



P.O. Box 238
412 W Kinne St
Ellsworth, WI 54011
Phone: 715-273-6755
Fax: 715-273-6854

MEDIA RELEASE

Contact: Amy Hess, RD
Email: amy.hess@co.pierce.wi.us
Phone: 715-273-6755 ext. 6568

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HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) Coalition- CHANGE Grant Summary

Pierce County HEAL (Healthy Eating Active Living) coalition implemented the CHANGE (Community Health Assessment aNd Group Evaluation) assessment to gain an understanding of Pierce County's needs and assets relating to physical activity and nutrition. Our team included representatives from the Pierce County Public Health Department, River Falls Hospital, River Falls Clinic, Ellsworth School District, UW- Extension, UW-River Falls, Chippewa Valley Technical College/UW-Eau Claire Interns, and Healthy Community Partnership Grantees.

Over twenty interviews were conducted with school, healthcare, community/organization, and worksite representatives. Photos, maps, focus groups, surveys, and observations were also used to capture the County's story. The CHANGE tool was then used to score the data to help our team determine areas to focus on in our action plan.

The results show the need for more work on community partnerships and coalitions focused on Nutrition and Physical Activity. Health promotion programs, chronic disease assessments, and education could be improved in the school and worksite areas. Furthermore, both the Community-At-Large and Community Organizations/Institutions assessments showed a lack of availability of healthy foods and/or beverages (vending, meetings, events, and/or restaurants). Breastfeeding awareness and promotion is another area revealed in the assessment to continue to support for good nutrition. Lastly, environmental and policy indicators for physical activity were identified in the worksite sector. Assessment indicators linked to this were providing break times for employees to be physically active, providing safe areas outside to walk or be physically active, and providing bicycle parking (rack/shelter).

Pierce County Public Health and Allina Hospital are currently working together towards an action plan to address the health indicators revealed from the CHANGE grant. By late summer, the county/hospital assessment and improvement plan will be posted on the Pierce County Public Health website.

Our mission is to assure the health of the public, prevent disease and injury, promote healthy behaviors, and protect against environmental hazards.