COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Health in Clinton County - Gathering Resident Perspective

Clinton County is in the process of completing a new community health assessment. Health partners undertake the process every three years. The assessment aims to identify current and emerging health concerns so a community health improvement plan can be developed.

From December 2018 through March 2019, the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) and UVMHN- Champlain Valley Physicians Hospital asked residents to weigh in on health issues they felt were a concern for them and in their communities. We heard from over 1,375 of you! Responses were received from residents living in all county townships and we heard from residents ranging in age from 17 to over 80 years old.

We learned you are concerned about chronic diseases, like obesity, and about issues associated with aging. You are also concerned with local water quality, including both the water we drink and the water we use for recreation, like our local lakes and streams. Affordable housing and the ability to earn a livable wage emerged as top social issues. In describing what a strong, vibrant community looks like, you told us it was safe and clean, with good schools and lots of economic opportunities.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and experiences. Everything we learned will be used to help us select our health priorities for the next three years. A summary of survey findings is being developed. Like the Clinton County Health Department on Facebook to be among the first to see the summary. That is also one of the best places to catch more updates on the community health assessment process.

Community Health Assessments and Community Health Improvement Plans are posted on the Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) website at www.clintonhealth.org. They are located in the Statistical Data and Annual Reports section along with the CCHD Annual Report and yearly reports on the activities of CCHD’s Health Care Services, Health Planning and Promotion; and Environmental Health and Safety divisions. While you’re visiting this portion of the CCHD website, check out one or more of the Profiles in Public Health which offer a detailed look at public health issues facing our community. Use the feedback form link at the bottom of our home page to provide comments and suggestions.
The expanded food and nutrition education program (EFNEP) is an exciting educational opportunity in our community. The program is offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Clinton County. It focuses on increasing the consumption of vegetables and fruit (especially local produce), whole grains and low fat dairy products; increasing physical activity and; decreasing the consumption of sugary beverages. EFNEP also has an emphasis on improved food security and food resource management.

In 2018 EFNEP enrolled 143 adults, directly impacting 601 participants within those households. Of the total enrolled, 97 received at least 6 hours of education.

EFNEP is also promoting healthy living through a technology pilot project unique to Clinton County. The project enrolled 50 participants in 2018, who each received at least 2 face-to-face contacts and 4 interactive group lessons via Facebook. The pilot project aims to reach participants in non-traditional ways in order to increase participation and overcome barriers such as lack of travel accommodations, childcare issues or demanding work schedules. The program will continue with planned improvements in 2019.

CCE is working to increase healthy living for seniors by connecting them to fitness programs upon referral from their primary health care provider. A pre-skill evaluation is provided to each new participant to help best advise them of the appropriate classes to attend. Working with Adirondack Medical Home and Town of Plattsburgh Recreation, 11 weekly fitness programs were offered in 2018. Seated Range of Motion, Growing Stronger, Chair Chi and Walking highlight CCE’s offerings. Two additional classes and new collaborations with the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) and Clinton County Office for the Aging (OFA) have been added for 2019. The number of classes attended so far is 257.

For more information on what’s being offered at CCE please find us on Facebook! ■

The documentary Addicted to Hope focuses a spotlight on the heroine and opioid epidemic affecting the Adirondack Region. It was created by SPARCC (Substance Abuse Prevention and Recovery of Clinton County) in partnership with ECHO (Essex County Heroin and Opioid Coalition) and FCPT (Franklin County Prevention Taskforce). John Bernardi, Chief Executive Officer of the United Way of the Adirondack Region, had this to say about the project that he was instrumental in developing.

“The Addicted to Hope documentary was produced locally to represent the Adirondack Region. The stories and perspectives that are conveyed come from our neighbors, our friends and our families. This makes it real and special. Our goal with the documentary is to raise awareness, promote prevention and reduce stigma related to treatment. We have found, so far, that it has been an excellent tool for starting conversations about the heroin and opioid epidemic and substance use disorder. The stories are moving, compelling, inspirational and heart breaking. Our region is the greatest place on the face of the earth and this documentary showcases the incredible human spirit that we have in this region.”

The documentary video can be found on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrWf3umeJBo. For more information or to schedule a viewing, contact United Way of the Adirondack Region, Inc. at 518-563-0028. ■

Raising Awareness and Hope

Check out:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BrWf3umeJBo

healthy living outreach

focused approach

www.facebook.com/nutritioneduCCEClinton/
www.facebook.com/cceClinton/
Longest Day of Play Marks 7th Year

Won’t you come out to play? That’s the question that Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) and community partners have been asking for the last seven years. In 2013, CCHD started something new. The first Clinton County Longest Day of Play was held to promote the health benefits that can be achieved through active play. The day was a grand success and has continued to grow in popularity from year to year. Opportunities to run, jump, dance, paddle, walk, roll and more are offered at various sites around the County and throughout the day. From bounce houses and games to trail walks and swimming, the Longest Day of Play offers something for everyone.

This year’s event will take place on Friday, June 28th. Past partners who will be hosting activities include the Childcare Coordinating Council of the North Country, the Village of Champlain, the Town of Plattsburgh and City of Plattsburgh Recreation Departments, and the CVPH Wellness and Fitness Center. New this year are the Village of Dannemora and an activity hosted by the Cumberland Head Fire Department Auxiliary. So, won’t you plan to come out to play for fun, and for your health?

The list above includes organizations that registered activities before May 15, 2019. Visit www.clintonhealth.org for a complete schedule of activities, host organizations, times and locations.

SPREADING THE WORD

#mybetterchoice

Most likely, you do something healthy each and every day. The Clinton County Health Department is hoping you will share your tips for healthy living and the places where you practice healthy behaviors, with other social media users.

