Peer led advocacy and intervention to reduce sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB) consumption among Converse County School District students
Isaac Wentz – University of Washington School of Medicine – 2016 – RUOP III-3

Purpose:
This community health project is aimed at reducing the obesity rates in Douglas, WY through school-based advocacy on sugar-sweetened beverages. The project proposes a plan to target schools and utilize student groups to spread awareness and education designed specifically for their schools.

Background:
- Douglas, WY (pop. 7,000) is the county seat for Converse County (pop. 14,000).
- The obesity rate for Converse County and Wyoming is 29% and 26% respectively.
- The residual effects of obesity and of the massive challenge to reduce rates frustrate clinicians, public health officers, and community members.
- Douglas Memorial Hospital and Converse County Public Health worked together to address the issue in 2013, but the program was not lasting.

Methods:
- Review of evidence-based strategies targeting sugar-sweetened beverage consumption revealed support for school-based intervention models.
- One specific intervention operated through a student advisor council to design an approach specific to their school.
- School-based interventions were discussed with those with direct roles and interests in community and school health.

Results:
- An informational pamphlet was designed to share with those interested in supporting or may be affected by the intervention, such as school administrators, teachers, parents and students.
- The current vision is to share the project at the annual Nutrition Services Department’s meeting in order to propose its implementation.
- Douglas students support the idea of utilizing knowledge and autonomy of the students, and even ponder expanding the focus to nutrition in general.

Discussion:
- The proposed project is supported by community needs and interests, and builds on strengths of members and structures currently in the community.
- The project’s partners have access to nutritional advisory boards in the county and currently provide nutritional education.
- The partnership will continue into the school year with availability of school administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

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