2023 Health & Well-Being Team Highlights

Several programs were offered across the state engaging adults, teens and youth in health and wellness

The Need:

Public Health drives economic and community strength - it creates a productive workforce, lowers healthcare costs, and contributes to overall well-being. Data indicates that challenges in New Hampshire affecting equitable access to good health include an aging population, disproportionate suicide rates, and increasing youth mental health concerns. Additionally, lower income families and communities are facing insufficient fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, and access to nutritious foods. There is a need to provide education and resources to empower individuals to make healthy choices and there is also a need to couple this education with ‘upstream’ systems-level changes that can make the places where NH residents live and work healthier places to be.

What we have done:

In 2023, UNH Extension Health & Well-Being staff implemented over 350 online and in-person in-depth educational programs across all ten NH counties reaching over 7,900 participants.

Healthy-living focused social media made 240,171 impressions.

Technical assistance was provided to 23 different sites where 117 systems-level changes were implemented reaching approximately 7,386 individuals.

An additional 12,195 online and in-person informational resources were accessed.
Select Impacts:

88% of surveyed Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) youth participants reported improving their knowledge of healthy eating or choosing healthier foods; 31% of 6-8th grade students and 28% of 3-5th grade students decreased consumption of sugary beverages.

Programs focused on older adults such as Walk with EaseSM, Boost Your Brain, and Chronic Disease & Pain Management resulted in increases in: physical activity, emotional well-being, and the overall ability to take charge of their health.

96% of surveyed EFNEP adult participants reported an improvement in food resource management practices, such as cooking dinner at home, comparing food prices, planning meals before shopping, and making a grocery list.

Over 400 youth participated in programs to improve mental health and well-being including Teen Mental Health First Aid and nature-based wellness. 88% of youth participants agreed or strongly agreed that the skills and techniques they learned at the Mindful Movement and Hike program will help them better manage their stress.

Over 1,100 educators, parents and community members were trained in Mental Health First Aid and Youth Mental Health First Aid. Participants report they are confident that they can ask anyone directly whether they are considering suicide (81%), have a supportive conversation with anyone about mental health or substance use challenges (89%), and respond to substance use crisis including and overdose and know what to do to keep an individual safe (80%).

Research suggests that the Chronic Pain Self-Management program reduces long term health impacts and costs by reducing dependency on drugs and visits to emergency rooms and that for every $1 spent to implement programs such as the EFNEP nutrition and physical activity education program, up to $10.64 is saved in health care costs.