

# Clark County Public Health

## Community Transformation Grant —Success Stories

### Healthy Living Collaborative

#### The Healthy Living Collaborative: A story of community partnership

Where and how people live, work, learn, and play has a tremendous impact on physical, emotional, and mental health and overall well-being. Today's policymakers and interventionists recognize that social and environmental determinants play a critical role in determining health. These health-influencing determinants range from education, jobs, and economic status to transportation, crime exposure, and food access. Other conditions such as housing design, weather, and pollution can also shape how healthy a person will be. Because health-influencing determinants bridge community sectors, it makes sense that any long-term approach to addressing them must include representation from each.

In 2012, spurred by the Community Transformation Grant, cross-sector partners from Clark, Cowlitz, Skamania and Wahkiakum counties came together to form the CTG Regional Coalition. Their shared goal is the creation of policies, environments, and systems that would encourage people to make choices that lead to good health. The collaborative included representation from agencies widely recognized as health-focused, such as public health and clinical providers, but also engaged representatives from a variety of other sectors.

Within a year of the first meeting, the regional coalition committed to a long-term relationship and secured strategic local and state partnerships, public and private funding, and a contractual relationship with Educational Services District 112 to serve as their fiscal agent. The coalition became the Healthy Living Collaborative of Southwest Washington (HLC), and charter membership now counts 50 dedicated organizational partners representing healthcare, housing, education, business, and government, as well as specific priority populations including mental health, the homeless, the disabled, the aged, children, the Cowlitz tribe, and ethnic minorities. Today, the HLC is led by an executive director and a 13-member policy and steering committee. Four workgroups target region-wide initiatives focused on active living, tobacco prevention, healthy eating, and the development of community health linkages



The HLC employs a three-prong approach to supporting health and wellness in Clark County and the larger southwest Washington region:

- A regional infrastructure supporting PSE change;
- A health-in-all-policies, systems, and structures approach; and
- Community-based prevention strategies.

Addressing health disparity is a cornerstone of the HLC, which partners pursue through shared strategic objectives of:

- Increasing cross-sector coordination and alignment between all partners and systems that influence social determinants of health;
- Improving the health of all people by incorporating health considerations into decision-making across sectors and policy areas to prevent and mitigate chronic disease and poverty;
- Increasing community capacity of neighborhood-based Community Health Workers as a means of:
  - Building community engagement, linking community resources and improving health outcomes;
  - Increasing neighborhood opportunities in the areas of chronic disease prevention, substance-free living, safety, and social connections as determined by the community; and
  - Increasing the capacity of systems to inform and weave health, housing, social services, education, employment, economic development, and civic participation into the fabric of neighborhoods with identified need.

The HLC will continue to build and sustain the broad community cross-sector structure needed to influence large-scale prevention and social change strategies required by this proposal. Through the collaborative model for community-based work currently used at our state level, the HLC provides critical synergy between our population-based work in neighborhoods with systems change efforts at regional and state levels supported by the state Prevention Alliance. To date, the HLC has successfully informed state policy efforts, supported local implementation of policy and systems changes, supported work activities related to active, smoke-free living, and has initiated a three-county community health worker pilot project. The HLC work platform is expected to evolve as the coalition engages and mobilizes new partners.

