

Creating Communities that Prevent Cancer

HEALTHY ANDROSCOGGIN'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY HEALTH





Healthy Androscoggin and Cancer Prevention

Healthy Androscoggin (HA), a community health coalition serving Androscoggin County, delivers innovative programs and builds communities that make healthy living easier and more accessible. Our work reduces cancer incidence by promoting healthy behaviors and minimizing factors that can lead to cancer.

We are not alone in this work. Our community is home to robust cancer treatment and support resources. Projects, like those described here, demonstrate Healthy Androscoggin's focus on preventing cancer before it ever develops.

THIS REPORT OUTLINES THREE UNIQUE AND SUCCESSFUL CANCER PREVENTION INTERVENTIONS IMPLEMENTED IN OUR COMMUNITY.

The development of this report and two of the projects outlined here have been made possible by grants from Maine Cancer Foundation. Thank you to all Maine Cancer Foundation donors. Your donations make an impact, right here in our community.



Tobacco 21

THE ISSUE:

Nearly 90% of people who smoke cigarettes initiate smoking by age 18, and 99% of people who smoke first try smoking by age 26. E-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among youth since 2014. Teen tobacco use increased by 38% between 2017 and 2019, largely led by a dramatic increase in use of e-cigarettes. Research has shown that using mass media to communicate health messages can be one of the most effective strategies to address tobacco use among youth¹.



¹ www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/results-2018-national-youth-tobacco-survey-show-dramatic-increase-e-cigarette-use-among-youth-over



HOW HEALTHY ANDROSCOGGIN MET THE CHALLENGE:

In 2018 Healthy Androscoggin received Tobacco Prevention funds from the Maine Cancer Foundation to create a media campaign aimed at educating the community about Maine's new Tobacco 21 (T21) law, enacted in the same year. The law states that a person must be 21 to purchase or obtain tobacco and related products. Previously, the age was 18.

The T21 Preventing Youth Smoking Through Community Education Project was developed and included prevention activities, education, and cessation support. The process to develop campaign materials began with focus groups with local adults and young people who advised HA staff on the right marketing messages and methods.

HA staff worked with a marketing firm to develop a campaign which educated community members about the new Tobacco 21 law and also connected people to resources to support quitting tobacco use. The campaign materials were created in both digital and print formats oriented toward youth and adult audiences. The T21 campaign used diverse digital media including: Spotify, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, and paper information cards.



RESULTS

The campaign ran during the months of August and September 2020, starting with the target of Androscoggin County and eventually increasing reach to the entire state of Maine. Since launching the media campaign, materials received over 11,000 views on HA's landing page and over 2 million impressions on social media.

SUSTAINING THE WORK

The project, including steps taken, lessons learned, and results, was presented at the National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Summit in February 2021. Campaign materials and a full project report are available free for public use at the Tobacco 21 landing page at:

HealthyAndroscoggin.org/tobacco21.

Let's Go! 5-2-1-0

THE ISSUE:

There is a connection between obesity and increased cancer risk. As many as 3.5% of all the cancers in men and 9.5% of all the cancers in women can be attributed directly to obesity. In Androscoggin County, the percentage of high school students considered obese has risen from 13.5% in 2011 to 17.4% in 2016².



² <https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/obesity/obesity-fact-sheet>

HOW HEALTHY ANDROSCOGGIN MET THE CHALLENGE:

Let's Go! sites support children's health by helping to make the healthy choice the easy choice. This is done by promoting the 5-2-1-0 message. The 5-2-1-0 program helps children develop healthy daily habits that include: Eating **Five** or more fruits and vegetables, participating in **Two** hours or less of recreational screen time, engaging in **One** hour or more of physical activity, and drinking **Zero** sugary drinks each day. Let's Go! sites use strategies such as encouraging fruit kabobs instead of cupcakes for celebrations, hosting self-serve water stations, and encouraging movement breaks throughout the day.



Currently, Healthy Androscoggin's Let's Go! Coordinator partners with 133 sites in Androscoggin County to promote healthy habits. These sites include:

- **53 early care and education programs**
- **38 school cafeterias**
- **22 schools**
- **8 out-of-school programs**
- **12 pediatric healthcare practices**

RESULTS:

Of the early care and education programs, schools, and out-of-school programs reporting in 2020, the majority are implementing Let's Go!'s priority strategies. Eighty-three percent limit unhealthy choices for snacks and celebrations and instead provide healthy choices. Ninety-three percent limit or eliminate sugary drinks and promote water. Eighty-five percent prohibit the use of food as a reward. One hundred percent provide opportunities for physical activity daily. And seventy-six percent limit recreational screen time.

Let's Go! Androscoggin supports Let's Go! sites in making environmental and policy changes by providing personalized assistance, training opportunities, and access to resources. At a Healthy Snacks Workshop held in June 2021, eleven early care and education sites received ingredients to make two healthy recipes with the children in their programs, resources to support nutrition education and healthy eating, and an opportunity to connect with one another.



Additionally, when funding is available, HA is able to provide small incentives and grants to assist Let's Go! sites in implementing the priority strategies:

“ Thanks to a \$100 gift card from Healthy Androscoggin, I was able to purchase equipment for my site to provide fruit-infused water once a week on Wellness Wednesdays and regular water every day. This was a huge success and helped eliminate sugary beverages from our program 100%. Thank you!” — *Owen Sterrs, Middle School Community Learning Center Site Coordinator*

School cafeterias are also engaging in positive practices, with 93% offering a variety of vegetables, 85% offering pre-packaged salads or a salad bar, and 93% serving easy-to-eat sliced fruit.

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SUSTAINING THE WORK:

Strong healthy nutrition policies in schools help kids establish good habits early in life and set them up for healthy living as they continue to grow. With the support of Healthy Androscoggin's Let's Go! Coordinator, all six of the public-school districts in Androscoggin County have Wellness Policies compliant with the **Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act** (HHFKA) of 2010 which increases access to healthy food for low-income children. Wellness policies that promote efforts to increase healthy eating and physical activity are an important tool for school districts to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

To view the Let's Go! 2020 Regional Report for Androscoggin County, please go to:

HealthyAndroscoggin.org/active-living



Colon Health Rx

THE ISSUE:

While good data does not exist that is specific to colorectal cancer in immigrants from Africa (also called New Mainers) specifically, the American Cancer Society estimates that about 1 in 21 men and 1 in 23 women in the United States will develop colorectal cancer during their lifetime.



Maine Community Integration
Strengthening the fabric of our community



HOW HEALTHY ANDROSCOGGIN MET THE CHALLENGE:

With input from New Mainers and providers at St. Mary's B Street Health Center, Healthy Androscoggin staff created a unique culturally-appropriate curriculum about colorectal cancer prevention and screening. HA staff partnered with Maine Community Integration to develop and implement Colon Health Rx workshops. The workshops were provided in person and virtually for New Mainer community members. These workshops included information about high fiber healthy eating, the benefits of physical activity, how to take a colorectal cancer screening test, and how to access testing.

Maine Community Integration staff provided clinical expertise and answers when questions came up during the sessions. One in-person and four virtual workshops were implemented between November 2020 and January 2021 with a total of 35 participants.

RESULTS:

Workshop participants were asked to complete a brief survey at the end of the Colon Health Rx workshop to evaluate the impact of the workshop.

Survey findings showed that:

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **learning how to prevent cancer** is important to them.

97% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that **getting screened for cancer** is important to them.

93% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they **are comfortable talking to their doctor** about cancer screenings.

94% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they **would complete a cancer screening test** if their doctor recommended it.

100% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there are things they can do to **reduce their chances of dying of cancer**.



Implementing the workshops remotely allowed HA staff and Maine Community Integration to develop an effective process for delivering health information by Zoom. Having remote workshops allowed people to participate from outside of the local community which increased distribution of colon health information.

In addition, **six participants** practiced what they learned about the benefits of physical activity to **combat cancer by attending the YWCA single-gender swim class pictured here.**



SUSTAINING THE WORK:



The Colon Health Rx curriculum and materials can be used by other providers to educate their patients about colon health. The culturally and linguistically-appropriate materials are available for free on Healthy Androscoggin's website at: HealthyAndroscoggin.org/health-equity.



We invite you to support our work by providing a donation through our website at www.HealthyAndroscoggin.org/donate or sending a check to us at our address below.

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Healthy Androscoggin is a community health coalition affiliated with Central Maine Healthcare.

