

YMCA Southcoast

YMCASouthcoast
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YMCA Southcoast SELECTED FOR NATIONAL HEALTH & WELLNESS INITIATIVE; ACHIEVE INITIATIVE FUELS COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO COMBAT OBESITY AND CHRONIC DISEASES

YMCA Southcoast One of 43 Communities Across the U.S. Selected for National Health & Wellness Initiative: ACHIEVE

(New Bedford, MARCH 25, 2009) - The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and the YMCA of the USA (Y-USA) today announced that YMCA Southcoast has been selected to become part of the Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental ChangE (ACHIEVE) initiative. YMCA Southcoast is one of 43 U.S. communities that have been selected in 21 states to advance community leadership in the nation's efforts to prevent chronic diseases and related risk factors through a locally collaborative approach. This approach, called Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental change (ACHIEVE), is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)'s Healthy Communities Program.

The purpose of ACHIEVE is to bring together local leaders and stakeholders to build healthier communities by promoting policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that focus on physical activity, nutrition, tobacco cessation, obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. ACHIEVE is an innovative approach that brings together all sectors of a community to spur policy change toward prevention of chronic diseases. The 2009 ACHIEVE communities will build on the successes learned in the 2008 ACHIEVE pilot communities. The ACHIEVE approach aims to promote improvements such as

increased access to and use of attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; revised school food contracts that include more fruits and vegetables and whole grain foods; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly, among others.

ACHIEVE fosters collaborative partnerships between city and county health officials, city and county government, tribal programs, parks and recreation departments, local YMCAs, local health-related coalitions, and other representatives from the school, business, health, and community sectors. State Departments of Health are also available to help provide state-based resources and information as well as linkages to other collaborators to help communities meet their goals. ACHIEVE recognizes the roles of these institutions as trusted community conveners and aims to combine public health expertise from the state and local levels with the experience of the YMCA and local parks and recreation departments that have expertise in providing community support and outreach.

Donna Querim, currently Nurse Clinician for the Cardiac Prevention Program for Southcoast Hospitals Group, has been confirmed as YMCA Southcoast's Partner Coach for the ACHIEVE program. Along with obtaining a Juris Doctor Degree from Southern New England School of Law, Donna received both her Bachelors and Masters degrees from Salve Regina University. A member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, Donna has over twenty years of nursing experience.

The 43 communities selected to join the initiative will become part of an aggressive social movement that is mobilizing leaders in local communities to respond to the public health challenge of obesity, physical inactivity and poor nutrition. This movement was inspired, in part, by YMCA of the USA's Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC). So far, 81 communities have convened leadership teams through PHC and another 10 communities have convened through ACHIEVE to make changes in their communities. For a complete listing of all funded communities, please visit the ACHIEVE Web site at www.achievecommunities.org or CDC's Healthy Communities Program's Web site at: www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram.

YMCA Southcoast applied for this program and was selected after a competitive review process.

"Southcoast Hospitals Group is pleased to partner with the YMCA Southcoast to support the ACHIEVE Initiative", said Jim Rattray, Vice President of Marketing and Public Affairs at Southcoast Hospitals Group.

“Promoting healthier lifestyles and supporting healthy communities will help us meet our goal of reducing chronic diseases. Through community collaboration, we can create a synergy that assists people in making healthy choices where they live, work and play.”

“The team-based approach modeled on YMCA of the USA’s Pioneering Healthier Communities, allows communities to provide a cohesive response to the lifestyle challenges facing our nation,” said Nancy LaRue Bonell. “By connecting the leaders who can affect change, communities are helping to make healthy behaviors an easier choice, not just the healthier choice. These improved opportunities for active living and healthy eating are laying a foundation to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases that have taken such a serious toll on Americans.”

What’s Next for ACHIEVE teams

Local health departments and YMCAs will immediately begin to compose teams consisting of 10 local leaders. The teams will include: elected officials; state and local directors of public health organizations; business leaders from various industries; and, leaders of local schools, parks and recreation departments, hospitals, and other community organizations. These teams will convene at an Action Institute in Alexandria, Virginia, in June 2008. At the conference, attendees learn about evidence-based approaches to affecting change in their communities from nationally known experts.

YMCA Southcoast strives to meet the health and social service needs of families throughout the Southcoast area. There are currently five branch sites serving a total of more than 16,000 members: the Dartmouth YMCA, Fall River YMCA, New Bedford YMCA, Mattapoisett YMCA, and the Gleason Family YMCA in Wareham. YMCAs embrace people of all ages, incomes, abilities, religions and ethnic backgrounds. As part of a national and world-wide organization, the YMCA Southcoast strives to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Financial assistance is available for membership and programs. For more information, call 508-996-9622, visit the nearest YMCA Southcoast branch, or go to www.ymcasouthcoast.org.

The YMCA: A Long-Standing Commitment to Health of Spirit, Mind and Body

YMCA of the USA is the national resource office for the nation's 2,663 YMCAs, which serve nearly 20.2 million people each year, including 9.4 million children under the age of 18. Through a variety of programs and services focused on the holistic development of children and youth, health and well-being for all and family strengthening, YMCAs unite men, women and children of all ages, faiths, backgrounds, abilities and income levels. From urban areas to small towns, YMCAs have proudly served America's communities for nearly 160 years by building healthy spirit, mind and body for all. Visit www.ymca.net to find your local YMCA.