



The Montgomery County Community Health Improvement Process (CHIP)

What is Eat Well, Be Active?

Eat Well, Be Active is a county-wide Healthy Montgomery partnership launched in May 2014 following the release of the [Healthy Montgomery Obesity Action Plan](#). The purpose of the partnership is to create and implement a coordinated strategy to decrease obesity in Montgomery County. Partnership members include community members, local non-profit and service providers, health care providers, representatives from Montgomery County government agencies and public schools, County hospitals, academic institutions, and insurance payers.

Vision

A community where eating healthy and being active are routine and easy choices for *all* who live, work, play and learn in Montgomery County.

Mission

To promote health equity by increasing opportunities for *all* Montgomery county residents to lead healthy, active lives. We do this by rallying community resources and by using and evaluating strategies that work to support healthy eating and active lifestyles.

Goals

Our overarching goals for where we live, work, play, and learn in Montgomery County are to:

- Increase active living options and opportunities to make them routine.
- Improve access to healthy foods and beverages to make them routine, easy choices.
- Disseminate socially and culturally appropriate messages that promote active living and healthy eating.
- Increase collaboration and coordination of resources across public and private sectors to promote active living and healthy eating.

Approach

Eat Well, Be Active's approach is to focus on limited-income families with children and on prevention, starting with selected communities considered to be at high risk for obesity in order to pilot intervention efforts. The pilot community of Long Branch/ Takoma Park was identified based on the following:

- High FARMs rates in 3 elementary schools
- Applied to become a Health Enterprise Zone based on poverty and lack of access to healthcare services.
- Presence of numerous community-based public and private-sector efforts to improve the health and well-being in Long Branch/ Takoma Park and interest among these groups in Healthy Montgomery efforts.

Elementary schools are a focus, as these are in communities with families with young children. High FARMs rates are a proxy for food insecurity, which is associated with higher risk of obesity among mothers of food-insecure families¹. There is also documented success in King County, Washington, where prevention efforts were implemented in communities surrounding schools with high FARMs rates. A decrease in the prevalence of obesity in these intervention communities has been documented.²

A place-based strategy was also developed based on recommendations from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Institute of Medicine.



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Current Activities

Eat Well, Be Active's strategy is to approach residents where they live, work, learn and play. Based on this strategy, Partnership members have divided into the following groups to develop strategies to reduce and prevent obesity in the Long Branch/ Takoma Park community:

- School
- Community
- Health care
- Home/ child care

Coordinating Committee

Eat Well, Be Active's Coordinating Committee monitors and guides the Partnership's work and is also charged with developing a funding strategy, communication strategy, and working with the Healthy Montgomery Steering Committee's Evaluation Subcommittee on an evaluation plan. The committee will also address ongoing data needs of the Partnership. Members include:

- Linda Ashburn, Chair, [University of Maryland Extension](#)
- Linda Goldsholl, Chair, [African American Health Program, Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- Bruce Baker, [Community Health and Empowerment through Education and Research \(CHEER\)](#)
- Tanya Edelin, [Kaiser Permanente](#)
- Marisol Ortiz, [Primary Care Coalition](#)
- Dr. John Torontow, [Community Clinic, Inc.](#)

References

¹Larson, N and Story, M (2010). Food Insecurity and Risk for Obesity Among Children and Families: Is There a Relationship? Minneapolis, MN: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Healthy Eating Research. Available at <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/herfoodinsecurity20100504.pdf>.

²Kern, E; Chan, NL; Fleming, DW; and Krieger, JW. Declines in Obesity Prevalence Associated with a Prevention Initiative – King County, Washington, 2012. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, MMWR Weekly Report. Vol. 63/No.7, February 21, 2014.

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