

Empire Health Foundation

Eastern Washington Obesity Prevention Initiative

Launched: 2011

Public Partners: The City of Cheney, Cheney School District, Washington State University, Spokane Regional Health District, Davenport School District, East Valley School District, Newport School District, Othello School District, Spokane Public Schools, Wellpinit School District.

Through extensive partnership with school districts and community agencies, the Eastern Washington Obesity Prevention initiative is starting to see measurable reductions in childhood obesity rates. Six school districts have converted from unhealthy processed foods to healthy scratch cooked meals; from chicken nuggets to herb-baked chicken; from French Fries to roasted red potatoes; from syrupy canned peaches to fresh fruits and vegetables. Last year alone, 1.6 million meals were positively impacted by this change.

Empire Health Foundation, with \$50 million in philanthropic assets, has invested in a public and private sector partnership that has successfully catalyzed sustainable systems and policy change. Cheney School District for example, has been working with Empire Health Foundation since the summer of 2011 on a



comprehensive approach to obesity prevention including complete reform of the school breakfast and lunch program; reducing access to unhealthy competitive foods on campus (both in and out of the classroom); increasing nutrition education; and increasing physical activity levels across all grades. The place-based public private partnership has included critical stakeholders such as the City of Cheney, Parks and Recreation, Cheney Public School District, the public health district, and the community wide *Let's Move! Cheney* campaign.



After a successful first year the partnership was replicated to include a total of seven communities. Initial evaluation indicates significant impact in nutrition, projected financial sustainability, and early positive impact on rates of obesity. Most importantly, the partnership has transformed the relationship between the foundation and its public sector partners.

Empire Health Foundation

The foundation's mission is to invest in ideas and organizations that improve access, education, research and public policy to result in a measurably healthier region.

empirehealthfoundation.org

