



2016-2017

BI-ANNUAL  
**REPORT**



HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS



# MESSAGE FROM CHANCELLOR SHARP



The job description of a Texas A&M University System employee is simple: Wake up each morning and get to work helping Texans.

Our system was created to improve lives in this state through education and service, and we never stop coming up with ambitious new ways to fulfill that mission. For example, a little over two years ago, we figured out a program that we believed could lower health care costs and improve health outcomes throughout the state. We called it Healthy Texas.

The idea was to disseminate the latest research-based preventative health strategies developed by the experts at the Texas A&M University Health Science Center to individuals and communities using the incomparable statewide network of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. With the support of the Texas Legislature, it launched as a pilot project in South Texas in 2015. To call it a success would be putting it mildly. Healthy Texas has delivered and then some.

From popular expo events for young families to our new full-service diabetes and medication assistance programs, this report will give you a brief overview of the ever-expanding services we provide local communities — and the incredible number of lives we have reached.

What has impressed me the most is the way in which our Healthy Texas staff has repeatedly risen to the occasion when confronted with unexpected challenges.

When the Zika virus arrived in Texas, we worked with Driscoll Health System to put together and distribute nearly 6,000 prevention kits to clinics and physician offices. When Hurricane Harvey made landfall in the Gulf Coast, our teams distributed more than 3,000 disaster recovery kits, which included mosquito repellent, first aid kits, diapers, and other basic supplies. They also provided free car seat checks and replacements for families whose cars were flooded during the storm.

Opportunities have arisen, as well. Through a new partnership with Univision in San Antonio, Healthy Texas programming now reaches televisions and devices in thousands of homes throughout South Texas each week.

The Texas A&M System is committed to creating a more prosperous future for our state, and Healthy Texas is a critical part of our strategy. When I think of all that it has accomplished in just two short years, I am filled with pride, hope and excitement for what is still to come.

**John Sharp**

Chancellor, The Texas A&M University System

# BIENNIUM AT A GLANCE

YR1

YR2

## DIABETES CONTROL PROGRAM

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**20,162**  
participants



**26,427**  
participants

## ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM

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**7,012**  
participants



**23,137**  
participants

## INFECTIOUS DISEASE EDUCATION

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**1,200**  
educational contacts



**20,987**  
educational contacts

## NUTRITION EDUCATION

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**284,985**  
contacts



**206,905**  
contacts

## PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION & TRAINING

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**2,284**  
professionals trained



**2,374**  
professionals trained

## VOLUNTEERS

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**197**  
participants trained



**245**  
participants trained

YR1

YR2

### WALK ACROSS TEXAS!

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**23,597**  
people walked 1.5MI



**30,172**  
people walked 1.5MI

### WELL BABY EVENTS & GESTATIONAL DIABETES EDUCATION

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**2,810**  
participants



**3,000**  
participants

### WELLNESS RESOURCE & OUTREACH

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**6,334**  
received resources



**94,103**  
received resources

### YOUTH OUTREACH

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**10,432**  
youth and students



**15,453**  
youth and students

**782,226**  
TOTAL CONTACTS

# OVERVIEW: HELPING TEXANS LIVE HEALTHIER LIVES

Thanks to a \$10 million investment from the 84th Texas Legislature, Healthy South Texas launched in 27 counties on September 15, 2015. With “*prevention is the solution*” as its driving philosophy, *the initiative seeks to reduce the highest impact diseases* in the area, including diabetes, asthma and infectious disease.



## HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS INITIATIVE

**\$10 M**

*investment (2016-17)*

**27**

*counties*

## HIGHEST IMPACT DISEASES

*diabetes, asthma, infectious disease*

## ABOUT:

**Healthy South Texas** brings together experts from medicine, nursing, pharmacy, biomedical science, public health, architecture and other areas to engage families, enhance education, promote behavior change and improve quality of medical care and health outcomes. Through effective nutrition, health and wellness programming, it enables Texans to take personal responsibility for their own health in order to reduce the burden of costly, preventable diseases.

The all-hands-on-deck approach brings together the researcher, health care provider, educator and county agent, all working jointly for a common good. Every county in the Healthy South Texas region

recruits, trains and mobilizes a local coalition of community members, program partners and representatives from organizations committed to creating a culture of better health in South Texas.

These grassroots groups help identify the critical health needs in their communities and assess the best way to address those needs.

