

Health Director's Report

Division/ Program: Administration – Durham County Opioid Settlement Funds

(Accreditation Activity 12.3: The local health department shall participate in a collaborative process to implement population-based programs to address community health problems.)

Program description

- Last May, the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) received an initial update on the Opioid Settlement funds and process. Several initial steps involved community input, which has been very useful.
- An online survey was developed and available from December 7, 2022, through January 31, 2023. We received 554 responses.
- On March 20, 2023, a community input meeting was held at Durham County offices, and 68 community members attended. The community meeting was beneficial as it was an interactive session to discuss gaps and strategies for funding.
- The three top strategies identified were (1) evidence-based addiction treatment, (2) evidence-based recovery support services, and (3) recovery support housing.

Statement of goals

- As part of the May 2023 presentation, three items were identified as "time-sensitive spending authorizations."
- We are pleased to inform you that all three have been presented to and approved by the BOCC, marking significant progress in our efforts to utilize the Opioid Settlement Funds.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - **Opioid Settlement Manager position**

This position will manage the day-to-day opioid funds, community outreach and reporting. We are in this recruitment process and expect to have the position filled by the end of next month.
 - **Expand harm reduction efforts (through Durham County Public Health)**

Under the 'Expand harm reduction efforts' initiative, we are planning to hire a Public Health Harm Reduction Specialist. We will also provide medical supplies for harm reduction, including Narcan supplies to support DCo Public Health Pharmacy distribution, 3 vending machines, and safer syringe program supplies for DCo Public Health Pharmacy and community distribution. Additionally, we are considering potential contracts for outreach by an individual(s) with lived experience. We intend to carry this item forward into next year.
 - **Community Linkages to Care (through Durham County Public Health)**

The CLC initiative will connect individuals who are struggling with substance use disorder (SUD) with comprehensive, evidence-based care, which

acknowledges social determinants of health and responds to current housing challenges. The goals are to:

- Reduce overdose hospital visits and fatalities in Durham County.
 - Increase the number of naloxone opioid overdose reversal kits distributed to Durham County residents with SUD.
 - Engage key stakeholders across Durham County to help respond to the overdose crisis and address social determinants of health for individuals affected by SUD.
 - We intend to move forward with these items into next year.
- **Challenges**
 - While the current spending plan will allow these funds to provide immediate help to our community, which are great "quick wins," we are also developing a long-term structure around this process.
 - To ensure transparency and community involvement, an additional community meeting is being developed.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - This meeting will be a key opportunity for community members and organizations to learn more about Durham County Opioid Settlement Funds, current spending plans, and help develop a path for the future.
 - Once an agenda and date have been set, we will widely publicize the meeting to ensure we are able to gather as much feedback as possible.
- **Service delivery**
 - In addition to the team preparing required documents for the Board of Health, County Commissioners, and CORE NC (Federal and State approvers) to approve, the Deputy Public Health Director, Kristen Patterson has created the job position for the Opioid Settlement Program Manager.
 - Health Education Division Director, Lindsey Bickers Bock and Program Manager, Dennis Hamlet has created the job position for the Harm Reduction Specialist.
 - Finance Director, Micah Guindon assist with the financial and other required documents for the respective Boards approval.
 - Narcan has been purchased to fill the vending machines which are located in the lobbies of the Public Health building and the Detention Center. Narcan has also been purchased for the Public Health Pharmacy.
- **Staffing**
 - The Harm Reduction Specialist and Opioid Settlement Program Manager positions are posted.
 - Current work for the Opioid Settlement Program is being carried out by the following staff members Lindsey Bickers Bock, Lacie Scofield, Dennis Hamlet, Micah Guindon, and Kristen Patterson.
- **Revenue**
 - Durham County Government continues to fund these efforts through the Opioid Settlement Funds.

- **Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies**
 - Durham County Opioid Settlement Program are currently in the process of recruiting for open positions in order to hire staff.
 - Continue to expand our reach to the community through the Community Linkage to Care program (CLC) with the new funding source.

