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Second Quarter Success

With the second quarter of activities now complete, the SScale Down Initiative is fully underway with active engagement from over 90 SScale Down partners. The Action Team (leadership) and Evaluation Team continue to provide critical support through strategic leadership and oversight in measuring progress and outcomes. The five SScale Down workgroups (child care, community, health care, schools and worksites) held their first full meetings in May and are diligently working to engage and support partners and stakeholders in their shared commitment to the Initiative. Through this collaborative work, SScale Down is gaining momentum and is making strides in addressing obesity in our state. This positive energy is reflective of the many innovative approaches being used to achieve the objectives of the Obesity Action Plan.

On June 25th, members of the five workgroups, the Action Team and Evaluation Team participated in the second SScale Down stakeholder briefing. This briefing not only provided a forum for participants to connect and share information, but also offered an opportunity to showcase innovative programs and resources from each of the workgroups. Highlights of those innovative approaches are included in this update as an effort to further disseminate information about this important work.

Innovative Approaches to Obesity Prevention

SC FitnessGram

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the South Carolina Department of Education and the BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina Foundation are working together to establish and implement SC FitnessGram, a statewide fitness education, testing, data management and reporting system. Potentially reaching over 740,000 South Carolina public school students, this project will allow students to set their own health-related fitness goals, help school administrators make curricular and policy choices for physical education and offer a way for teachers to manage and communicate student fitness information to students and parents. This system also provides a way to monitor the status of student health-related fitness as a state.

During the 2014-2015 school year, a pilot was successfully implemented in six public school districts across the state. On the heels of the success of the pilot project, more than 50% of schools across the state have now signed on to participate in the second phase of the SC FitnessGram program this coming school year.

For more information on FitnessGram, visit www.fitnessgram2015.net. To find out if your school district is participating in the SC FitnessGram program, for more information or to see how you can help get your school district started, contact Lynn Hammond, SC FitnessGram Coordinator, at hammonld@dhec.sc.gov or 803-898-3076.

The Charleston Healthy Business Challenge

The Charleston Healthy Business Challenge is a collaborative program developed by the City of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) to help businesses and organizations improve the overall health and well-being of their employees and create a culture of wellness in the workplace.

The program is free, voluntary and open to all businesses in the Charleston metropolitan area through generous support from presenting sponsors BlueCross BlueShield of South Carolina and Arthur J. Gallagher & Company. Participants register online for access to the Charleston Healthy Business Challenge Scorecard, which outlines various actions to take to create a healthier workplace. Quarterly seminars hosted by MUSC and sponsored by Sodexo, Coca-Cola and CVS focus on each of the four pillars of worksite wellness (healthy eating, active living, tobacco-free worksites and stress management) and provide participants with valuable tools and local resources to help reach their worksite wellness goals. An awards ceremony recognizes and celebrates the successes of participating businesses and provides an opportunity for networking and sharing ideas across worksites.

Although the current program is only available to businesses in the Charleston metropolitan area, future plans include assessing opportunities for program expansion and replication in other regions of the state.

For more information on the Charleston Business Challenge, please visit <http://www.chbchallenge.com/> or contact Susan Johnson, Ph.D. at susan@chbchallenge.com.

The Grow Healthy Florence Pilot Project

Grow Healthy Florence is a pilot project being implemented in five child care centers in Florence, SC through the collaborative work of DHEC, the South Carolina Department of Social Services ABC Quality Rating and Improvement System (ABC Quality), the USC Early Childhood Education Program and the NC State University College of Design Natural Learning Initiative. The goal of Grow Healthy Florence is to support ABC Quality child care providers in their efforts to provide healthy eating and active living environments by: 1) becoming a Preventing Obesity by Design

(POD) demonstration site, 2) engaging children and their families in nutrition and physical activity initiatives occurring at the child care center and 3) increasing access to fruits and vegetables by linking centers to local food growers. Each participating pilot site will receive training, design assistance and technical support to create an outdoor environment that encourages physical activity, healthy eating and lifelong learning.

To learn more about Preventing Obesity by Design, visit <http://www.naturalearning.org/pod>. For questions about the Grow Healthy Florence pilot project or to find out how you can get involved, contact Misty Pearson at pearsomh@dhec.sc.gov.

