

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

COMMUNICATING HIGH OBESITY PROGRAM WORK

May 2023

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As opportunity for Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) High Obesity Program (HOP) spreads to more Tennessee counties, careful communication of the program's purpose and intent from the start will assist in effective implementation activities. This fact sheet provides communication tips as experienced from Hardeman Healthy Outreach to help introduce HOP and its policy, system and environment (PSE) work.

Following is a list of considerations for use from the beginning of a new HOP project:

1. Even though the term "obesity" is in the title and eligibility for inclusion are related to its metrics, Extension personnel should avoid references to that term except for mention of the title. To that end, downplaying of the terms "fat" and "overweight" are key to avoiding stigma of the overall purpose of the project.
2. HOP-eligible counties were identified by CDC based on Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) data. Counties that have adult obesity prevalence of 40 percent or more are included. This information is based on the most recent year for which data was available when the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was prepared.
3. The focus of the project is "improving access to healthy food and physical activity opportunities to avoid chronic disease." All people, whether already dealing with extra weight or not, can benefit from improved access. This is another reason why avoiding reference to weight is important.
4. Traditional Extension work is to provide research-based information. HOP's focus on PSE change is a paradigm shift for community members who are familiar with the organization. Using the phrase "making the healthy choice the easy choice" may help Extension personnel and clients more readily understand the purpose of the work.



5. While strategies have been developed for HOP work, there is no set plan for accomplishing it. Local activities are based on county and community needs, wants, assets and priorities. Those are assessed at the start of a new HOP funding cycle. Community input and engagement are crucial for being successful.
6. Correct attribution of CDC funding should be used in addition to identification of UT Extension's role in the work.

Communicating effectively about the purpose of the project from the start is key to efficient and successful PSE change and improved access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities for HOP counties.

References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. October 2018. Implementation Guide for the Notice of Funding Opportunity: High Obesity Program (CDC-RFA-DP18-1809).

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Acknowledgments

This project was supported by cooperative agreement no. NU58DP006558 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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