While serving the South Texas region, this innovative program helps develop tools, technologies and strategies that can be applied to public health challenges across the state through additional Healthy Texas initiatives. As a result, Texans will enjoy improved health and better living for generations to come.

# COALITIONS & ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Healthy South Texas is not a one-size-fits-all program. Every county in the Healthy South Texas region recruits, trains and mobilizes a local coalition consisting of community members, program partners and representatives from organizations who have a similar desire to **create a culture of better health in South Texas**. This grassroots group helps **identify the most critical health needs in their community** and assess the best way to address those needs. Using this feedback, we can tailor our information, services and programming so that it is most impactful.



## The coalitions had representation from the following sectors:

- City Government
- County Government
- State Government
- Education
- Medicine
- Public Health
- Community Organization
- Social Services
- Agriculture
- Small Business
- Industry
- Higher Education
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Law Enforcement
- Banking
- Food Banks
- News Media
- Childcare
- Eldercare
- Fire Services
- EMT Services
- Elected Officials
- Other

## LOCAL COALITION ENGAGEMENT

**26**

county coalitions

**298**

members



## DIRECT SAVINGS:

**\$26.1 M** in medical costs were saved for those who engaged in diabetes self-management, medication assistance, asthma self-management and general health services.

**\$80.8 M** potential savings over a lifetime can be attributed to increased physical activity. This includes medical costs and prevented sick days from work due to illness.

## IN-KIND LEVERAGING:

**\$13 M** of in-kind resources were leveraged by working with partner organizations. These resources include grants, sponsorships, registration fees, volunteers, medical care and donated office and event space.

## POTENTIAL IMPACT:

For every person's self-reported health status we can help improve from Fair/Poor to Good, Very Good or even Excellent, we will see productivity gains associated with lower direct State spending on Medicaid, better work attendance and improved quality of life.

If Healthy South Texas programming is expanded to the entire state of Texas, we could see the following cost savings:

**\$258.5 M** annually in Medicaid savings

**+ \$61.1 M** annually in productivity gains

**\$334.7 M** total potential annual savings

(Source for the Potential Impact section is Healthy Texas Initiative: Implications for the State of Texas, TXP, Inc.)

# DIABETES CONTROL PROGRAM

Managing type 2 diabetes is essential to **preventing or delaying the risk of heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, amputation and even death**. The Healthy South Texas diabetes control program **provides education and support** for those diagnosed with or at risk for diabetes, so they can **keep their chronic illness under control or, ideally, prevent its onset**.



## DIABETES CONTROL

**46,589**

*people served*

**12,812**

*educational materials distributed*

**\$8.7 M**

*current medical cost savings*

Over the past two years, individuals who participated in our year-long diabetes self-management education program were able to reduce their out-of-range blood sugar levels to a recommended range.

## ABOUT:

**Diabetes self-management education** provides eight hours of instruction on the basics of diabetes, blood glucose monitoring, nutrition, physical activity, medication and insulin administration, stress management, preventing complications and goal setting. Initial lab work is taken at the beginning of the program and again every three months for a year following completion of the course. One-on-one continuing education is provided by a health educator for continued support over the span of a year.

**Nutrition education** focuses on meal planning for the prevention and control of diabetes, with an emphasis on carbohydrate counting and portion control. Nutritionists and dietitians guide participants from the grocery store to the kitchen and even go over how to dine out healthfully.



**The Diabetes Prevention Program** instills healthy lifestyles for the prevention or delay of diabetes in high risk individuals. Over the course of 16 weeks, health educators teach participants how to eat healthy, add physical activity to their routine, manage stress, stay motivated and solve problems that can get in the way of healthy changes.

**Point of care education**, delivered one-on-one with a community health worker or health educator, covers how to identify and treat low and high blood sugar, how to use a glucometer, how to take medications safely and how to engage in safe physical activity.

**DIOSK**, a touchscreen, web-based diabetes self-management education kiosk, is placed at public, low-income locations to provide accessible diabetes education in English and Spanish. It is also available 24/7 at diosk.org.

**The bilingual, multidisciplinary diabetes care team** includes a physician medical director, registered nurses, certified diabetes educators, registered dietitians, exercise physiologist and community health workers. This team approach to diabetes care has been proven to provide continuous, supportive and effective care for people with diabetes, leading to improved glycemic control, reduced hospitalizations, improved quality of life and lower risk of complications.

