programs are some examples.

HEAL also helps community partners support restaurants, grocery stores, convenience stores and other public service venues to offer and promote healthy foods and beverages. Examples include grocers that procure locally grown healthy foods, convenience stores that offer and display more fruits and vegetables, and restaurants that add healthy food and beverage items to their menus.

Additional HEAL tools and resources help work sites adopt policies and offer programs that promote access to healthy foods and beverages and opportunities for physical activity for employees and dependents.

HEAL NH is sponsored by a collaboration of foundations and state agencies committed to promoting health and wellbeing for all residents. Key funders include the HNHfoundation, Endowment for Health, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare Foundation, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation, NH Charitable Foundation, and NH Department of Health and Human Services.





The Foundation for Healthy Communities is a nonprofit corporation that exists to improve health and health care, and includes New Hampshire hospitals, health plans, clinicians, home care agencies and public policy leaders.

The Foundation's primary objectives are:

- 1. To collect, analyze, and evaluate data about health and about the delivery, quality, management and organization of health services;*
- 2. To promote, sponsor and conduct applied research and scientific investigation relative to quality, health delivery process improvement and health policy; and*
- 3. To communicate information, sponsor education and training, and facilitate innovation and access for the improvement of health and the creation of healthy communities.*



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*Improving health and health care
delivery in New Hampshire.*