

School Efforts

The Governor's Buckeye Best Healthy Schools Awards program was launched in 2001 to recognize schools with policies and practices placing a high priority on healthy outcomes for children.

Based on the Healthy People 2010 objectives, schools are encouraged to assemble a multidisciplinary team to complete a self-assessment of their building's programming in the areas of tobacco prevention, nutrition and physical activity. The Buckeye Best application measures a school's progress over time. Once a benchmark is established, schools are encouraged to work toward a higher level of achievement in subsequent years. Buckeye Best also offers technical assistance to any school wishing to improve in the focus areas. The assistance includes a "tool kit" of best practices or an on-site consultation from one of ODH's health educators.

Business Efforts

In 2002, Taft made the first appointments to the Healthy Ohioans Business Council. Council members were selected from companies providing exemplary health and wellness programs for their employees. Members meet regularly to share pertinent information regarding their programs and to formulate plans to encourage other Ohio businesses to adopt similar healthy workplace practices. Among their accomplishments, the council released *Doing Well by Being Well: designing win-win employee wellness programs* and sponsored a workplace wellness conference in 2004. In 2005, the council will "spread the word" by expanding into regional councils in five areas of the state.

Healthy Ohioans Website

Please check out the Healthy Ohioans website, www.healthyohioans.org, for all kinds of helpful and healthy information, or contact the Healthy Ohioans staff at (614) 995-7620 or Healthy0@odh.ohio.gov.

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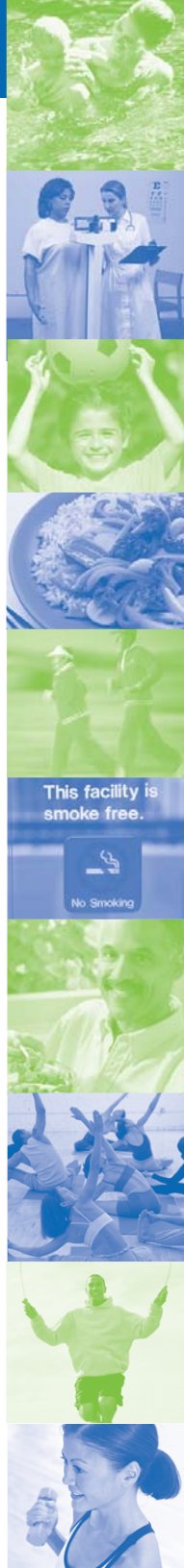
What is Healthy Ohioans?

Healthy Ohioans is a multi-year, statewide initiative under the direction of Governor Bob Taft and the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) to encourage Ohioans to adopt healthier behaviors and lifestyles. The *Small Steps, Big Strides* tagline of the program illustrates the concept that achieving a healthier lifestyle is within everyone's reach by taking a series of small steps which ultimately add up to big strides toward a healthier life. Healthy Ohioans' statewide partners include the American Cancer Society, Ohio Division; the American Heart Association; Ohio on the Move; and the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association.

When Taft reviewed the year 2000 health statistics for Ohio and learned that 26 percent of Ohio adults were smokers, that 31 percent reported no leisure-time physical activity, 58 percent were overweight, and 79 percent consumed less than the recommended five to nine daily servings of fruits and vegetables, he was determined to help Ohioans become healthier. In fact, the five leading causes of death in Ohio—heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and diabetes—are directly linked to unhealthy lifestyles. Healthy Ohioans is working to lower Ohio's chronic disease rates by encouraging Ohioans to improve nutrition, increase physical activity and prevent or reduce tobacco use. The simple fact is that a healthy lifestyle is one of the most important health prevention tools available.

The Healthy Ohioans initiative is focused on four fronts: with schools through the Governor's Buckeye Best Healthy Schools Awards program; with businesses through the Governor's Healthy Ohioans Business Council; with state employees through the State Agency Wellness Committee and the State Employee Health and Fitness Taskforce; and in communities through cardiovascular health grants and other community efforts.

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Community Efforts

Toward building healthier communities, ODH awards cardiovascular health (CVH) grants to many Ohio counties. The goal of the grants is to increase the number of heart-healthy communities in high-need areas of the state through programs addressing prevention and risk reduction of CVH risk factors including obesity, physical inactivity, diabetes and tobacco use.

Beginning in 2005, outstanding, healthy communities and parks and recreation programs will be eligible for the Healthy Ohioans- Healthy Communities Parks and Recreation award or Healthy Community award. These awards encourage community groups, schools, parks and recreation programs and businesses to work collaboratively to build healthier communities.

State Employee Efforts

The Benefits Administration section of the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (DAS) works with ODH and other state agencies to develop and promote wellness programs for state employees. Among the accomplishments of this group are a fitness challenge event held each May on the Statehouse lawn; a dedicated state employee blood donor center; health and wellness related articles in the state employee benefits newsletter; and numerous health fairs, screening events and educational seminars. In addition, under executive order from Taft, each state agency has developed its own wellness program. Annually, DAS and ODH recognize state agencies that have developed exemplary wellness programs and state employees who have taken big strides toward healthier lifestyles.