**A1C CHAMPS** are diabetes self-management education participants with the most significant drops in their A1c (de-identified for their privacy)

AGE	GENDER	RACE	INT A1C	LAST A1C	A1C DECREASE
60	Male	Hispanic	14.6	5.9	8.7
50	Male	White	14	5.7	8.3
55	Female	Hispanic	14	6.1	7.9
58	Male	Hispanic	13.1	5.3	7.8
51	Female	White	13.7	6.4	7.3
61	Male	Hispanic	12.8	6	6.8
40	Male	Hispanic	12.9	6.4	6.5
77	Male	Hispanic	13.1	6.9	6.2
51	Male	White	12.2	6.1	6.1
67	Female	Hispanic	11	5.3	5.7

Keeping A1c levels as close as possible to the normal value of 6% or less reduces risk of diabetes complications by up to 76%.

*(Diabetes Control and Complications Trial, 1993)*



“ **I decided to go through the Texas A&M Diabetes Education Program, because I want to live a high-quality life. I now exercise four to five times each week for about an hour—I have so much more energy now!** ”

—David C., 47

# ASTHMA CONTROL PROGRAM

Despite advancements in treatment and control, **asthma continues to kill 10 people every day in the United States\***. For various reasons—including socioeconomic, environmental and behavioral causes—South Texas has a high rate of poor asthma outcomes. But that can be **improved through increased awareness and education on this disease**.



## PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

**29,597** *Total participants*

**17,135** *Asthma community outreach events*

**870** *Asthma summer camps*

**673** *Asthma management education*

**676** *Home visits*

**2,003** *Asthma continuing education*

**6,550** *Child care provider trainings*

**1,207** *Asthma screenings*

**483** *Follow-ups*

## ABOUT:

**Asthma community outreach events** at health fairs, flea markets, churches and schools provide interactive, fun learning activities such as asthma bingo, word search, crossword games, word mazes and asthma education utilizing lung models to demonstrate how asthma impacts the lungs.

**Asthma summer camps** are one-day camps designed to provide interactive learning about asthma to children at public libraries, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches and community centers.

**Asthma management education** provides evidence-based Asthma and Healthy Homes curriculum taught in English and Spanish and tailored to the target audience. The program is led by a team of respiratory therapists, community health workers and health care students who facilitate pre- and post-assessments, develop asthma action plans and conduct follow-up visits for a full year.

\*CDC. Most Recent Asthma Data. National Data/State Data. 2013. [http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most\\_recent\\_data.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/most_recent_data.htm)



**Home visits** are conducted to reinforce asthma education for families and to identify triggers in the home that could make asthma symptoms worse. Families who participate in home visits are provided with hypoallergenic mattress and pillow covers along with medication spacers free of charge.

**Asthma continuing education** is delivered to school nurses, community health workers, respiratory therapists and nursing students to improve their understanding of the needs of children with asthma and their families and how to effectively educate them and others about asthma.

**Child care provider trainings** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has a repository of online programs that provide state-mandated training to child care providers on a variety of health and wellness topics including Controlling Asthma Triggers in the Child Care Environment. This training educates child care staff and administrators on the basics of asthma attacks, common triggers, and a variety of strategies that child care providers can use to reduce asthma triggers in their facilities. In 2016–17, 290 participants from Healthy South Texas counties completed the course.

**An additional 23,063 people** received asthma education materials at health fairs and other community events.

# INFECTIOUS DISEASE EDUCATION

In response to **increasing concern about mosquito-borne diseases, such as Zika**, Healthy South Texas focused on educating health care professionals and the general public about **preventing, identifying and treating vector borne diseases** currently present or anticipated in South Texas.



## ZIKA RESPONSE

**5,925**

*Zika prevention kits distributed*

**2,363**

*contacts from educational sessions*

**16,439**

*educational resources distributed*

**3,579**

*newsletters distributed*

**436,000**

*reached by mass media (TV, newspaper, radio)*

## ABOUT:

Informative materials are posted online in English and Spanish and are also disseminated in print at health fairs, flea markets, farmers' markets, churches and schools that educate the general public about preventable infectious diseases.

Presentations and handouts are also integrated into other Healthy South Texas programming.

### For example:

- Diabetes Control Program participants are taught how to prevent diabetic foot infections.
- Well Baby attendees are provided with information about the Zika virus and childhood immunizations.
- Asthma Control Program participants are taught measures to prevent respiratory illness that could make asthma symptoms worse.

