

Primary Prevention: Physical Activity Education for Providers at the Tennessee Department of Health

Collaborators: Maggie Smith, Dr. Patti Scott, and other Office of Primary Prevention staff

Background

There are three levels of health prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The Office of Primary Prevention (OPP) in the Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) focuses on the first level: prevention. It was established in 2012 to address upstream solutions to the biggest health issues facing Tennesseans in an effort to maintain wellness and prevent the development of diseases. This is done through addressing the built environment and its relation to health, involvement in the Tennessee Livability Collaborative, and addressing the clinical connection to primary prevention.

- Example: Encourage physical activity through the built environment to prevent individuals from becoming overweight



Aims

- **Assist University of Tennessee-Chattanooga MPH faculty in creating a physical activity course for TDH providers and staff**
- **Assist in an early language development program called “Talk With Me Baby”**
- To reduce or eliminate risk factors for diseases through interventions implemented before there is evidence of disease or injury.
- Have a positive impact on the health of all Tennesseans, not just those that are served through the clinics
- Establishes a culture change within the local health department and state department to focus on Primary Prevention

Methods

- Use survey responses from county health department staff and providers to inform structure and content of the physical activity course
- Connect with UT-Chattanooga MPH faculty about collaboration, development, and timeline of the course through weekly phone calls and an in-person meeting
- Create surveys to get feedback on the “Talk With Me Baby” course

Outcomes

1. OPP staff, UT-Chattanooga MPH faculty, and myself developed an outline, timeline, and main objectives for a physical activity course that will be available for all local health departments.
2. The responses from the “Talk With Me Baby” survey were shared and disseminated with the “Talk With Me Baby” team and instructors to improve upcoming courses



Discussion

Through my projects, I was able to see public health in action on the state level. I learned about various state initiatives and was able to see effective collaboration between departments. I was able to see first hand how important it is for programs to collaborate with stakeholders and community leaders to create a cohesive message that will be accessible for all people.

Summary

I learned about current OPP initiatives to better improve the health of all Tennesseans, not just those seen at TDH clinics. I was able to assist in the organization and the creation of a physical activity course with OPP staff and UT-Chattanooga MPH faculty. I also assisted with the early language development course “Talk With Me Baby”.

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