

CLIENT ALERTS

Echo, Echo, Echo...

8.23.2016

While the federal government has been busy creating thousands of pages of regulations to enforce the Affordable Care Act, one of our county governments has been busy developing a program of its own to improve the health of residents in Oakland County[1]. "ECHO" is the Energizing Connections for Healthier Oakland which has been in development for the last several years. The following will explain several aspects of ECHO. The balance will be addressed in a future Health Alert, but feel free to go to the ECHO website.

Oakland County Health & Human Services has expressed that the public's health is a shared responsibility requiring the coordination of a number of County and other organizations. ECHO is a part of their effort to engage in a data driven community health initiative. ECHO began by performing a systematic examination of health status indicators to identify key problems and assets in a comprehensive assessment of the health of Oakland County residents. Utilizing this data, ECHO developed the Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

ECHO has now moved to an action phase where CHIP is being implemented. There are four action teams:

1. Access to Care Work Group
2. Food Policy Council
3. Active Living Network
4. Health Information Work Group

The teams will align strategies and move to increase collaborative efforts. ECHO supports the ECHO Data Dashboard and Service Directory which provides up to date health data, model practices and an extensive directory of services in Oakland County. More information is available on line or contact echo@oakgov.com.

Related Services

Health Care

Health Care Industry Team

Health Information Technology

HIPAA

CLIENT ALERTS

Some Highlights

The four action teams have the following goals:

1. Access to Care. The goal is to improve public knowledge about available health insurance and other health resources and to improve coordination of integrated services.
2. Food Policy. The goal is to increase accessibility, affordability and consumption of healthy foods.
3. Active Living. The goal is to increase the number of children and adults who lead active lifestyles.
4. Health Information. The goal is to improve data and information technology use to make Oakland County a leader in health information.

Getting there: This Alert focuses on the “Eating Healthy” and “Active Living” action areas. Future issues of this Alert will address the ECHO approach to “Access to Care” and “Health Information”.

Eating Healthy

Using eating habits and food as an example to demonstrate the thinking in ECHO: Through its data collection, ECHO has learned many of the indications about eating habits and weight in Oakland County residents. Some of the methodologies either in place or being put in place are:

- Organize a food policy council
- Increase healthy food access by exploring and expanding community, school and home gardens
- Increase amount of healthy food donated to local pantries and free/low – cost alternative food outlets
- Establish a Healthy Corner Store Certification Program in designated food desert areas in Oakland County
- Identify opportunities to expand access to healthy and affordable options at farmer’s markets
- Identify opportunities to increase farmers’ market locations
- Increase education and promotion opportunities about healthy eating

Each of the goals has short term, midterm and long term action plans. To learn more, or to become involved, you can connect to the ECHO website.

Active Living

Keeping in mind the objectives of increasing education, increasing access to safe, affordable active living activities, increasing the number of children who are physically active for 60 minutes per day and increasing employer wellness policies, the following are among the actions in place or being put in place for the active living objective:

CLIENT ALERTS

- Create an active living network of organizations
- Promote affordable family-oriented physical activity options
- Promote affordable active living opportunities for pregnant women
- Promote affordable community-based physical activity for children and older adults
- Promote education and awareness of safe school routes
- Increase awareness about access to active living opportunities for people with disabilities
- Promote and implement strategies to increase walking and walkable communities
- Increase number of community organizations and facilities promoting and hosting active living activities
- Utilize volunteer groups to assist isolated individuals in becoming more active and less secluded
- Work with PTAs to expand awareness, understanding and promotion of Safe Routes to School
- Increase the number of communities participating in Safe Routes to School
- Increase the number of hospitals and physicians supporting and issuing prescriptions for active lifestyles
- Work with schools to identify barriers to daily recess and promote recommendations/research supporting daily recess
- Engage political leaders and media to increase awareness of Safe Routes to School Opportunities
- Increase number of schools offering 20 minutes of daily recess
- Work with employees to increase the number of businesses with wellness policies promoting active living
- Create checklist of wellness options that employers can provide, such as reduced weight loss program fees, walking paths or health care reimbursement.

If you have questions regarding this alert, please contact your regular Butzel Long attorney, the authors of this alert, or any member of Butzel Long's Health Care Industry Group.

Robert H. Schwartz

248.258.2611

schwartzrh@butzel.com

Mark R. Lezotte

313.225.7058

lezotte@butzel.com

[1] George J. Miller, Jr., Director Department of Health and Human Services, Kathleen Forzley, R.S., M.P.A., Manager Health Officer Health Division and Carolyn Hribar, MA, Planning and Evaluation Supervisor made contributions in the writing of this Alert. Butzel Long does not endorse any particular program or vendor and those interested in the topic of this Health Alert should conduct their own due diligence.