Division / Program: Population Health / Epidemiology

Accreditation Activity 38.1 BOH Review of Community Health Reports. Requires evidence that the BOH/advisory committee on health reviews health statistics of the communities served by the department.

Division/Department: Population Health Team

Program Description

Each year, the health of Durham County residents is evaluated using the County Health Rankings model. This model uses health outcomes such as quality of life and length of life, as well as health factors such as health behavior, clinical factors, social and economic factors, and physical environment to determine how people are living and how well people are living. This model is applied to all counties in North Carolina and used to rank them, one through 100. In 2024 this changed, so that counties are no longer ranked but are described as above or below average. In 2024, Durham County was described as “faring better than the average county in North Carolina for Health Outcomes, and better than the average county in the nation.” From 2021-2023, Durham County was ranked in the top ten healthiest counties.

The purpose of these rankings allows public health workers to identify gaps and inequities in the health of Durhamites and to compare this health to other counties in North Carolina, the state of North Carolina, and the United States as a whole. Examining inequities allows public health workers to look closely at social determinants of health and how they are driving health outcomes. Because County Health Rankings evaluates counties yearly, a time-series analysis can be performed to identify trends in health outcomes and behaviors over time. This can also be used to identify inequities.

Statement of Goals

- Utilize the data found from County Health Rankings to identify gaps and inequities in the health and wellbeing of Durhamites.
- Identify trends over time to understand the long-term impact of certain health behaviors that can lead to good or poor health outcomes.
- Provide secondary data to reports, infographics, StoryMaps, and presentations to inform Durhamites and county officials on Durham County’s health and wellbeing.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Gain thorough insight into the health and wellbeing of Durhamites.

- Analyze disaggregated data when possible, to understand how social determinants of health affect health outcomes.
- Identify areas of excellence and areas of opportunities with Durham County.

- **Challenges**

- Recent data is not available in all categories, some data points are from several years ago.
- Not all the data can be disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**

- Durham County is one of the most diverse counties in North Carolina.
- Durham County residents reporting poor or fair health increased since 2023.
- Residents with poor physical and mental health days out of the past 30 days increased in Durham County.
- Low birthweight babies in Durham County did not increase or decrease.
- Diabetes prevalence increased from 10% to 11% and now matches the state of North Carolina.
- Drug overdose deaths in Durham County increased from 18 to 23 deaths per 100,000 residents.
- Life expectancy decreased for all races and Hispanic and Latinos since 2023 in Durham County.
- Infant mortality and premature deaths did not increase or decrease in Durham County.
- Black or African American infants die at a higher rate (11 per 100,000) than white (3 per 100,000) or Hispanic or Latino babies (4 per 100,000).
- Durham County continues to provide excellent mental and physical care providers to patient ratios than the state or country.
- Durham County has higher flu vaccination rates than the state.
- There are still inequities seen in mammogram screenings by race and ethnicity.

- **Staffing**

- Epidemiologist
- Population Health division staff

- **Revenue**

- None

- **Next Steps/Mitigation Strategies**

- Continue to analyze data yearly to identify trends over time as well as gaps and inequities.
- Incorporate this data into reports, infographics, StoryMaps, and presentations to paint a better picture of Durham County's health and wellbeing.

Division / Program: Dental Division / Oral Health Screenings at DPS/Early Head Start
(Accreditation Activity 20. 1- The local health department shall collaborate with community health care providers to provide personal and preventative health services.)

Program description

- The Dental Division conducts screenings for children in Durham Public Elementary Schools and Early Head Start Centers in Durham.
- A Public Health Hygienist provides screenings to identify cavities and any emerging dental issues.
- After the screening, parents receive a letter with the results. The letters state whether the child has or may have caries. The documents note that if the child does not have a dental home, the parent can call the Public Health Dental Clinic to schedule an appointment.
- Parents of children in Durham Public Schools are notified if the Tooth Ferry mobile will visit their child's school. In these instances, parents are provided information on how the child can be treated on the Tooth Ferry. (They also have the option to take them to the Public Health Dental Clinic.)

