



PROJECT HEALTHY SCHOOLS

Executive Summary & Locations by County



Executive Summary

Project Healthy Schools (PHS) is a community/University of Michigan collaborative program designed to reduce childhood obesity and its long-term consequences. PHS provides the spark within our state to light the fire for health education in our schools. Highlights of the program are:

1. PHS Contributes to the Community Benefit Designation and Supports Children in Its Service Area

Project Healthy Schools is cited on the Michigan Medicine Community Benefit website as an important health resource for children and families. PHS is an integral part of the strategies discussed in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment Implementation Plan, where obesity is one of the identified health priorities.

2. PHS Provides Significant Southeast Michigan and Statewide Exposure

PHS has more than 60 partners and community collaborators and touches a significant number of children and families throughout the state. Since 2004, the program has been implemented in 137 schools and continues in 107 of these schools. Over 87,500 mostly sixth-grade students have participated in the program's health education curriculum. This year alone, over 46,200 students benefitted from healthier school environments and school-wide wellness policies and initiatives. PHS and 18 PHS schools were recognized with Michigan School Wellness Awards in 2020.

3. PHS Contributes to the Research and Academic Mission of the Health System

Since 2005, PHS' research team has delivered over 125 presentations, abstracts and papers on topics related to childhood health and interventions for reducing childhood obesity. PHS' most recent journal article was just published in the American Journal of Medicine. Over 25,000 middle school students have participated in PHS research. PHS also collaborates with many University of Michigan and Michigan Medicine departments, schools and programs.

4. PHS Outcomes Show Michigan Medicine is Making Progress on a Major Health Issue in the U.S.

PHS is one of the few school-based programs that have demonstrated significant improvements in both health behavior and cardiovascular risk factors, such as reductions in total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure. In a group of 1,100 students followed for four years, the students' physiologic measures after four years were still better than their measures at base-line, indicating that the program has a lasting impact.

5. PHS Demonstrates 'Leaders and Best' by Providing a Model for the State, Nation and World

PHS provides a model for the state, nation, and world, demonstrating that a multi-level, school-based program is an effective behavior change program for youth that can be replicated in diverse populations/communities with the support of local resources for sustainability. From 2014-2020, PHS has received funding from The State of Michigan and PHS is aligning the program with the State's priorities. From 2013-present, PHS has received funding from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan to expand the program to new middle schools each year across the state of Michigan. PHS is also implemented in schools in Arizona and Bangladesh.

6. PHS is a Good Steward of Investment Partners

For every dollar invested in PHS by Michigan Medicine, about two dollars has been raised from other sources. Michigan Medicine's investment in PHS allows the health system to be seen as a state leader in community health partnerships. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and the State of Michigan have taken note and partnered with PHS to fund the program throughout the state. Michigan Medicine's funding of PHS allows the innovative, behind the scenes work and strategic planning that helped the program expand across the state, more than tripling the number of schools since 2013, without increasing staff.

7. PHS Expands its Wellness Efforts Each Year and Pivoted during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The PHS program has expanded its holistic approach to wellness by including the following components to the program: in-person and virtual health education curriculum and resources that focus on nutrition and physical activity, staff wellness, social emotional wellness for students, before and after school programming, community outreach and family engagement, and increased focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. These elements will be further integrated and enhanced as we leverage a new and exciting partnership with the TRAILS program (Transforming Research into Action to Improve the Lives of Students) within the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Michigan to our existing partnership with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan.