

## 10 Evaluation of the Maine PAN Plan

An evaluation workgroup was established with evaluation stakeholders consisting of staff from related State programs, representatives from other organizations and community groups, and other possible end users of the evaluation findings. The workgroup developed the Maine Physical Activity and Nutrition Program Evaluation Plan (PANPEP) 2003–2004, the first year of the PAN Program (PANP).

Because the PAN Program is integrally related to the Healthy Maine Partnerships, the Maine Cardiovascular Health Program, and the Community Health Promotion Program, evaluation plans necessitate coordination with these respective efforts. The PANPEP follows the CDC evaluation framework in that the workgroup reflects these partnerships, informs the evaluation planning process, and assures the evaluation plan's utility, feasibility, accuracy, and propriety.<sup>134</sup> The PANPEP concentrates on two main foci. These are (1) the Maine PAN Program process evaluation, and (2) the Maine PAN Plan process and outcome evaluation, involving tracking strategies and outcomes delineated in the Maine PAN Plan.

The Maine PAN Program is responsible for rigorous evaluation of Maine's pilot intervention and other interventions initiated as part of the PAN Program. The initial pilot intervention is the Soda/Snack a la Carte and Vending High School Intervention. This intervention is evaluating baseline and follow-up measurements in selected high schools in Maine. Measurements include school-wide assessments of food venues, including a la carte, vending, school food service, and foods brought from home, and individual student assessments. Students are participating in height and weight measurements for body mass index (BMI) and are completing food frequency, food behavior, and physical activity questionnaires.

Monitoring the outcomes of the Maine Health and Human Services' Public Health physical activity and nutrition efforts dictates the consistent and long-term tracking of key performance indicators. These indicators are outlined in the PANPEP and corresponding Logic Model. A Physical Activity and Nutrition Surveillance Plan is also being developed with the evaluation plan and will be used to collect, analyze, interpret, and disseminate data, including providing data to key stakeholders on a regular basis. This data will be used to influence decisions for Statewide prevention and control of overweight and obesity and related health problems in the future.

The Healthy Maine Partnerships are building their capacity to collect local data on nutrition and physical activity initiatives focused on policy and environmental change through the HMP monitoring tool. These endeavors present an opportunity for local intervention data sources and evaluation. Other Maine initiatives to enhance Statewide data collection and surveillance include activities

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<sup>134</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*. 1999; 48(RR11).

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that focus on building or enhancing: a routine source of population-based data on overweight, nutrition, and TV viewing in children prior to the seventh grade; an infrastructure for routine analysis and interpretation of nutrition and physical activity data; and the capacity to identify and assess populations that are disproportionately affected by the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases due to physical inactivity and/or poor nutrition.

In summary, Maine has begun to address the problem of overweight and obesity, but much remains to be accomplished to improve the nutrition and physical activity status of Maine citizens. The Maine PAN Plan provides guidance, resources, and strategies for integrating science-based evidence and promising practices related to overweight and obesity. All sectors of society must collaborate in the implementation of policy and environmental changes that will impact nutrition and physical activity. These initiatives will allow the State to make major strides in reversing the trend toward overweight and obesity and ultimately some of the related consequences. Furthermore, this emerging infrastructure will provide Maine with a valuable framework to address future physical activity and nutrition issues.