Statement of goals

- Annual dental screenings provide indications of the prevalence of dental disease in children in the County- and how Durham compares with other counties within the state.
- Parents receive information on their child's current oral health status and treatment needs.
- Dental Division Clinic or Tooth Ferry can be dental care options for parents whose children need treatment.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - The screenings serve as a positive (and sometimes first) dental experience for a child.
 - The screenings assist in collecting vital information to help improve children's dental health programs.
 - The screenings include education for children (and parents) via oral health presentations at the schools or Early Head Start Centers.

Challenges

- There are often last-minute adjustments to the screening schedule when arriving at the sites, including finding space for the team.
- Despite many requests, the team does not have the ability to visit multiple Middle School sites, and requests are vetted on a case-by-case basis.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - The Division completed screening on 9,200+ children this past school year.
 - The team was able to accommodate Brogden Middle School's request for screening, completing two days there in May.

- The State Oral Health Section completed a dental sealant project, also in May at Eastway Elementary. They saw 25 students and 19 needed/received sealants.
- **Service delivery**
Team compiling data for screenings completed in the last week of September.
- **Staffing**
 - Fariba Mostaghimi, Public Health hygienist, completes the screening.
 - Dental team members (typically the Tooth Ferry Coordinator or Driver) record results and assist in completing the letters to parents.
- **Revenue**
 - N/A
- **Other**
 - N/A

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

The Division will compile data and produce reports during the summer months.

Division / Program: Health Education & Community Transformation / Naloxone Vending Machines (Accreditation Activity 12.3: The local health department shall participate in a collaborative process to implement population-based programs to address community health problems.)

Program description:

The Durham County Department of Public Health (DCoDPH) is partnering with the Durham County Detention Center to implement the “Naloxone Vending Machine Project.” Naloxone, also known as the branded medication, named Narcan, blocks opioid receptors and reverses the effects of opioids. Opioids are a highly addictive class of drugs. When someone is overdosed, naloxone can restore normal breathing when their breathing has slowed or stopped. The medicine, when distributed as a nasal spray, doesn’t require medical training to administer. Implementing naloxone vending machines is an evidence-based strategy for mitigating substance use associated morbidity and mortality via the dispensation of naloxone to people who use drugs, including overdose prevention resources.

The Naloxone Vending Machine Project provides a no-cost, stigma-free harm reduction strategy in a safe and discrete environment. The vending machines will increase access to naloxone outside of traditional brick and mortar settings.

DCoDPH currently manages two naloxone vending machines in Durham County:

1. Machine #1 is located at the Durham County Human Services facility and is available during normal business hours.

- Machine #2 is located at the Durham County Detention Center and community members can access the machines 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Statement of goals:

- Reduce opioid overdose deaths and improve the quality of life for people who use drugs by increasing low barrier access to naloxone. Low barrier access, for the purpose of this agreement, is providing free supplies with comprehensible messaging.
- Reach and engage communities, both geographic and demographic, disproportionately impacted by opioid overdose.
- Reduce stigma related to substance use.

Issues:

- **Opportunities**
 - Naloxone vending machines will afford Durham County the opportunity to utilize a new, innovative approach to protect and promote the health and safety of individuals who use drugs.
 - The addition of naloxone vending machines has expanded our naloxone distribution efforts as the machines are relatively inexpensive and cost effective compared to other modes of service.
- **Challenges**
 - There is limited capacity for data collection. However, efforts to collect patient demographic and supply input and output data are in progress. Key staff across the Durham County enterprise are identifying strategies to improve our data infrastructure for county opioid response efforts. Once we have a Harm Reduction Public Health Education Specialist, we will have an increased capacity to collect additional data, such as machine utilization patterns, frequency of use and participation experience.
 - As Durham County finalized their opioid settlement funding plan, opportunities to purchase bulk orders of naloxone were limited. This caused a delay in launching our Human Services vending machines.
 - Although there are myriad benefits associated with naloxone vending machines, there is an inherent limitation of not being able to offer face to face service provision.
- **Outcomes**
 - Over 600 naloxone kits have been dispensed across both vending machines since our initial launch – September 2023 for the Detention Center and February 2024 for the Human Services Building.
 - Since launch, we've observed an increased interest in Durham County's approach to opioid response. Key staff have been invited to conduct community presentations and consultations related to the implementation of the vending machine project.
- **Service delivery**
 - Machines are strategically placed at the Durham County Human Services facility and the Durham County Detention Center.

- **Staffing**
 - Until a full-time Harm Reduction Public Health Education Specialist is hired, the machine is stocked and monitored by the following Public Health staff.
 - Christopher Mack, Public Health Educator
 - Quanna Norman, Public Health Educator
 - Colin Moore, Health Education Administrative Assistant
 - The overall naloxone vending machine project is managed by Public Health Education Program Manager, Dennis Hamlet.

- **Revenue**
 - The naloxone provided through the vending machines is provided at no cost. During FY24, the naloxone provided through the vending machines has been purchased using Health Education County funding, as well as in-kind donations from Durham County EMS and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, Injury and Violence Prevention Branch.
 - Starting in FY25, naloxone supplies provided through the vending machines will be paid for with the County's opioid settlement funds.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies:

- Leverage Durham County opioid settlement funds to sustain and expand the vending machine project.

Division / Program: Nutrition

(Accreditation Activity 10.2 - The local health department shall carry, develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the CHA)

Program description

- Durham's Innovative Nutrition Education (DINE), part of the Durham County Department of Public Health, promotes nutrition in the community. DINE works with several Families and Communities Rising (FCR, Inc.) Head Start locations in Durham. A DINE nutritionist provides direct education with students at Leathers Meachem Head Start, Lyon Park Head Start, and Seminary Road Head Start and works with school staff to make policy, system and environment (PSE) changes.
- Double Bucks is a nutrition incentive program running at local farmers' markets that offers a dollar-for-dollar match to customers enrolled in SNAP, WIC, and those receiving housing vouchers. The program also doubles WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits. Double Bucks runs at Durham Farmers' Market (DFM), along with three other markets in Durham and four other markets in the Triangle.
- Durham Farmers' Market hosted an Early Care and Education Day on May 1st, 2024. The event included \$5 vouchers for children to use at the market, \$5 vouchers for early care and education teachers, a cooking demonstration led by chef and farmer Skip Gibbs, and resource sharing, games and activities for families with young children.

Statement of goals

- Increase awareness for families and early care and education (ECE) teachers about double bucks programs and other programs that increase accessibility (such as Sprouts Club) at DFM.
- Increase access to and consumption of nutritious foods.
- Support local farmers and the local economy.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Partnerships between DINE, DFM, Durham Partnership for Children (DPfC), Welcome Baby, and Chef Skip Gibbs.
 - The event was promoted by email, social media, and face to face reminders by DINE, DPfC, DFM, and other community partners serving the early care and education community.
 - Accessible large public space at DFM, open to all in the Durham community.
 - DFM offers Sprouts Club funds, \$5 available weekly to any child who attends the Wednesday afternoon market.
 - DFM used its Double Bucks funds to provide \$5 vouchers to any early care and education teacher for this special event.
 - Staff from DFM, DINE, and DPfC delivered vouchers in advance to approximately 400 children and teachers at Head Start locations within 2 miles of DFM.
 - Costs for ingredients for the cooking demonstration were shared between DFM and DINE. In addition, some farms donated ingredients. Chef Gibbs brought some of his own equipment including a portable grill.
- **Challenges**
 - Barriers for attendance included scheduling conflicts for busy families and transportation to the market.
 - Staff at childcare programs offering extended care past 6pm were not able to attend due to market hours.
 - Special \$5 funds were only available to early care and education teachers at this onetime event.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - The farmers' market had a higher turnout than a typical Wednesday of approximately 530 people.
 - Chef Skip Gibbs did a cooking demo of chicken tacos with slaw utilizing market ingredients. 220 people attended the cooking demonstration and sampled local food.
 - As of 5/15/24, 60 of the vouchers have been used by families and ECE teachers. Because the vouchers do not expire, they may be used later at Wednesday and Saturday markets.
 - For the two weeks of the Wednesday market prior to Early Care and Education Day, the market averaged five Double Bucks transactions. On ECE Day, there were 18.
- **Service delivery**
 - Sprouts Clubs funds of \$5 per week are available to every child who attends the Wednesday afternoon farmers' market during its season (April through October).

- The Double Bucks program is available at all Triangle Double Bucks markets. DINE nutritionist, Durham Partnership for Children staff, and Welcome Baby staff can reinforce messaging re: double bucks.
- **Staffing**
 - DINE nutritionist helped coordinate between Durham Farmers' Market, Durham Partnership for Children, Chef Skip Gibbs, and Welcome Baby.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- Continue to work with preschools served by DINE to teach families and staff about benefits available at local farmers' markets.
- DINE's Childcare Nutritionist and Double Bucks nutritionist will continue to collaborate on future projects with Durham Farmers' Market.

Division / Program: Nutrition / Double Bucks Updates

(Accreditation Activity 10.2 - The local health department shall carry, develop, implement, and evaluate health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the CHA)

Program description

- Double Bucks is a Farmer's Market nutrition incentive program that is quickly expanding. It offers a dollar-for-dollar match to customers enrolled in SNAP, WIC, and those receiving housing vouchers. The program also doubles WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) benefits. In years past, Double Bucks was only offered at Durham Farmers' Market, South Durham Farmers' Market, the Black Farmers' Market in Durham County. DCoDPH DINE also provides support to the programs at Carrboro Farmers' Market, Chapel Hill Farmers' Market, Eno River Farmers' Market in Hillsborough, and the Black Farmers' Market in Raleigh.
- The following are updates that have occurred since September 2023:
 - North Durham Farmers' Market, a brand-new market which opened this spring near Oxford Manor, joined the Double Bucks team. The market began accepting SNAP and providing Double Bucks at their opening market on April 6th, 2024.
 - East Durham Market, a new grocery store operated by Communities in Partnership is accepting SNAP and offering Double Bucks for eligible food purchases to all SNAP customers. The market had its official grand opening on April 13th, 2024.

Statement of goals

- Promote the Double Bucks program among residents of Durham County.
- Increase access to and consumption of nutritious foods.
- Support local farmers and the local economy.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - North Durham Farmers' Market, which is conveniently located close to Oxford Manner and Braggtown neighborhoods, expands access to Double Bucks and

local foods to the Northern region of the county. It also supports farmers and vendors that identify as BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+. The market managers strive to create a welcoming atmosphere that will improve food access and economic opportunity.

- East Durham Market, the first brick and mortar store to offer Double Bucks, expands Double Bucks to people who prefer to shop in stores rather than a farmers' market. The market is in the East Durham neighborhood, where two grocery stores recently closed. It also supports BIPOC farmers and vendors, further extending the economic impact of the program.
- Durham County ARPA funding is supporting both the opening of the East Durham Market as well as Durham Double Bucks programs.
- **Challenges**
 - Changing customers' shopping behavior and enticing them to shop at new stores is often difficult.
 - Due to USDA regulations, East Durham Market must run the program differently than other Double Bucks programs because it is a brick-and-mortar store. SNAP regulations require retailers that have storefronts to sign an incentive waiver and limits stores to only incentivizing fruits, vegetables, dairy, and whole grains. Conversely, any SNAP eligible food can be incentivized at a farmers' market, including meats, eggs, any grains, and even fruiting plants. This unfortunately limits customers' buying power at the East Durham Market and can make advertising more difficult.
 - Double Bucks, which has a budget of about \$200,000 per year in the Triangle, is funded through grants and donations. It takes a lot of time and effort to raise this money every year and the team is searching for funders willing to provide continued funding to the program.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - DINE expects that new customers will be reached by the Double Bucks program.
- **Service delivery**
 - North Durham Farmers' Market will be open and offering Double Bucks from April through November each year.
 - East Durham Market will be open and offering Double Bucks year-round. They are open to customers Monday-Friday, 9am-7pm, and on weekends 9am-5pm.
- **Staffing**
 - DINE Healthy Environments Nutritionist provides technical assistance, organization, evaluation, and marketing for the program. A DINE Nutrition Program Manager assists with grant writing.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- A new website is being designed and will be launched soon outlining all markets that offer the program and the times they are open. The website will allow for easy advertising of all new markets that join the program and explains the program to partners and participants.
- Continue to market the program and advertise new locations.