We’ve already started. CCHD has been creating posts using #mybetterchoice for over a month. A quick search will show you lots of places to be active; point out where to find healthy foods and; highlight ways to practice other healthy behaviors.

Now, it’s your turn. Did you walk your favorite trail today? Post a picture on your Facebook page and include #mybetterchoice. Did you swim laps? Tag the pool’s location and add #mybetterchoice to your next tweet. Played pickleball? Help others in your community see how much fun this game can be by sharing the hashtag with your Instagram post.

Help build a healthier community by sharing your better choices for better health. For more ideas about how to make your community a healthier place to live, work and play, look for 101 Ways to a Healthy Community at www.clintonhealth.org/bhc.

Pickleball Comes to Rouses Point

Pickleball mania has spread to Rouses Point and it’s all because of the Foundation of CVPH! Through generous funding from the Foundation in 2017, the Village was able to construct an outdoor pickleball court at the Rouses Point Recreation Center. The funding also allowed for the purchase of paddles and balls that are available to check out from the Dodge Memorial Library. The pickleball craze grew even more when the Village received support from Eastern Adirondack Health Care Network to purchase four portable pickleball nets, sixteen paddles, 200 balls, and four ball hoppers to promote physical activity for our older adult community. A pickleball program was started over the winter with seven weeks of instructional play on Saturday afternoons at the local elementary school gym. Forty-five people from eight municipalities attended the weekly sessions. Their enthusiasm prompted the Village to allow four temporary courts to be set up inside the Civic Center at 39 Lake Street after the ice was removed from the hockey rink. The Village now supports indoor open pickleball on Wednesday evenings 5-8 pm and Saturday mornings 9 am -12 noon. For a $3.00 daily fee, you can enjoy three hours of exercise and sociability with equipment and informal instruction available if needed. Over 20 people have been regularly enjoying this added recreational program since April. Additional funding from The Foundation of CVPH will support a week long summer camp for children ages 10-18 to learn pickleball as part of a Fitness in the Parks series. Information about these and other recreational activities can be found at rousespointny.com.
The Ethics of Caring: Seniors to Seniors Social Visiting Program

Meadowbrook Health Care has been hosting SUNY Plattsburgh senior nursing students in the Senior to Senior Social Visiting Program (SSVP) since 2015. Each semester, the program pairs students with an elder nursing home resident. The students visit each week. Guidelines from the World Health Organization centered on improving the interests of society and the person in long-term care, provide a framework for the program. The public health students apply previously learned ethical care concepts and practice communication skills at each visit. They achieve critical learning outcomes that include respect and valuing of elders, while overcoming perceived stereotypes and inherent biases.

Senior nursing student Stephanie L. shared this comment about her experience, "I learned patience and skill in talking even when I got few responses." Students often enter the SSVP program uneasy, as the only assigned task is to talk and listen. Nate S. said, "Seeing my growth from week to week is an exciting thing for me to experience because I never thought I would grow so much as a nurse from just speaking to a resident at a nursing home." By the end of the program, students develop confidence in their role as a nurse, a deep respect of elders and competence in ethics of care. Elders enjoy regular visitors and sometimes gain a lifelong friend. Jane R. sums it up beautifully "I came in a young student and I left a professional nurse as a result of the program. I’m ready for practice." Students have collectively logged over 2600 volunteer visiting hours since the program started.

Teaching Kitchen Event Benefits Participants and Trainers

The Teaching Kitchen at Lenox Hill Neighborhood House in New York City hit the road in March, traveling to Plattsburgh to share their expertise with local organizations. Staff of the Senior Citizens Council of Clinton County Inc. Nutrition Program, the Joint Council for Economic Activity (JCEA) Head Start Program and Pine Harbour Assisted Living participated in the full day training event. They were eager to learn about economical ways to add more fresh, healthy and local food to their menus. Teaching Kitchen Executive Chef Lynn Loftin and Chef Evelyn Garcia helped the participants evaluate their current menus, develop goals for improvement and devise plans to achieve them. Some of the goals they established were to serve more diverse local grains, more vegetables and more vegetarian meals.

This was the first time that the Teaching Kitchen has offered a training outside of New York City. The opportunity to do so was provided by the New York State Health Foundation, a key supporter of the Teaching Kitchen and several Clinton County Health Department programs. The training was a double-win benefitting the participants and the Teaching Kitchen. According to Debbie Alexander, Congregate Meals Director for the Nutrition Program, "We are always striving to improve our menu and use as many fresh ingredients as possible. We learned some valuable information on different types of grain and introducing more fresh produce into items we already make." In a Teaching Kitchen newsletter article, the chefs stated, "This experience provided many useful takeaways for our team as we work to develop new materials and training methods to expand the Teaching Kitchen’s impact statewide." The chefs will keep in touch with their Plattsburgh class throughout the year to provide additional support and get updates on menu improvements.

Remembrance and Recreation

Construction of Phase I is expected to begin in the fall of 2019.

In the spirit of highlighting the region’s natural resources, the Town of Plattsburgh Recreation Department is also pleased to announce the Inaugural River Run Mini-Tri! This unique paddle-run-bike triathlon will be held on Saturday August 10th. The adventure begins with a 6.8 mile paddle along the scenic Saranac River to Cadyville Beach. It continues with a 1.0 mile run to the Cadyville Recreation Park and concludes with an 8.6 mile bike along Hardscrabble Road, back to the Saranac Town Park. An awards ceremony and after party will be held at the Cadyville Recreation Park. This event is guaranteed to be some of the most fun you will have all summer! Visit www.townofplattsburghrecreation.com for more information and to sign up!