**Project Healthy Schools Goals**

- Eat more fruits and vegetables
- Choose less sugary food and beverages
- Eat less fast and fatty food
- Be active every day
- Spend less time in front of a screen

**Did you know?**

- Krystofer Hernandez and Jana Stewart recently joined the PHS team as wellness coordinators. They will be working in the schools.

- Detroit Lions’ Quarterback Mathew Stafford visited Vista Charter Academy (VCA) in Grand Rapids to encourage students to maintain healthy lifestyles. VCA is a Building Healthy Communities partnership school. The visit was arranged by BCBSM.

- This fall, U-M Grounds Department will be donating over 250 abandoned bikes to PHS partner Back Alley Bikes, a Detroit-based bike-education non-profit that offers youth an opportunity to learn to build and maintain bikes and earn a bike of their own in the process.

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**Five BHC:PHS schools win school wellness awards**

Five schools with the Building Healthy Communities: Engaging middle schools in Project Healthy Schools (BHC:PHS) program won Michigan School Wellness Awards this year, including one gold-level, three silver-level and one bronze-level awards. A total of 38 Michigan schools won awards this year. The BHC:PHS winners were:

**Gold:** Powell Middle School

**Silver:** Clarenceville Middle School, Allendale Middle School and White Pine Middle School

**Bronze:** Vista Charter Academy

The Michigan School Wellness Award encourages Michigan schools to promote physical activity, healthy eating, and tobacco-free lifestyles for students and staff and to create healthy school environments by establishing school health teams and implementing sustainable policy and environmental changes. The first step in qualifying for the award is completing the Michigan Healthy Schools Action Tools (HSAT) school wellness assessment.

Schools that implement Project Healthy Schools already have a good start in achieving the goals of the award. PHS encourages all schools to complete the HSAT and apply for the award. A link to the HSAT is available on the new PHS Portal. Schools that need assistance with completing the HSAT should contact their PHS wellness coordinator. An HSAT...next page

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**12 new schools starting BHC:PHS this fall**

Twelve new schools are starting Building Healthy Communities: Engaging middle schools through Project Healthy Schools (BHC:PHS) this fall thanks to the continued support of our program partners the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM). With the additional 12 schools, a total of 48 schools have started the BHC:PHS program since 2013.

Project Healthy Schools sent out a Request for Applications in late May. By the end of June, 19 schools submitted applications. After a thorough review process, which included telephone interviews with administrators and wellness champions at the prospective schools, PHS selected the following 12 schools:

- Boyne City Middle School, Boyne City
- Cherryland Middle School, Elk Rapids
- East Middle School, Plymouth
- Ferndale Middle School, Ferndale
- Grand Rapids Ellington Academy of Arts
- MacDonald Middle School, East Lansing
- Marshall Green Middle Schools, Birch Run
- Michigan School for the Deaf, Flint
- Sault Area Middle School, Sault Ste. Marie
- St Charles Borromeo Catholic School, Coldwater
- Surline Middle School, West Branch
- Wolfe Middle School, Center Line

First visits, training and implementation are taking place from August through November at these schools. By the end of the school year, the wellness champions should be fully trained and ready to maintain the program in future years at their schools with the resources available on the new PHS Portal (see article on next page) and consultation with PHS staff.
New PHS Portal provides resources to support schools

Project Healthy Schools is excited to announce the launch of The PHS Portal, a website which provides a one-stop shop for all PHS program materials. For the past year, Project Healthy Schools (PHS) has been hard at work designing the PHS Portal to support its ever growing and geographically expanding network of middle and high schools. The website is being rolled out to over 70 PHS schools this fall. Development of the PHS Portal was made possible by a generous gift from the Wetsman Foundation.

The PHS Portal provides school wellness champions and teachers with access to a wealth of materials and resources to help them implement and sustain the PHS program in their schools. Through the PHS Portal, they can also connect with PHS staff as well as their peers in other schools using the PHS program. Below is an overview of what is available on the PHS Portal under each of the menu tabs.

5 Steps: PHS developed a five-step process to guide schools through implementing and sustaining the PHS program. Each step has smaller action steps under it and links to the necessary resources. For example, Step One: Build Support includes the action steps of identifying a wellness champion and forming a wellness team. It also provides links to information about the roles of a wellness champion and a wellness team.

Education: Here school staff can access all the materials needed to teach the 10 PHS lessons, create a school year’s worth of bulletin boards, answer nutrition questions that students may ask and send enrichment activities home with students so they can share what they learn in each PHS lesson with their families.

Champion Resources: In this section, wellness champions can connect to the resources they need to lead wellness team meetings, conduct a needs assessment, write an action plan, measure success, find forms and fundraising ideas and more.

Wellness Initiatives: PHS has provided plans and materials for dozens of wellness initiatives that have been successful at other schools. Wellness teams can customize the initiatives for use in their school or use them to help generate new ideas of their own.

