

The Kansas Disability and Health Program

Improving the Health of Kansans with Disabilities

Kansans with Disabilities Can Be Healthy

The Kansas Disability and Health Program (DHP) has been funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for 2016-2021 to improve the health and quality of life among people with mobility limitations and intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD).

We are accomplishing this by adapting and offering programs that are evidence-based. These programs have been tested and shown to be effective.

Meeting a Need

People with disabilities need public health programs and health care services for the same reasons everyone does – to be healthy, active, and part of their communities.

Nationally, about 20% of the population has some kind of disability. This often makes it difficult to live a healthy lifestyle.

That trend holds in Kansas. Research shows that for Kansans with disabilities:

- More than 80% do not eat the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Nearly 75% are overweight or obese.
- Only 12.8% meet physical activity guidelines.
- Only 54.3% visited the dentist in the past year.
- They are nearly five times more likely to report having had a heart attack and three times more likely to report having diabetes compared to their non-disabled peers.

These facts make it clear that Kansans with disabilities need both opportunities and support to improve their health.

The DHP also addresses two related problems:

- Kansans with disabilities have significant health disparities (poorer health) than their non-disabled peers.
- Many public health programs are not accessible or do not include people with disabilities.



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Our mission is to improve the health of all Kansans with disabilities. The program focuses on people with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) and people with mobility limitations.

We work on improving consumers' access to and knowledge about three important health areas:

- Physical Activity
- Oral Health
- Nutrition



Working with Partners to Promote Health

The goal of the DHP is to increase the following for Kansans with disabilities:

- 1) **Physical activity**, including access, opportunities and supports
- 2) Knowledge of **oral health** and the capacity of the state's oral health system
- 3) Knowledge of and access to good **nutrition**

To meet these goals, the DHP works with a network of partners across the state to connect with consumers and offer programs to improve their health. More than a dozen community-based organizations collaborate with the DHP.

The DHP also partners with several divisions within the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities.

In addition, a **Consumer Advisory Board** meets regularly to share their ideas and help identify programs that make it easier to practice a healthy lifestyle.

The Kansas DHP is led by Jean Hall, PhD, director of the University of Kansas Institute for Health and Disability Policy Studies and the Research and Training Center on Independent Living.

Building on Success

In the first two years of its five-year funding, the DHP has provided these programs to Kansans across the state:

- **Feeling Good About Your Smile** – an oral health workshop for people with IDD
- **Stoptlight Healthy Living Program** – a six-session workshop designed to improve nutrition and increase physical activity for people with IDD
- **NCHPAD 14-Days to a Healthier You** – an online physical activity program for people with mobility limitations

We continue to develop and refine programs that can benefit Kansans in the three health areas of focus.

We are also working with health care providers to improve access to health care, an issue that affects many people with disabilities.

In one project, we are partnering with centers for independent living to find out how usable the health care practices in their communities are – including medical, dental and vision practices. This information is useful to consumers and has encouraged some health care providers to make changes.



For More Information

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