

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.



Douglas, WY from E Richards St. one of the two exits into Douglas from I-25.

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.



Pepsi vending machine stocked with sugar-sweetened beverages next to the trophy case near a main entrance at Douglas High School.

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.



Pepsi truck delivering soda to the Douglas Loaf 'N Jug, publicizing "Proudly Made in Wyoming".