



September/October 2014 Newsletter

HKHM Annual Meeting is Fast Approaching- Registrations Rolling In

This year's event will take place from 9:30am-2pm on Wednesday, October 29, and will be held at Eagle Eye Banquet Center. We have a fast moving day of policy focused activities for those interested in addressing childhood obesity and promoting a healthier Michigan. In addition to updates from HKHM's Policy Action Teams on priorities for next year, MDCH Director Nick Lyon will join Kevin Besey from MDARD and Kyle Guerrant from the Department of Education to discuss how policies from across government can positively impact health goals. The event will also feature a discussion of prominent lawmakers and will be topped off by a keynote presentation on an exciting collaboration of the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Voices for Healthy Kids, working to ensure access to fresh fruits and vegetables for those in underserved communities.



Nick Lyon,
Director, MDCH

Be sure to sign up [here](#)! See you on October 29!

Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan Legislative Update

Legislation to educate all new drivers on proper safety around more active forms of transportation has passed the House and Senate. HB 5438, introduced by Representative Terry Brown, would require training to enhance motorcycle and bicycle awareness during the course of normal driver training curriculum. Amended in the Senate to be named the "Nathan Bower Act", HB 5438 received a final "concurrence" vote in the House before being sent to the Governor for his signature. Under the bill, classroom instruction must include information on the laws governing bicycles and motorcycles as well as an emphasis on building awareness of their operation on Michigan roads to reduce incidents of accident and injury.



New Study Suggests Policies to Address Obesity in Michigan

In 2013, just over one-quarter of Michigan children ages 6 to 17 participated in vigorous physical activity every day, despite the federal recommendation for 60 minutes of physical activity daily. Not only are children not engaging in vigorous physical activity, but they are engaging in high amounts of sedentary activity. Over one-third of Michigan high school students played video or computer games or



Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children

were on a computer for three or more hours per day. Over one-quarter of high school students watched television for at least three hours per day.

Physical inactivity is a risk factor for obesity and regular physical activity is linked to improved student concentration, cognitive functioning, and classroom behavior as well as improved academic and standardized test performance. If public policy is to be used to effectively prevent obesity and treat it in children, it needs to address both diet and physical activity, as both of these factors influence health. Schools have a long history of providing health and physical education curricula and now, more than ever, these two subjects are needed.

For more on the Citizen's Research Council study, click [here](#).

Significant Barriers Hinder Healthy Food Access

Almost 40 percent of residents live below the poverty line in Detroit, with unemployment at about 20 percent and the median income at \$26,955 (Census Quickfacts, 2011). Vehicle ownership is low and Detroit lacks an adequate public transit system. These are significant barriers to access the quality foods already in Detroit. Detroit could be called a "food desert" for the simple fact that getting to healthy food, paying for it, and keeping it on the table is not an easy task for many residents.



Presently, more than 30 percent of city residents rely on SNAP (food stamps), while, for some, the time it takes to get to the store and go grocery shopping is too great of a burden after a long day's work. These issues of food access and food security need to be systematically addressed. This issue is as relevant in rural communities as in urban centers. For more on efforts to study food access in Detroit, click [here](#).