- Continue to search for funding to support the program.

Division / Program: Nutrition / DINE Family Cooking Events

(Accreditation Activity 10.2: The local health department shall carry out or assist other agencies in the development, implementation and evaluation of health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the community health assessment.)

Program description

- DINE is a school- and community-based nutrition education program targeting SNAP-eligible Durham families.
- The DINE school team delivers a nutrition curriculum that includes instructions on cooking skills to students in many Durham Public Schools (DPS) elementary and middle schools. To reach the parents/caregivers with nutrition information, the lessons include an informational family handout that describes the key nutrition concepts covered in class.
- During the 2023-2024 school year, DINE provided family cooking events at Holt, Spring Valley, and Y.E. Smith Elementary Schools. Two other family cooking events were held for DPS families in collaboration with the DPS Hub Farm. At all the events, a brief nutrition lesson was delivered to the group, followed by a hands-on cooking activity. Parents and their students worked with other families to prepare a dish that everyone shared. Participants were also offered samples of infused water at the events.

Statement of goals

- To reinforce DINE's nutrition education and behavior change goals, including daily consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables and decreased consumption of sugar sweetened beverages.
- To increase participants' nutrition knowledge and culinary skills.
- To increase self-efficacy in preparing and providing healthy meals.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - The family handouts that correspond to each DINE nutrition lesson in the schools are a passive method to deliver information and could be easily misplaced or discarded without being read. The family cooking events allow for in-person instruction and interactions with parents and caregivers who are the providers of food for elementary age children.
 - Parents/caregivers receiving nutrition information with their student(s) in conjunction with practicing cooking skills together encourages family discussions around food choices and promotes cooking more meals at home.
 - Participating schools and the Hub Farm provided space that accommodated family cooking events.
- **Challenges**
 - The reach is smaller with this type of nutrition programming because the nature of family cooking requires limiting the number of participants to 10-15 families.

- Staffing requirements are greater for a hands-on family cooking event versus a nutrition class that simply offers a taste test to participants.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**
 - The family cooking night events took place on the following dates:
 - September 27, 2023, at the Hub Farm with 23 participants,
 - October 26, 2023, at Holt Elementary School with 40 participants,
 - November 30, 2023, at Spring Valley Elementary School with 34 participants,
 - December 5, 2023, at Y.E. Smith Elementary School with 28 participants,
 - April 26, 2024, at Holt Elementary School with 30 participants, and
 - May 22, 2024, at the Hub Farm with 41 participants.
- **Service delivery**
 - DINE coordinated with each host site regarding the event logistics.
 - DINE staff conducted a brief nutrition lesson on such topics as using MyPlate to plan a healthy meal, and tips on decreasing consumption of added sugar from food and drinks.
 - Following the brief nutrition lesson, DINE staff led a hands-on cooking activity in which the participants prepared a dish or two to eat together. Examples of recipes used include Jicama Salad, Three Sisters Soup, Breakfast Burrito, Mediterranean Couscous, and Stove-Top Apple Crisp.
 - Participants were given a “Chop-Chop” cooking magazine and a cooking utensil (liquid measuring cup, cutting mat, or spatula) as educational reinforcements.
- **Staffing**
 - Four DINE staff participated in the planning and workshop presentations.
 - Other partners involved in the workshop presentation were DPS staff from after-school programs and Hub Farm.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- DINE will ask DPS Hub Farm staff about feedback received from participants. This feedback will be used while developing future presentations.
- DINE has recently completed a community assessment survey of the DPS families whose children attend elementary schools receiving the DINE program. The purpose of the survey was to determine if more parents would be interested in attending programming like the family cooking nights, as well as nutrition topics the families would like covered at these events. DINE is currently planning to offer family cooking events to more elementary schools during the 2024-2025 school year.

