Food Insecurity: Solutions through Community Collaboration

Governmental and Academic Partnership Increases a Coalition’s Capacity to Address Healthy Food Access

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Objectives for this Session

Part 1: Structure and function of an effective coalition
Part 2: Approach to achieving goals and mission of LPOC and Stakeholders

- Conduct a needs assessment of the local community
- Identify community partners and stakeholders
- Align project objectives and tasks
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Loudoun County, Virginia

- Population: 379,575
  - more than doubled since 2000

- Urban and Rural

- Median household income
  ~$118,000

- #1 Health Outcomes in Virginia
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Health Disparities

- 20% born outside the United States
- Increasingly diverse
  - 17% Asian
  - 14% Hispanic
    - ~40% increase in a decade
    - 7% Black
- 4% living below federal poverty line
  - 12% Hispanic / Latinos
- 17% enrolled in NSLP
- 9% uninsured
  - 5% of children
- 50% children at FQHC are overweight or obese
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Food Environment

- Modified Retail Food Environment Index (mRFEI)
- Food Swamps
- Fast Food Restaurant Density

Map from Community Commons, Data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, 2011.
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Loudoun Pediatric Obesity Coalition

Formed in March 2013 out of a Community Advisory Board from an American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Catch Grant 2012

**Vision Statement:** The Loudoun Pediatric Obesity Coalition envisions a county where all children and their families are empowered to live a healthy life by having knowledge, skills and access to healthy food and physical activity.

**Mission:** To bring a diverse group of organizations and individuals in the community together to improve and sustain systems, infrastructure and services available for healthy living for families.
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Coalition Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By-laws in place</th>
<th>Annually elected leadership:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly meetings with approximately 20 attendees</td>
<td>Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic planning/action goals</td>
<td>Vice-Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-committee breakout &amp; report back</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Director of Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sub-committees:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Member Organizations

More than 55 members from over 30 organizations:

- Loudoun County Health Department
- George Mason University
- Northern Virginia Family Services
- Loudoun Hunger Relief
- Connect Northern Virginia
- Loudoun County Public Schools - School Nutrition Services
- Loudoun County Public Schools - School Health
- Safe Routes to School
- Head Start
- Loudoun Valley HomeGrown Markets Cooperative
- Girls on the Run
- HealthWorks (FQHC)
- InTotal Health
- Inova
- Loudoun WIC
- Town of Leesburg Parks & Rec
- Town of Leesburg Diversity Commission
- Real Food For Kids
- Loudoun County Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services
- Feed Loudoun
- Loudoun Free Clinic
- Junior League of Northern Virginia
- Girl Scouts
- Loudoun County Department of Family Services
- Loudoun Health Council
- Honest Medical Weight Loss
- YMCA
- Loudoun Cooperative Extension
- Giant Food
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Change Coalition

• Force for positive change in policies, systems and the environment to create a culture of health in Loudoun County.
• Facilitates strong community multi-sector collaborations.
• Harnesses:
  - Power in relationships
  - Strength in diversity
  - Strength in resources
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Loudoun County Health Department

- Virginia Department of Health
- Accredited through the Public Health Accreditation Board
- Divisions:
  - Environmental Health
  - Community Health
    - Clinical: Family planning, immunizations, communicable diseases, dental
    - WIC: Food assistance, nutrition education, breastfeeding support
    - Obesity and Chronic Disease Prevention - 100% grant funded
Part 1. Coalition Overview: Public Health/Medical Expertise

• Community-based prevention
  • Understanding and impacting how the community affects the ability of the patient to achieve optimal health.

• “Community Centered Health Homes1”
  • Bridging this gap between health services and community prevention provides direct benefits for the individual patient and the community.
  • Apply physicians’ assets, expertise, and credibility to the challenge of creating environments that support health, equity, and safety.

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Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Coalition Partnership with Health Department

• **Assets**
  • Public Health/Medical Expertise – experience in chronic disease/obesity prevention
  • Coalition Building – structure, capacity, strategic planning
  • Technical Assistance
  • Funding – time and resources for coalition development
  • Sustainability
  • Mentoring and training undergraduate and graduate level students

• **Benefits**
  • Community connections
  • Broader reach
  • Partner support in achieving VDH mission
  • Increasing capacity for community knowledge and leadership in public health
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Identifying Need for Academic Partnership

• LCHD recognized need for partnership to:
  • **Strengthen**
    • Inquiry
    • Assessment
  • **Enhance capacity for**
    • Action

• Collaboration with George Mason University,
  Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, 2015
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
George Mason University

Largest public research university in Virginia, est. 1972
- Main campus in Fairfax, VA
  - ~23,000 undergraduate, ~11,000 graduate students
- College of Health & Human Services
  - Department of Nutrition & Food Studies, est. 2011
    - MS in Nutrition program
      - Focus on community nutrition
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Coalition Partnership with Academic Institution

• **Assets**
  • Expertise - skills in nutrition, data analysis, dissemination of results
  • Student capital - skilled in nutrition, statistics, program development
  • Access to campus resources i.e. GMU-TV, communications, etc.

