



Health Is Academic

OFFICE OF HEALTHY SCHOOLS
MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Office of Coordinated School Health ▪ Safe and Orderly Schools ▪ Office of Child Nutrition

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Fit, Healthy, & Ready to Succeed

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The Office of Healthy Schools welcomes you to an exciting 2008-09 school year. When implementing a coordinated approach to school health, the focus goes beyond the health and well-being of students to include school administration and staff. Staff wellness programs provide opportunities for adults to concentrate on improving their own self-esteem equipping participants with better coping skills to handle stress. Staff wellness will not only provide health benefits to participants, but also support quality instruction in every classroom.

Data shows that approximately two-thirds of all deaths in adults in the United States ages 25 years and older can be attributed to preventable diseases such as cardiovascular disease, some forms of cancer and diabetes. The primary causes of these conditions are tobacco use, poor eating habits, inadequate physical activity and obesity.

Compounding this issue is the escalating cost of health care. Health insurance expenses are the fastest growing expense for employers to date. As a result, many insurance companies are denying coverage for those with chronic diseases. In 2005, the United States spent nearly \$2.0 trillion on healthcare, or \$6,697 per person, an increase of more than a 30 percent from 2001. With approximately 3.5 million teachers and 3.2 million other district employees, this equals \$663 billion spent on health insurance in public school systems alone.

This makes the need for staff wellness even greater. Beyond cost savings, other potential benefits of school staff wellness programs include:



- Decreased absenteeism
- Increased employee retention
- Fewer work-related injuries
- Fewer worker compensation and disability claims
- Attractiveness to prospective employees
- Positive community image
- Increased productivity
- Increased motivation to teach about health
- Increased motivation to practice healthy behaviors
- Healthy role models for students

By investing just a small amount of time and energy, the lives of school staff and students can be changed forever. How do we get started? Take small steps.....

Join or start a staff wellness committee in your school. Seek involvement from your superintendant and school administration. Get the word out, post signs or write an article in your school newspaper. Once your committee is established, identify your needs. Contact the Office of Healthy Schools; we can help you develop a plan for addressing these identified health issues. Work with your staff wellness committee to implement the plan. Evaluate your plan through feedback from your staff, revise your plan each year and continue getting the word out. Seize the opportunity to improve the quality of life for your staff while becoming important role models for your students to ensure that everyone is safe, fit, healthy, and ready to succeed.

Inside this issue:

Welcome

Pg. 2 – Health in Action

Pg. 2 – Staff Wellness

Pg. 2 – Safe Routes

Pg. 3 – October, Walk to School Month

Pg. 3 – Data, Giving You the Edge

Pg. 3 – Often Overlooked Component

Pg 4 – Oral Health

Pg 4 – Health Institutes

Pg 4 – Governors Comm. Award Application

Upcoming Conferences

MASH - 2008 Institute on School Health, Wellness & Safety
Sept. 23-26 • Philadelphia, MS

2008 MAHPERD On The Move
Nov. 3&4 • Clinton, MS

To Register Visit the OHS Website
www.healthyschoolsms.org

HEALTH IN ACTION Web site up and running...

The Health in Action Web site was launched on June 2, 2008. Health in Action is a collection of web-based physical and health education lesson plans written by educators from across our state. The Web site is user friendly and packed with over 1,200 lesson plans just waiting to be accessed!

Health in Action was developed to address the need of teachers, schools and school districts in the implementation of the MS Healthy Students Act. The plans are linked to web-based resources, classroom materials and videos. They can be implemented in the regular classroom setting, on a playground or in a gym. The Web site supports quality health education and physical education/activity-based instruction, and the lesson plans can be integrated into the teaching of core academic subjects (math, science, social studies and language arts).

Educators will be happy to know that the lesson plans on the Health in Action Web site are based on national and state standards for health and physical education and that they focus on all content strands. To encourage student interest, the lesson plans are based on interesting monthly themes that focus on national issues. The plans are grade-level appropriate for K-2; 3-5; 6-8; and 9-12. Many are activity based to motivate students to get moving and engaged in learning that is fun!