The Faith and Health Guide

Faith communities play an important role in providing social support, community leadership and positive reinforcement to individuals interested in making lifestyle changes to achieve and maintain health. The Faith and Health Guide is designed to provide resources and programs that can be used to promote healthy behaviors in congregations and community organizations. Developed collaboratively by DHEC staff, the guide provides program descriptions and easy links to websites and other health-related resource tools.

The Faith and Health Guide is free and will **soon** be available online on the DHEC and SScale Down websites. If you are part of a faith-based organization and have a question about the guide, are interested in receiving a copy or would like to get involved, we encourage you to contact the Office of Community Health Improvement at (803) 898-0800 or CHInfo@dhec.sc.gov.

The Mother Friendly Toolkit

In South Carolina, a fundamental public health goal is to increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed so that mother and child can take advantage of both the health and economic benefits that breastfeeding offers. The Mother Friendly Toolkit assists faith-based organizations with promoting and supporting a family's decision to offer the natural nutrition that breast milk provides by creating a mother friendly environment within the faith community. Developed in partnership by DHEC, Eat Smart Move More South Carolina, Palmetto Health Richland Hospital and the South Carolina Breastfeeding Coalition, the toolkit includes information on the benefits of breastfeeding, helpful tips and steps a faith-based organization can take to create a mother friendly environment, a mother friendly sample policy, examples of outreach activities and a section of resource and support tools.

The Mother Friendly Toolkit is free and will **soon** be available online on the DHEC and SScale Down websites. To learn more, receive a copy or for additional questions about the toolkit, contact the Office of Community Health Improvement at (803) 898-0800 or CHInfo@dhec.sc.gov.

The Mother's Milk Bank of South Carolina

Mother's milk is extremely important for newborns, especially for premature, very low birth weight babies who are at higher risk for many serious health conditions.

Sometimes new moms find it difficult to make enough milk for their very low birth weight infants. With support from the South Carolina Neonatal Consortium, DHEC and the South Carolina Birth Outcomes Initiative, MUSC recently launched the first donor human milk bank in the state.

The [Mother's Milk Bank of South Carolina](#) (MMBSC), which is the second of its kind in the Southeast, provides an opportunity for healthy breastfeeding mothers with surplus milk to become milk donors to hospitalized very low birth weight infants. The milk bank is currently housed at MUSC, and there are donation drop-off sites at five DHEC health departments, as well as hospitals and pediatric clinics throughout the Palmetto State.

Becoming a donor is easy. The Mother's Milk Bank of South Carolina follows all standards established by the Human Milk Banking Association of North America to ensure safety and be recognized as an accredited milk bank. Each donor will be required to go through a screening process in order to meet these standards.

To learn more about the program and how to become a milk donor, please visit <http://www.scmilkbank.org/> or email scmilkbank@musc.edu.

Medicaid Nutrition Counseling Policy

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) plans to implement the Nutritional Counseling policy in August 2015. This policy targets those individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 and greater who are currently not seeking gastric bypass surgery or related services.

Adult Medicaid members with a BMI of 30 or greater who are committed to losing weight through diet and exercise will be eligible for an initial screening and five additional face-to-face behavioral counseling visits/encounters with their health care provider. Obesity management-related treatment for children will continue to be covered as a part of the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Testing (EPSDT) Program.

In addition, DHHS now recognizes Licensed Dietitians (LDs) providing nutritional counseling services for obesity as a provider type under its managed care and fee-for-service programs. Eligible participants must receive a referral from a physician to receive an initial dietitian visit for nutritional counseling and five follow up visits.

In order for LDs to be reimbursed directly for services rendered, they must enroll with both DHHS and the Managed Care Organizations (MCOs). LDs may enroll utilizing the provider enrollment online application tool located at <https://providerservices>.

scdhhs.gov/ProviderEnrollmentWeb/.

Please refer any questions or concerns regarding the DHHS Nutritional Counseling policy to either Obesity@scdhhs.gov or the Provider Service Center at (888) 289-0709.

Connecting the Dots

The programs and resources showcased above are examples of the many projects currently linked to the SScale Down Initiative. Critical to the success of all SScale Down activities and the overall initiative are partnerships and collaborative efforts created by key stakeholders. Thanks to this collaborative spirit, exciting and impactful work continues in the five SScale Down workgroups and progress is being made to achieve the objectives of the Obesity Action Plan.

To learn more about SScale Down, visit www.scaledown.org. For questions on how you can become involved with SScale Down, please contact info@scaledown.org.

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