



Vermont Obesity Rates and Healthy Food Choices in State Government

Overweight and Obesity in Vermont

- 25% of Vermont adults are obese
 - The rates are higher for those making \$50,000 or less annually
 - This rate has increased from 19% in 2004
- 36% of Vermont adults are overweight
 - This rate has remained relatively steady since 2004
- Accompanying chronic disease rates
 - Diabetes: 8% of adults
 - Hypertension: 27% of adults (2013)

Source: 2014 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey

Food Purchasing Standards at the Health Department

- In 2013, the Health Department adopted these Food Standards
 - Healthy food is provided, including low-fat, sugar and sodium items.
 - Apply whenever food is paid for with state funds or at conferences sponsored or co-sponsored by the State.
 - Works for all food budgets.
 - Caterers, vendors and conference facilities have been able to easily accommodate the requests.
 - Preference for local food when available.

Waterbury Employee Survey

- **Vermont Certified Public Manager Project- 2015:**
 - State employees moving back to the Waterbury campus were surveyed regarding food preferences- 47% response rate
 - 89% said they prefer healthy foods in their diet always or as often as possible
 - 75% said they would be willing to spend more money for healthier options if they were available in the building
 - 84% said they would be more likely to purchase lunch on site than off site
 - 72% prefer locally grown/prepared items

Progress to Date

- Dr. Chen met with the Extended Cabinet in September to invite them to adopt the health department standards.
 - ▣ Agency of Agriculture has adopted the standards
 - ▣ Agency of Human Services is in the process of doing so

Other Efforts

- The Overlook and Courthouse Cafes offer a range of healthy foods and participate in the Harvest of the Month program, highlighting Vermont vegetables and fruits
 - ▣ The Waterbury Café will follow this model
- The Abbey Group is expected to provide healthy options at the Statehouse Cafeteria and 133 State St. Cafes, per their contract.
- Vermont State Parks will offer healthy options at their concession stands this summer.

Vending Machines

- State vending machines are managed by the Division of the Blind and Visually Impaired (BVI). Proceeds from the machines go to the Division and to their operators as part of their salary.
- A pilot program to increase healthy foods in vending by 30% was done at the Health Department. Sales were neutral.
- BVI is interesting in moving forward with machines that contribute to their program budget, with a slower roll out for those whose proceeds go to operators.

Why do this

- Build on Vermont's healthy brand
- Walk the walk- we ask Vermonters to eat healthy local foods, we should do the same
- We are concerned about employee well being
- Local food provides another aspect of building the brand and helping the economy
- State as purchaser- we can move the market

Similar Efforts across the Nation

- State of Washington Executive Order, 2013
 - Effects state cafeterias, vending, custodial care menus, meetings. Includes mandatory participation in state employee wellness program
- Iowa: Vending in state buildings follow 30% rule (2011)
- Alabama: Vending in state buildings follow 50% rule (2009)
- Delaware State Parks: increase healthy food at park concessions and stores (2010)

Similar Efforts across the Nation

- Massachusetts Executive Order, 2009
 - ▣ Effects dependent clients and patients
 - ▣ Strong encouragement to follow State Healthy Meeting guidelines

Next Steps for Vermont

- Adoption of Healthy Food Standards by all State Agencies and Departments that haven't done so already
- Further rollout of healthy vending initiative