

MCBC

Madelia Community-Based Collaborative

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For Immediate Release:

Local Community Group Encourages Healthy Beverage Choices in Madelia

Madelia Community-Based Collaborative Receives Grant Funding Aimed at Reducing Obesity

Madelia, Minn. - A local community group, the Madelia Community-Based Collaborative (MCBC), has partnered with the Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) in Faribault, Martin & Watonwan Counties to implement a series of strategies to increase access to healthy beverages in the community of Madelia.

MCBC is working toward the goal of improving the health and well-being of the citizens and families in Madelia. The local group includes broad community representation consisting of members from the Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic, Madelia School District, Tony Downs Food Company, Public Health, Glen Taylor Nursing Institute for Family and Society, Minnesota State University, Mankato Nursing Program, Luther Memorial Home and Watonwan County Vision for Families and Children.

The request for grant funding was the result, in part, of a community-health assessment conducted by the Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic in May 2013. The assessment found that the top three health concerns of Madelia residents are obesity, cancer and diabetes. Working to increase access to healthy beverages throughout the community is one strategy to improve the overall health of all residents, and to decrease the incidents of obesity and diabetes.

“The Madelia Community-Based Collaborative was very concerned by the current rates of obesity in the community as well as diabetes, which commonly results from obesity,” said Candace Fenske, Administrator for the Madelia Community Hospital & Clinic.

Studies have repeatedly shown a direct link between the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, such as soda, sweetened teas, flavored milks and sports drinks, and significant weight gain in children and adults. Just drinking one 12-ounce serving of a sugary drink each day has been shown to lead to weight gains. Those sugary beverage-caused weight

gains have been a significant contributor to the obesity epidemic, which today stands at 28 percent in Watonwan County. The county's diabetes rate is also higher than the state average.

While the project is still in the formative stage, it will center on reaching out to local organizations, businesses and individuals to voluntarily participate in the effort to increase the consumption of healthy beverages. For example, an interested worksite could choose to improve their vending offerings, ensuring a variety of healthy beverage options are available when employees purchase beverages. In addition to partnering with businesses and organizations in Madelia, MCBC also plans to implement a community-wide campaign, providing education and resources to community members regarding the health benefits of consuming healthy beverages like water, low-fat milk, sparkling water, tea, coffee and fruit-infused waters instead of sugar-sweetened beverages.

“The heart of this project is about making the healthy choice the easy choice,” says Chera Sevcik, Statewide Health Improvement Project Supervisor for Faribault, Martin & Watonwan Counties. “It creates an opportunity for community partners to encourage healthy beverage choices, and it gives the citizens of Madelia the information and opportunity to voluntarily make healthy beverage decisions. It's not about banning or taking anything away, rather empowering citizens to make the healthier choice.”

The grant funding began November 1, 2013 and will run through October 2015.

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