Division / Program: Nutrition / DINE Gardening Project with Holt Elementary School and Durham Academy

(Accreditation Activity 10.2: The local health department shall carry out or assist other agencies in the development, implementation and evaluation of health promotion/disease prevention programs and educational materials targeted to groups identified as at-risk in the community health assessment.)

Program description

- DINE is a school- and community-based nutrition education program targeting SNAP-eligible Durham families. DINE has ongoing and long-lasting partnerships with Durham Public Schools (DPS), providing nutrition education to SNAP-eligible students and their families. DINE also facilitates policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes and social marketing campaigns at these schools that strive to improve the health environment.
- DINE works with Durham Public Schools (DPS) and community organizations on farm to school initiatives to promote local food/agriculture, school gardens, and healthy eating. Farm-to-school encompasses garden, nutrition, and agriculture education, and is a priority for USDA and SNAP-Ed.
- DINE was approached by 8th grade students from Durham Academy who wanted a location to conduct a vegetable planting project they had created as part of a food security lesson in their civics class. DINE has a longstanding relationship with the afterschool program at Holt Elementary School, so it was determined that this location would be a good place to partner with Durham Academy.
- The Durham Academy (DA) students provided pots, soil, tomato and cucumber plants, as well as a pamphlet they created with instructions on how to care for the plants at home. DINE provided brainstorming and feedback to the DA students for their project, as well as hands-on support during the event. Each student in the afterschool program was able to plant both a cucumber and tomato plant and take them home.

Statement of goals

- To reinforce DINE's nutrition education and behavior change goals, focusing on increasing the consumption of vegetables.
- To increase hands-on gardening opportunities in Durham Public Schools.
- To partner with community organizations to expand learning opportunities for DPS students.

Issues

- **Opportunities**
 - Hands-on growing projects help students understand where food comes from and increase their exposure to vegetables.
 - This project increased students' time outdoors, which has been shown to be beneficial to physical and mental health.
 - This project created a new relationship between DINE and Durham Academy, which has the potential to create new projects and learning opportunities in the future.
- **Challenges**
 - The partnership with Durham Academy was a one-time event. DINE does not have the resources to replicate this project at other schools.

Implication(s)

- **Outcomes**

- On May 8, 2024, 21 Holt afterschool students in grades K-5 were reached through this project.
- Additional vegetables were planted for students who were not in attendance that day, expanding the reach to 30 students.
- **Service delivery**
 - DINE staff introduced the lesson, which was then led by the Durham Academy (DA) 8th grade students. The DA students showed the DPS students how to create labels for the plants, assisted each student in putting soil in their pots and planting cucumber and tomato plants to take home.
 - DINE provided gardening gloves for the DPS and DA students to wear during the planting activity.
 - DINE staff assisted the DA students in leading the planting activity.
- **Staffing**
 - Three DINE staff met with the DA students ahead of time to discuss planning and implementation.
 - One DINE staff member participated in the day-of execution of this project.

Next Steps / Mitigation Strategies

- DINE nutritionists will maintain partnership and communication with the Durham Academy Civics teacher to consider similar partnerships and projects in the future.



Durham Academy students assist Holt afterschool students with planting tomatoes and cucumbers.



Completed plants ready to be taken home.