• **Benefits**
  • Opportunities for translational research projects for researchers
  • Opportunities for student learning, practicum/internships, thesis projects
  • Access to community connections
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Examples of Collaborative Projects

• Live Healthy Loudoun Resource Guide

• Master’s student practicum
Part 1. Coalition Overview:
Examples of Collaborative Projects

- Nutrition education/assessments at community health fairs
- Incorporated into GMU micronutrient course requirements

MS Nutrition student Hillary Klemmt completing service learning assignment as part of NUTR644: Micronutrients.
Part 1. Overview:
Examples of Collaborative Projects

• “It’s Water Time!”: Policy, System and Environmental Change in Loudoun County Head Start to decrease SSB and increase water consumption
• Master’s student practicum

LPOC Community needs assessment

- Target population of LPOC
- Identifies community strengths and gaps in services
- Framework for developing strategic plan for services and solutions
- Baseline to make comparisons in response to changes or new programs/resources

- ~15 minute self-administered survey developed by LPOC members with support from LCHD and GMU
- Administered February to August 2015
- Five community sites: Community/free clinics, food bank, health fair, government office
  - Questions & community sites derived from coalition members
  - Infrastructure provided by county health department
  - Data collection and analysis by academic partners
- Sample of 181 families
  - 62% Latino
  - Low-income; 55% annual income as <$20,000
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach:
Needs Assessment Results: Assistance Programs

- Medicaid: 82
- Free/Reduced Lunch: 55
- SNAP: 46
- WIC: 36
- Food Pantry: 36
- Medicare: 30
- School Backpack Program: 26
- Other: 3

n=181
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach: Needs Assessment Results: Assistance Programs

| Number of Families on Concurrent Assistance Programs (n=130) | |
|---|---|---|
| 0 | 43 | 26% |
| 1 | 37 | 22% |
| 2 | 33 | 20% |
| 3 | 26 | 15% |
| 4 or more | 29 | 17% |

| Do Families Receive the Assistance They Need? (n=154) | |
|---|---|---|
| Yes | 104 | 67% |
| No | 50 | 33% |

52% on 2 or more assistance programs
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach: Needs Assessment Results: SNAP Eligibility

Opportunities for increased SNAP enrollment

- **Eligible**: 67%
- **Potentially Eligible**: 31%
- **Not Eligible**: 2%

*Based on income and family size*

How often do you have to miss meals or cut back on serving a **healthy, well-balanced meal in order to save money**?

- 1 or more times / day: 11%
- 1 or more times / week: 15%
- 1 or 2 times / month: 19%
- 1 or 2 times / year: 11%
- In the past but, not now: 16%
- Never: 27%

n=159
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach:
Needs Assessment Results: Fruits and Vegetables

How frequently do snacks and meals at home include fruits and vegetables?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-3 X / day</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least 1 X / day</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 X / day</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1X / week or Never</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=175

Results Presented to Coalition

• Expertise

• Collaborative thought

• Key stakeholder identification

• Added evidence for partner initiatives

• **Problem Identified in Community Needs Assessment**
  - Food insecurity
  - Underutilization and poor awareness of SNAP and other safety nets
  - Inadequate consumption of healthy foods

• **Barriers identified by Coalition:**
  - Poorly understood application process by both community and service provider
  - Poorly understood and coordinated benefits of SNAP as an entry point food safety net
  - Poorly understood linkages to additional food security programs such as Free and Reduced Lunch and farmers markets’ fresh match program
  - Need for education on healthy purchasing and eating
  - Myths and fears associated with SNAP eligibility

• Lead Organizations’ role in project
  
  **GMU:** nutritional expertise, provides practicum student for project, nutritional expertise
  **LCHD:** clinical expertise, leadership for community linkages, provides oversight for practicum project for GMU student

• Engage network of coalition stakeholders

  **Department of Family Services: Chris Slagle, Benefits Program Manager**
  
  • **Assets:** Knowledge of SNAP application process, myths, barriers, benefits and linkages to other programs
  • **Benefits:** Increased SNAP outreach

