

Who We Are and What We Do

Our Goal

The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (DNPAO) aims to improve access to healthier foods and opportunities for daily physical activity through policy, systems, and environmental approaches reaching South Carolinians where they live, learn, work, and play. You can learn more at www.scdhec.gov/DNPAO.

Our Strategies

- Improve early care and education environments to support healthy eating and active living
- Improve school environments to support healthy eating and active living
- Improve student health through the implementation of a statewide, web-based FitnessGram system
- Integrate access to healthy foods and opportunities for active living into community planning and design
- Engage partners to guide state-wide healthy eating, active living, and healthy weight efforts



Improving Environments to Support Healthy Eating and Active Living

Early Care and Education

DNPAO provides subject matter expertise and guidance on the integration of nutrition and physical activity best practice recommendations into early care and education systems. By working through the established systems to improve nutrition and physical activity practices in the child care environment, all current and future children attending these facilities are positively impacted. Providing environments that support healthy behaviors at this young age helps to build a foundation for healthy living.

Schools

DNPAO provides subject matter expertise and guidance on creating healthier school environments using best practice recommendations for nutrition and physical activity. By convening partners from national, state, and local levels, DNPAO garners support and resources to empower education leaders to improve nutrition and physical activity environments in schools. DNPAO coordinates the SC FitnessGram System, a statewide web-based health-related fitness testing and data management system, to enhance the ability of public schools to monitor and improve student health.

Community Planning and Design

Built environment interventions to increase access to healthy foods and opportunities for physical activity are well-documented as proven effective



strategies to improve population health. To assist communities with the best practice recommendations, DNPAO convenes the South Carolina Health + Planning Advisory Committee to connect health and planning in South Carolina. Through this committee, the SC Health + Planning Toolkit, a healthy eating and active living policy guide for planning and public health in South Carolina, is promoted. The focus of the Toolkit is to incorporate health-related planning principles into local government comprehensive planning, with the overall goal of providing a policy resource to understand, evaluate, and impact local planning policy. In addition to this Toolkit, DNPAO provides additional tools and guidance to assist communities in improving health through community planning and design.

Partner Engagement

To impact population nutrition and physical activity in the state of South Carolina, a multi-sector, collaborative approach is necessary. DNPAO co-leads the Healthy Palmetto Leadership Council which serves as the state lead coalition of organizations responsible for collectively addressing healthy eating, active living, and healthy weight within the Live Healthy SC State Health Improvement Plan chronic health conditions priority area. The purpose of Healthy Palmetto is to unify and mobilize healthy eating and active living efforts that create equitable opportunities for all South Carolinians to achieve a healthy weight.

Program Highlights

Early Care and Education

- [Improving the Nutrition and Physical Activity Environments of ABC Quality Child Care Centers in SC: A Five Year Review](#), summarizes the successful implementation of nutrition and physical activity standards by ABC Quality child care centers. ABC Quality program requirements continue to include nutrition and physical activity indicators as components of quality care.
- Identified, piloted, and recommended nutrition and physical activity standards for ABC Quality family and group child care home providers which ABC Quality leadership is considering for adoption. In preparation for the proposed standards, ongoing technical assistance is being provided to family and group child care home providers on creating healthier menus, increasing opportunities for physical activity, decreasing screen time, and supporting breastfeeding families.
- In collaboration with ABC Quality, an initiative to increase young children's access to quality, naturalized outdoor environments that support play and learning across all domains of development was implemented in 20 child care centers. A framework to support statewide expansion of this initiative is under development. The quality of a child care center's outdoor environment is particularly relevant because this is where children can learn to be physically active, can be motivated to play in nature, and feel comfortable outdoors – habits that may persist in later life.

Schools

- Through a partnership with the SC Department of Education, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and the Boeing Center for Children's Wellness, the Local Wellness Policy State Technical Assistance Team (LWP STAT) was formed to support USDA's Final Rule of the Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The interagency team provides professional development opportunities to school district administrators on how to adopt, implement, and monitor the SC School Boards Association's model Local Wellness Policy to support the sustainability of healthy eating and active living opportunities in schools.
- [SC FitnessGram](#), a statewide web-based health-related fitness testing and data management system, is being used in 72 of 81 public school districts and has brought together leaders and experts to support efforts to improve health-related fitness among public school students. At the local level, the SC FitnessGram system provides ways to manage and report data to assist parents, teachers, and administrators in providing information that can strengthen fitness education, testing, and improve student health and academic achievement. SC FitnessGram will continue expanding efforts through exploring longitudinal analyses of the data and implementing communication strategies at the school, community, and state level.
- [Breaking Physical Activity Barriers Through Open Community Use](#) was developed to encourage school districts to adopt the SC School Boards Association's model Open Community Use of School Recreational Areas policy to provide safe, convenient, and free places for physical activity during non-school hours. As of 2019, 18 school districts have adopted the model policy. Qualifying schools that complete the DHEC Open Community Use survey are offered free signs to promote the use of their outdoor recreational facilities for community use.

Community Planning and Design

- The SC Health + Planning Advisory Committee developed and promotes use of the [SC Health + Planning Toolkit](#), a healthy eating and active living best practice policy guide for local governments.
- [Creating Active Community Environments in South Carolina: A Grassroots Guide](#) is a beginner's guide for communities that are interested in creating an active community environment. This includes local coalitions, community groups, and interested citizens who want to improve their built environment to increase physical activity.

Partner Engagement

- The Healthy Palmetto Leadership Council was officially launched in 2020 and has over 20 engaged partner organizations. For more information, please visit the [Healthy Palmetto page](#) on the Live Healthy SC website.

Did You Know?



Poor diet and physical inactivity (combined) are the second actual cause of death (JAMA, 2004), contributing to South Carolina's leading chronic conditions including some cancers, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.



SC has the 14th highest rate (34.3%) of adult obesity in the nation (Trust for America's Health: The State of Obesity 2018).



According to measured data of SC's public school students, 37.0% of students are overweight or obese and 50.0% of students do not meet cardiorespiratory fitness requirements for good health (SC FitnessGram 2017-2018).

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