**Zika prevention kits** were distributed to clinics, hospitals and physician offices throughout South Texas. These kits contained educational material on the Zika virus, as well as mosquito repellent, infant clothing and condoms.

**Vector Control Workshops** train personnel in cities and municipalities that are in the field of mosquito abatement.

### The workshops provided education on:

- mosquito identification
- biology
- ecology
- diseases
- trap usage
- surveillance
- mosquito control

**ImmTrac**, the Texas Immunization Registry by the Texas Department of State Health Services, allows authorized health care professionals to access clients' vaccination histories. Healthy South Texas encourages everyone to register for ImmTrac to improve immunization rates in Texas.

# NUTRITION EDUCATION

The Dinner Tonight program was developed to **provide busy families with quick, healthy, cost effective recipes that taste great**. The Dinner Tonight website, weekly newsletter and social media presence enable participants to make the most of the foods available to them by providing **24-hour access to healthy recipes with videos featuring best practices for food preparation and food safety**.

## ABOUT:

**Dinner Tonight Signature Events** are live, interactive cooking demonstrations focused on nutrition, kitchen safety, best cooking practices and food safety.

**The Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities** program aims to increase the availability of healthy foods, specifically fresh produce, through the use of community gardens.

In the last two years, an estimated 1,000 families enrolled in the program, maintained 44 community gardens, and grew more than 10,000 pounds of vegetables with support from Extension educators and Master Gardeners. Locations of the gardens varied but were in areas accessible to the participants. Extension educators taught the gardening class series, which included topics such as how to select the right garden location, planting and watering techniques, controlling insects, and composting. As produce was harvested, participants learned how to prepare it by participating in the Better Living for Texans program. Pre- and post-surveys indicate participants had an increase in gardening knowledge, as well as an increase in the availability of vegetables and fruits in the home.

**Cooking School Events** Over the last two years, live cooking school events were held in locations across Healthy South Texas including Aransas Pass, Beeville, Kingsville, Robstown, Laredo, McAllen, Pearland, Rio Hondo, Victoria and Karnes City. More than 2,400 people participated in these cooking schools.

**Nutrition-education partnerships** were established with Texas Beef Council, Texas Department of Agriculture, Texas Parks & Wildlife, King Ranch, University of Houston-Victoria, Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi Nursing and Health Sciences, Jackson County Hospital District, DeTar Hospital System, South Texas Health System, local H-E-B stores, and more.

**Nutrition Education with Limited Resource Families** Over the past two years, agents in Healthy South Texas counties have engaged limited resource families in education on the importance of staying healthy through good nutrition, food safety, and how to spend food dollars wisely.

### Class attendance:

- 7,991 adults, impacting 34,042 family members
- 75,337 school age youth (K-12)

### Adult Impacts:

- 91% of adults showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices (planning meals, making healthy food choices, preparing foods without adding salt, reading labels)
- 85% of adults showed improvement in food resource management practices (planning meals, comparing prices, using grocery lists)
- 61% of adults showed improvement in food safety practices (thawing and storing food correctly)

### Youth Impacts:

- 79% of youth improved their knowledge and ability to choose foods according to MyPlate
- 50% of youth improved their ability to prepare simple, nutritious, affordable food
- 46% of youth used safe food handling practices more often or gain knowledge
- 43% of youth improved their physical activity practices or gained knowledge

## TOTAL REACH

**491,890**

*contacts made through live and web-based nutrition education*

**10K+**

*pounds of vegetables grown*

**2,400**

*live cooking school attendees*

**7,991**

*limited resource adults engaged in nutrition education*

**75,337**

*youth participants educated about nutrition and food safety*

In addition to live cooking demonstrations and face-to-face classes, the Dinner Tonight! website, weekly newsletter, and social media presence provide 24-hour access to healthy recipes with videos featuring best practices for food preparation and food safety.

# WALK ACROSS TEXAS!

Lack of physical activity is associated with numerous health problems, including **heart disease, type 2 diabetes, hypertension, osteoporosis and certain cancers**. To help combat these risks, Walk Across Texas! (WAT!) brings together people of all ages to support one another in **establishing the habit of regular physical activity**. Teams or individuals **challenge themselves to complete 830 miles**—the distance from El Paso to Texarkana—in just two months.