  **Loudoun County School Nutrition Services: Teresa Lucas, Free/Reduced Specialist**
  
  • **Assets:** Knowledge of Free and Reduced Meal Program process, benefits, linkages to other programs, and network of stakeholders
  • **Benefits:** Increased Free and Reduced Meal outreach, reduced administrative costs
Part 2. Multi Sector Approach:
Coalition Structure at Work

Additional Benefits of Free and Reduced Meal Program

SNAP Access Resource

Healthy Eating Made Simple
How to Apply for SNAP

Go to [https://commonhelp.virginia.org](https://commonhelp.virginia.org)
- Click ALL BENEFITS PROGRAMS
- Start a New Application
- One application also for multiple services and programs including:
  - Child Care
  - Energy Assistance
  - Health Care Coverage
  - Temporary Cash Assistance for Families with Minor Children (TANF)

Visit or Call Department of Family Services (DFS)
- 102 Heritage Way NE #103
  Leesburg, VA 20176
  (703) 777-0353

Additional SNAP Benefits

If you are on SNAP you have automatic eligibility for:
- Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC)
  - WIC Ashburn Office
    45201 Research Place, Suite 120
    Ashburn, VA 20147
    703-777-0239
  - WIC Leesburg Office
    163 Fort Evans Road, NE, Suite 110
    Leesburg, VA 20176
    703-777-0239
- Free and Reduced Meal Program (see other side)
  - Once on SNAP, your child's school will mail a certificate

How to Keep Your SNAP Benefits

- Complete your SNAP renewal online or in person every 6 months
- UPDATE your address on CommonHelp or by calling Department of Family Services
  "Your renewal reminder will not get to you without a current address"

Using Your SNAP Dollars

- Use your EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card like a debit card at the grocery store
- SNAP Dollars don't expire, use leftover money in the following month or you can save your $$
- Use at some farmers markets and receive an extra $10 each trip

**Leesburg Saturday Market**
- May-Oct 8am-12pm
- Nov-April 9am-12pm
- 20 Catoctin Circle SE Leesburg, VA 20175

**Cascades Sunday Market**
- May-Nov 9am-1pm
- 21060 Whinfred Place Sterling, VA 20165
**Additional Benefits of Free and Reduced Meal Program**

You may be surprised to find how many added benefits come with being on the Free and Reduced Meal Program...

**Keep your child’s Free and Reduced Meal eligibility letter and bring it with you to receive these benefits!**

**Did You Know??**
- You may also be eligible to receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)
- Being on SNAP enrolls your family in Free and Reduced Meals without an application
- Apply for SNAP and other benefits like Medicaid, TANF, and Child Care at [https://comrhrp.virginia.gov](https://comrhrp.virginia.gov) It’s easy!

**Reduced or Free Dental Care**
Loudoun County Health Department Children’s Dental Clinic
102 Heritage Way, Suite 101
Leesburg, VA 20176
Call 703-771-5959 for more info about the eligibility process

**Reduced or Waived Fees at School**
- Speak with your child’s school counselor about how to access these possible additional benefits at your child’s school.
  - Advanced Placement Testing
  - Band and Art Scholarships
  - Field Trips
  - Homecoming Tickets
  - Parking for High Schoolers
  - School Events
  - Select School Supplies
  - Sports Teams and Cheerleading
  - Summer in the Arts
  - Summer School

**Reduced Fees at After-School Programs**
Loudoun County CASA Program (Children’s After School Activities)
- 50% reduced fee for families receiving free meals
- 25% reduced fee for families receiving reduced meals
- Call 703-777-0344 for more info on the eligibility process

Loudoun County YMCA
- Reduced fees available for after-school programs and sports leagues
- Call 703-777-9622 for more info on the eligibility process

**Internet Benefits**
- [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com)
- [http://es.intemetessentials.com](http://es.intemetessentials.com)
- 855-846-8376
- $9.95/month
- No activation fees
- No additional equipment fees
- 10 Mbps download speed
- Free Norton Security Suite
- Free wireless router
- Eligible for low-cost computer

**Recreation Sport League Waived Fees or Scholarships**
Many Loudoun County Recreation Sports team offer scholarships or fee waivers including:
- Sterling Youth Soccer Association
- Northern Virginia Volleyball Association
- Central Loudoun Basketball League
- Dulles South Youth Sports

Check with your team of interest; a complete list of Loudoun County Sports Teams can be found at:

**Always bring your eligibility letter to verify your child’s participation in Free/Reduced Meals**

This document was prepared by the Loudoun County Health Department with funding from the National WIC Association (NWA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and does not necessarily represent the views of CDC.
Healthy Eating Made Simple

Make these small changes every day to improve your health and your family’s health.

