

# NCCDPHP Success Story

## Pilot Program Increases Access to Healthier Food Choices in Shasta Lake



### At A Glance

To encourage the retail markets in Shasta Lake, California, to provide more healthy choices, Shasta County Health and Human Services (SCHHS) formed the Shop Healthy Shasta Lake community collaborative. Through this collaborative, a pilot program in three local stores, (Sentry, Drive-In, Sunshine markets) provided easier access to healthier choices to more than 7,000 residents.

*By Mary Messier*

### Public Health Challenge

More than 1 in 3 adults in Shasta County, California, have high blood pressure, and 1 in 5 have been told they have diabetes or prediabetes, according to data from the 2016 California Health Interview Survey. The 2016 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Survey showed that only 26% of the county's stores sell fresh fruit or vegetables and 66% advertise unhealthy products. For families living in more rural areas, like Shasta Lake, availability of affordable fresh foods may be even more limited. Shasta Lake residents view food prices as more expensive in local stores and will travel 10 miles or more to big-box supermarkets instead of shopping locally, according to results from a 2016 survey of Shasta Lake residents. Retailers may have limited time and resources to prioritize healthy options for customers and need continued support from the community.

### Approach

Shasta Lake residents participated in a community workshop on the retail environment sponsored by SCHHS. In August 2015, Shop Healthy Shasta Lake (SHSL) was formed. This collaborative includes representatives from city and tribal government, education, health care, and area farmers interested in promoting local shopping and improving the health of their community. In the spring of 2016, SHSL surveyed shoppers to find out what healthy foods they wanted to see in their local stores. Survey results provided direction for reaching out to stores and media promotional efforts. SHSL built relationships with three stores that served as pilot stores.

*"Produce sales have increased and customers are excited about the fresh fruits and vegetables being offered. They even ask about it when items are missing."*

- Jyotsna Patel, Store Owner

## Results

In 2016, the three markets made at least three of the following environmental changes to support healthier food purchases:

- Stocking healthy options (including refrigerated options) at checkout.
- Stocking produce baskets in the deli and loose produce in front of the store.
- Displaying healthy eating signs inside and outside the store, along with floor arrows and recipe cards.
- Replacing alcohol or tobacco signs with healthy eating signs.

After these changes, a 2018 follow-up survey showed that when shoppers noticed signs promoting fresh produce, it had a significant, positive effect on regular purchasing of fruits and vegetables, and 48% of respondents said the store changes made them more likely to eat healthier. These efforts reached around 7,453 residents. Two store owners reported the changes improved sales of healthy items.

## What's Next

To sustain the retail work, the collaborative will incorporate ideas from the Food Trust's Heart Smarts program for providing nutrition education and prevention services in communities. In September 2018, a retail event at Sentry Market included health screenings for high blood pressure, pre-diabetes, and tobacco use through a partnership with Shasta Community Health Center. Healthy Shasta, California Tobacco Control, and SNAP-Ed grant funding will continue to support this work. The Healthy Shasta website includes a healthy retail page to increase awareness of the movement and provide resources for the community and retailers.

## Find Out More

To learn more about healthy retail in Shasta County, visit the Healthy Shasta Community Partnership website at <https://healthyshasta.org/eat-healthy/healthy-retail>. This project was supported by Healthy Shasta Community Partnership, California Tobacco Control Program, Supplemental Nutrition Education Program (SNAP-Ed), and Lifetime of Wellness grant, and CDC's State and Local Public Health Actions to Prevent Obesity, Diabetes, Heart Disease and Stroke cooperative agreement (1422).

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### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

#### Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

#### CDC-INFO

<https://wwwn.cdc.gov/dcs/ContactUs/Form>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