Educators are encouraged to check out the Health In Action Web site at <http://activities.healthyschoolsms.org>. For additional information, contact the Office of Coordinated School Health at (601) 359-1737.

Safe Routes to School Lesson Plans on Health In Action Web site

To assist in implementing the instructional and physical activity requirements for K-8 grade students and to introduce the Safe Routes to School program in Mississippi schools, the Office of Coordinated School Health has received a grant from the Mississippi Department of Transportation to provide lesson plans for teachers. These plans are part of the Health in Action Web site that can be accessed at <http://activities.healthyschoolsms.org>

The national goals of the Safe Routes to School program are reflected in the lesson plans. These goals are as follows:



- Enhance school safety by creating “safe” walking paths and bicycle trails;
- Increase walking and biking to school;
- Decrease the transportation of students to school in family vehicles;
- Improve student and family health;
- Lower transportation costs of families and school districts;
- Reduce pollution; and enable students and families to have fun as they walk and ride bicycles to school.

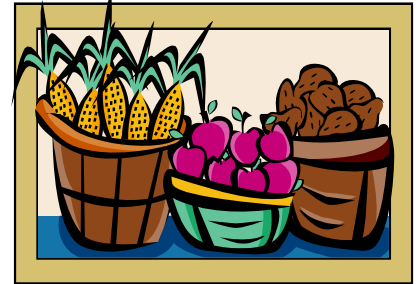
The lesson plans can be easily integrated into academic subjects including language arts, science and math. As the grade level increases, learning outcomes increase. The lessons are creative and practical with five or more plans for each grade level. Teachers are encouraged to view these lessons and to determine how they may be successfully used to teach safety to students in grades K-8. For more information about the Safe Routes to School program contact Christine Phillely at cphillely@mde.k12.ms.us or by (601) 359-1737.

Staff Wellness

Murray Harber, *Employer Health Management Consultant*

Employee wellness is making its way into school systems across the country. Offering wellness programs to employees and their families helps to improve their quality of life, health status, and reduce health-related expenses. A healthy work environment for staff includes having healthy food choices, places to be active, places to take a break, and time-off for clinical appointments.

In Jackson, Southern Farm Bureau Life Insurance Company has been offering a wellness program for several years. On any given day, employees can be seen taking the stairs, or using the outside walking trail around the lake. This summer, a farmers market was held where employees saved up to 40 percent on the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables. The cafeteria and vending machines have healthier choices.



Both employees and leadership are happy about the wellness program and both see a difference in workplace culture. Matt Ginn, SFBLI Wellness Coordinator, states, "Our program is geared to the overall wellness of employees so they can choose to be healthy, happy and productive at doing their jobs."

Do your part and use the resources from your health plan, your local providers, and state agencies to create your own wellness program for your staff.

October is Walk to School Month

October has been designated as Walk to School Month in Mississippi! The Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT) has declared the entire month of October as Walk to School Month, giving schools many options for hosting local events. The official Walk to School Day for 2008 is Oct. 3.



Walk to School Day began as a simple idea – children and parents, school and local officials walking to school together on a designated day. Walk to School events work to create safer routes for walking and bicycling and emphasize the importance of issues such as increasing physical activity among children, pedestrian safety, traffic congestion, concern for the environment and building connections between families, schools and the broader community.

The Office of Healthy Schools is supporting the Walk to School promotion and encourages schools to go to the International Walk to School in the USA Web site: www.walktoschool.org to register local events. By doing so, they will receive free Walk to School promotion materials from MDOT that will assist them in having the best Walk to School Event ever! For more information concerning Walk to School Month, contact Christine Philley at cphilley@mde.k12.ms.us (601) 359-1737.