Make half your plate fruits & vegetables
Cut your grains to ¼ of your plate.

Include protein at every meal
Eggs, seeds, nuts, beans, fish, poultry, lean meats, and low-fat dairy.

Eat a rainbow every day
More colors means more vitamins & minerals

Choose WATER
You wouldn’t eat 19 teaspoons of sugar at once... so why are you drinking it?

Buy brown bread, rice, and pasta
Remember white bread, rice, and pasta act like sugar in your body.

Be smart about snacks
Feed your body well all day long!

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- **Presentation at LPOC meeting**
- **Training stakeholders and dissemination**
  - Loudoun County Public Schools
  - Loudoun County WIC
  - Loudoun Health Council
  - Loudoun County Head Start Program
  - Loudoun Hunger Relief
  - Loudoun Workforce Resource Center
  - Mobile Hope
  - Health Fairs
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach:
Food Access Project: Estimated Reach

Reach

- Loudoun County Public Schools: **78,000**
  - Website/E-fliers/Parent Liaisons
- Loudoun Hunger Relief: **17,000**
- WIC Clinics: **3,100**
- Mobile Hope: **2,000**
- Backpack Coalition Program: **1,400**

Meal Applications

The 2016-2017 Breakfast and Lunch Meal Application are accepted all year.
Click the image below to get started.

Applying online is Faster and Safer than a paper application. A family that is eligible can save over $5000/year during the school year.

Have questions? Call us at 571-392-1010 or email cafeprices.org

What's involved in applying online? Watch a video in [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

Loudoun County Public Schools follows Federal and State regulations when administering the Free and Reduced Meal Program. Children from households that meet Federal Income Guidelines are eligible for either reduced price or free meals. Eligibility under this program applies to both breakfast and lunch. Please call Lesley Carter, Administrative Office Assistant - School Nutrition Services, with any questions at 571-282-1010.

[Other possible benefits](#) [Learn about it here](#).

Meal Applications page on Loudoun County Public Schools, School Nutrition Service's website.

Number of SNAP Applications Received in Loudoun

Virginia State Data Warehouse: provided by Loudoun County Department of Family Services, pulled 2017

Difference in Percentage Change in SNAP Applications Between FY 2015/2016 and FY 2016/2017

Virginia State Data Warehouse: provided by Loudoun County Department of Family Services, pulled 2017

Number of SNAP Transactions at Loudoun Farmers Markets

Data provided by Loudoun Valley HomeGrown Markets Cooperative

![SNAP Dollars Spent at Loudoun Farmers Markets](chart)

Data provided by Loudoun Valley HomeGrown Markets Cooperative
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach:
Food Access Project: Successes

• Larger Reach
  • Community-wide reach through coalition partner training

• Replicability
  • Model of lead organizations collaborating with coalition members coordinates a food assistance program awareness project
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach: Growing a Culture of Health

• **Drinking Water Program**
  • **Partners:** LCHD, GMU, LC Head Start, LCPS, LCPL
  • **Outcomes:** Decreased juice consumption in Head Start classrooms

• **Live Healthy Loudoun Campaign**
  • **Partners:** LCHD, GMU, LHC, LCPS, LCDFS
  • **Outcomes:** Comprehensive resource packet and branding, community health dashboard
Part 2. Multi-Sector Approach: Growing a Culture of Health

**Projects**

- Live Healthy Loudoun Campaign
- Community Needs Assessment
- WIC Survey
- Healthy Beverage campaigns
- Vertical Gardens
- SNAP at farmers markets
- Farm to School Program
- Health Fairs
- Streamlined Gleaning System
- Summer feeding programs
- FVRx program
- Cooking Classes
- Breastfeeding Support Training
- Breastfeeding-Friendly Businesses
Review of Objectives

Part 1: Structure and Function of an Effective Coalition

Part 2: Approach to achieving goals and mission of LPOC and Stakeholders

- **Conduct a needs assessment of the local community**
  - identifies the issues, barriers and opportunities leading to food insecurity, associated health issues and potential solutions

- **Identify community partners and stakeholders**
  - for involvement in planning a collaborative project

- **Align project objectives and tasks**
  - to complement and capitalize on the mission and strengths of partner organizations to ensure sustainability
Acknowledgements
Thank You!