High School Program: High schools using the Science of Wellness program can link to lessons and materials for the high-school version of the PHS program. (High school staff also has access to all the wellness initiatives and other resources on the website.)

FAQs: Get answers to frequently asked questions about PHS in this section of the Portal.

Forum: Wellness champions and other school staff can use the forum to connect with their peers in other PHS schools to ask for advice and share ideas and successes. They can also connect with PHS staff to ask questions.

The PHS Portal makes it easier and faster for school staff to get the materials and resources they need to successfully implement PHS and build a culture of health at their schools. Instead of waiting for a PHS wellness coordinator to return a phone call or send an email with a requested lesson or wellness initiative attached, school staff will have the resources at their fingertips. PHS is grateful to the Wetsman Foundation for making creation of the PHS Portal possible.

Many schools have already received their passwords and training on use of the Portal. Please contact Nate Saulter at nsaulter@med.umich.edu if you need access to the PHS Portal.
School lunch associated with unhealthy behaviors and cardiovascular risk factors

Millions of children in the United States consume school lunches daily, making schools an ideal prospective avenue for promoting healthy, nutritional food items. Due to increased attention focused on school lunch programs, the PHS research team sought to compare the health behaviors and physiological parameters of students who consume school lunch to those who consume lunch brought from home.

Results from this study found that students who ate school lunch reported worse health behaviors and had significantly worse physiological measures than students who brought their lunches from home. School lunch students reported lower rates of physical activity and sports participation, fewer servings of fruits and vegetables, and increased sugary beverage consumption and television screen time than home lunch students. These behavioral results were significant in both high and low socioeconomic status (SES) districts. Additionally, school lunch students in higher income districts had higher systolic blood pressure and recovery heart rate than home lunch students, and they were more likely to be overweight or obese.

This study raises many questions. “The significant difference in the physiological measures between home and school lunch eaters from high income districts (but not in the low income districts) indicates to me that it’s more than just poor nutrition in the lunches,” says Research Coordinator Rachel Sylvester. “My guess is that it falls back to parental involvement again, as several of our other studies are starting to indicate.”

In any case, these finding demonstrate the need for strategies to promote health behaviors within this age group. The ability of children to make healthy lifestyle choices should be incorporated into the school curriculum, as well as the lunchroom.

Rivals Challenge raises over $1,600 for Project Healthy Schools

University of Michigan faculty, staff and spouses contributed over $1,600 to Project Healthy Schools (PHS) as an optional part of their participation in the Rivals Challenge, a free, eight-week physical activity challenge for which participants tracked their minutes as part of the U-M team in an effort to beat The Ohio State University team’s total minutes logged. The University of Michigan may not have come out victorious over Ohio State in the first-ever Rivals Challenge, but U-M participants were successful in logging millions of exercise minutes and raising over $1,600 for PHS.

PHS was presented with a check and the winning university was announced on July 8 at a recognition reception for participants. Millions of children in the United States consume school lunches daily, making schools an ideal prospective avenue for promoting healthy, nutritional food items. Due to increased attention focused on school lunch programs, the PHS research team sought to compare the health behaviors and physiological parameters of students who consume school lunch to those who consume lunch brought from home.

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Students from Cody High School visit U-M

On a warm, blustery day in late May, over 50 students from the Science of Wellness program at Cody High School visited the University of Michigan (U-M) campus in Ann Arbor. The tour began at the Student Activities Building where they met their U-M student guides for a walking tour of the campus followed by a visit to the Frankel Cardiovascular Center and a stop at the Big House.

The Science of Wellness students from Cody High School’s Medicine and Community Health Academy spent the year learning about and promoting healthier lifestyles to fellow students as part of a high school version of PHS.

PHS worked with the University of Michigan Health System Office for Health Equity and Inclusion, the U-M Office of Undergraduate Admissions, and the U-M Athletic Department to coordinate the visit.

Several interesting presentations were arranged for the students, including a presentation by Roland Blackwood, M.D., Ph.D., a pediatrician and motivational speaker; a panel of U-M undergraduate students from Detroit who discussed their experiences at U-M; and a final word of encouragement came from Kim Eagle, M.D., PHS co-founder and director of the cardiovascular center.

Following the presentations and lunch at the Cardiovascular Center, the students boarded buses for the trip home, but not before a final stop at the Big House. The U-M Athletic Department opened up the stadium to allow students onto the field, which was surely the highlight of the visit for many of them.

Ben Ransier, the PHS wellness coordinator for Cody High School who helped organize the visit, said, “The event was a huge success. Thanks to our campus partners, our Cody students were provided a taste of campus life, tips for future success, and an opportunity to showcase their end-zone dance. Thank you again to our U-M partners for making this such a special day for these students.”

Students from Cody High School visited the Big House during a tour of the U-M campus.

Thank You PHS Supporters!

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We are also grateful to the many other corporations, foundations and individual donors who have supported PHS over the years.

Information on how to donate is available at www.projecthealthyschools.org

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