

2010-11 PFT Successes

Title: Walk Kansas PFT: Nutrition, Food Safety and Health

The Situation

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that:

- 52% of people living in Kansas do not meet the minimum goal for physical activity – 150 minutes of moderate activity per week, or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity per week.
- 81% of adult Kansans report not eating fruits and vegetables five or more times daily.
- 65% of adults are overweight or obese and 75% have high blood pressure.

Nationally, chronic disease is responsible for more than 70% of health care expenditures. Poor diet and physical inactivity have been linked to many health conditions – including obesity, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, heart disease, certain cancers, respiratory disorders joint problems and osteoporosis – as well as to psychosocial problems.

Healthy lifestyle choices such as being physically active, eating more healthfully, maintaining a healthy weight, and managing stress more effectively, can delay onset of chronic disease and even prevent it. Lifestyle habits also play a key role in managing symptoms of these diseases.

Public Value:

Participants in Walk Kansas are challenged to lead a healthier life by being more physically active, making better nutrition choices, and dealing with stress more effectively. The public value of this program is realized when Kansans adopt healthy lifestyle habits which will lead to fewer weight-related chronic and acute diseases and improved quality of life. This will benefit other community members by lowering the public cost of health care and health insurance and increasing the number of productive contributing citizens.



What We Did

K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) Family and Consumer Sciences professionals provided leadership in working with local partners (community task forces, agencies, service groups, schools, faith based groups, employers, etc.) to offer Walk Kansas in 2011. This program is an evidence-based model that is adapted each year to reflect current nutrition and physical activity guidelines and research findings.

Participants in the program (co-workers, family members, friends, neighbors) formed teams of six people. If each member reached the minimum goal for physical activity during the 8 weeks, the team would, collectively, walk 423 miles, which is the distance across the state of Kansas. Teams had the option of setting a goal that goes beyond this minimum.

Participants logged minutes of activity each week, and the amount fruits and vegetables they ate. Team progress was reported weekly by captains and recorded at www.walkkansas.org.

Each participant received a weekly newsletter and most had the opportunity to attend health and nutrition related classes and activities, offered by KSRE and partnering organizations, in their community. The Walk Kansas website continues to provide current information on healthy lifestyle habits including “how to” videos for selecting and preparing nutritious foods, walking technique, strengthening exercises and more.

Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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Outcomes

In 2011, the 10th anniversary of Walk Kansas, the program was one of KSRE's largest with 19,785 participants.

Through program evaluation surveys the following outcomes were reported:

- 90% met the minimum physical activity goals for physical activity during the 8 weeks; and 74% were confident or completely confident they can continue this amount of activity during the next 6 months.
- 89% increased fruit and vegetable consumption during the 8 weeks; 75% were confident/completely confident they could continue this habit over the next 6 months.
- As a result of healthy lifestyle practices during the Walk Kansas program, these changes were reported:
 - Increased endurance - 56%
 - Increased energy – 54%
 - Better attitude – 54%
 - Improved sleep – 43%
 - Decreased weight – 39%
 - Increased muscle strength – 36%
 - Better able to manage stress – 33%
 - Increased flexibility – 31%
 - Lower blood pressure – 14%
 - Lower blood cholesterol – 7%
 - Better diabetes control – 5%

Success Stories:

This was the first year we, as a family, chose a goal to get fit and eat healthy and to join Walk Kansas. As the team captain, I have lost a total of 18 pounds in the 8 weeks. As a family, we wanted to get out and walk – individually and as a family. We have done many benefit walks for cancer and just for fun, and will continue after Walk Kansas is over this year. Thanks for the wonderful opportunity.

Frontier District

When offered the chance to join a Walk Kansas team, who would have known it would make such a difference? I grew up on meat and potatoes and moved on to convenience foods. I have found that fruits and vegetables can be convenient too. Exercise has been added to my couch potato lifestyle, and I really do feel better. With all this newly found health and wellness, I lost 20 pounds and best of all have used my healthier, slimmer self to walk away from the grips of nicotine.

Shawnee County

As gas prices have increased, I have walked 5 to 8 blocks one way to do errands in town.

Southwind District

Before Walk Kansas, I was exercising 30 minutes/4 days a week. When I joined Walk Kansas our team took on the challenge of walking around the state and I have increased activity to 60-90 minutes/7 days a week. I have lost 5 ½ pounds in 8 weeks. I am energized and ready to continue my journey, and have decided to continue in the spirit of Walk Kansas and walk to the east coast.

Butler County

It was motivating in our workplace to come together toward a common goal of making ourselves healthier! I appreciate the opportunity to add ways to our jobs to incorporate physical fitness and health as there is a direct impact on performance and productivity!

Douglas County

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