Let Snapshots Give You an Edge When Applying for your Next Grant

Every year school budgets seem to shrink while the demand for services increase causing many districts seeking grants to meet funding shortfalls. The Office of Healthy Schools has a “Funding Opportunity” link on the OHS Web site that lists health and physical education grant opportunities. As grants become more competitive, a higher value is placed on statistical data. Statistical data gives districts hard numbers to demonstrate need and an edge on the competitive grant process. A great resource for finding this data is *Snapshots*, a Web site funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The Web site houses student behavioral data and online resources on a local, state and national level in an easy to navigate format. Looking for 2007 Mississippi Youth Risk Behavioral Survey data? We Have It! Need to know last school year’s SmartTrack survey results? It’s there! Take a few minutes and navigate through the website so the next time a grant opportunity comes across your desk, you will know that there is an easy and accessible resource available. For more information or to begin your search visit *Snapshots* www.snapshots.ms.gov.



An Often Overlooked Component of the CSHM

An often overlooked component of the Coordinated School Health Model (CSHM) is that of Staff Wellness. There has been very little research on the effectiveness of school wellness programs requiring educators to look to the private sector for measurable data. Even then there are inconsistencies that make the data unreliable, and can therefore give an inaccurate picture of Staff Wellness and its benefits.

During the 2007-08 school year, 53 of Mississippi’s school nurses collected data measuring the areas that they impact. Included in this survey was staff wellness. These school nurses reported data about the staff members seen during the school year. Of those seen, 85 percent returned to class, 9 percent were sent for medical care and 6 percent were sent home. These same nurses have taught staff development including chronic disease, first aid/CPR, nutrition and fitness. There is a need to incorporate wellness data for a better picture of the health of our teachers.

Staff wellness goes beyond teachers or administrators, impacting the overall climate of a school and how well that school will perform academically. Developing staff wellness programs should be an all inclusive approach involving the school nurse as well as the school health council. These health champions can initiate, support and advance a change in the health of our staff.

An easy place to start is participation in the wellness component of your health insurance. This allows us to determine our health status. A health risk assessment survey will provide you with a picture of your health. It will also suggest areas of improvement. Participation in this program will increase your insurance wellness benefit. Go to www.healthytogether.net/login.aspx for the survey and other information regarding your wellness benefit. For more information regarding Staff Wellness and Creating a School Health Council visit the OHS Web site at www.healthyschools.ms.org or call (601) 359-1737.



Oral Health: Did You Know



Ten states and the District of Columbia now require children to have a dental examination before entering school. Mississippi has not taken that action, but the Mississippi State Department of Health is working closely with the Office of Healthy Schools to incorporate oral health education and prevention. On Aug. 1, 350 oral health tool kits including a Medicaid dentist contact list were distributed to school nurses. MSDH Oral Health Consultants also provide guidance for school nurses to perform oral health screening as part of Medicaid EPSDT.

Nearly 74,000 children have participated in the weekly school fluoride mouthrinse program since its inception and we appreciate your support. Funding this year will provide training and education of school nurses to integrate oral health in coordinated school wellness programs. Contact the Office of Oral Health (601) 576-7500 or www.HealthyMS.com/dental



The Mississippi Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness & Sports is pleased to announce the *2008 Excellence in Physical Education Certification Program Application* is now available on the OHS website.

Applications are due Dec. 12, 2008.

Health Institutes are coming....

In an effort to address the needs of school districts and teachers across the state, the Office of Healthy Schools will be conducting three Health Institutes during the 2008-09 school year to increase the number of certified health education teachers. The Mississippi Healthy Students Act and the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards require health education and activity-based instruction in grades K-12. Due to the new regulations for health education, there is an increased need for training/certification to support quality implementation of health education programs.

To participate in one of the institutes and be eligible for 3.0 CEU credits, K-8 grade teachers must have a valid K-8 teaching license. To be eligible for the 142 endorsement and CEUs, 9-12 grade teachers must have a license in Science or Physical Education or have been previously awarded a Health, Physical Education and Recreation degree and only received the physical education endorsement.

The institute is designed as a four-day training with one follow-up day given within the year. The Institute will be offered in Jackson on November 1, 8, 15, & 22 in Hattiesburg on January 10, 17, 24, & 31 and in Columbus on February 7, 14, 21, & 28. Visit the OHS Web site for more information or to register.

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