## WALK ACROSS TEXAS! RESULTS

**43,409**

*adults and students participated in WAT!*

**3,042,685**

*miles walked by participants*

*or enough miles to go...*

**AROUND EARTH  
122 TIMES**

## THIS BIENNIUM:

**Designated Best Practice Physical Activity Program**

by the Texas Department of State Health Services

**9,819 adult participants walked 1,735,598 miles** and on average increased the number of miles walked weekly.

**33,104 students walked 1,307,087 miles**

over the course of 8 weeks.

**An estimated 1,173 of the adult participants** could avoid or delay the onset of diabetes through continued physical activity.

**\$80.8 million total potential impact** for the WAT! adult participants, including the cost of lost wages from work days missed due to illness.

“ **Not only did we learn healthy eating tricks, but getting up and walking made me feel so much better!** ”

-Nancy Hickman, Robstown, TX

# WELL BABY

A lifetime of health begins before birth. That's why taking care of moms and **monitoring infant health** is essential to growing healthy communities. Healthy South Texas delivers evidence-based health education programs to **enhance the well-being of families by improving infant and maternal care.**



## ABOUT:

**Healthy Families, Healthy Communities Expos** connected 3,000 expectant mothers, young parents and other family members with local resources in prenatal care, family health, child safety, nutrition and physical activity. The region-wide community events also featured free health screenings, affordable immunizations, health education and numerous chances to take home items such as high chairs, strollers, school supplies and more. Participants were encouraged to sign up for programs that focus on reducing the highest impact health concerns in the region such as diabetes, asthma and infectious disease.

**Controlling Your Gestational Diabetes classes** were delivered to pregnant women diagnosed with gestational diabetes. This evidence-based diabetes self-management education program is recognized by the American Diabetes Association. Participants receive continuous, supportive and effective care from a team of bilingual, multidisciplinary health educators that includes registered nurses, certified diabetes educators, registered dietitians and community health workers with guidance from a medical doctor in obstetrics.

**Meet the Baby** events were held for participants of our gestational diabetes classes to celebrate the birth of their babies and provide continued education and support. Women who have had gestational diabetes—and their babies—are at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes later in life. These events teach healthy behaviors that can prevent type 2 diabetes and its complications.

## YOUNG FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

**5,810**

*expectant mothers, young parents and other family members reached*

## RESOURCES:

- prenatal care
- family health
- child safety
- nutrition
- physical activity
- free health screenings
- affordable immunizations
- health education
- gestational diabetes education

# YOUTH OUTREACH

Healthy behaviors picked up in one's early years can develop into lifelong habits. Healthy South Texas **engaged school-aged youth in a number of ways to help develop beneficial behaviors.**

## YOUTH AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

**11,537**

*youth engaged in physical activity*

**8,836**

*youth explored health careers*

**9,808**

*contacts made with Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!*

**153**

*Youth Ambassadors trained and mobilized*

## ABOUT:

**Youth Ambassadors** are local, high-school-age youth recruited and trained to serve as health and wellness advocates in their communities. Over the last two years, more than 150 youth have been trained as Healthy South Texas Youth Ambassadors. These youth have volunteered more than 4,987 hours to reach 84,813 contacts.

**Physical activity rallies** 11,537 contacts were made with students who participated in physical activity rallies, special events, and the McAllen Kids Marathon over two years.

**Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!** Schools can have a positive impact on child obesity by providing opportunities for school garden and nutrition based programs which have been shown to increase the healthy eating habits of students. Risks of childhood obesity include: lower school attendance, increased risk of being teased, bullied, and developing type 2 diabetes during childhood.

Preliminary results from the Learn, Grow, Eat, and Go! (LGEG) research study have indicated that family-focused garden, nutrition and physical activity programs significantly improved health behaviors in children.

Pre-test surveys were administered to a sample of the children participating in LGEG in Healthy South Texas counties (n = 830) prior to starting the LGEG curricula and post-test surveys (n = 677) were administered at the conclusion of the curricula.

### Significant findings include:

- Increases in vegetable preferences for seven of the 12 vegetables featured in the LGEG curricula (Of the 20 total vegetables on the survey, only vegetables featured in the LGEG curricula showed increases.)
- Significant student responses in selection of healthier beverage options after completion of the LGEG curricula

The questions related to family engagement with regard to growing a garden, tending a garden, eating vegetables from a garden, and enjoying gardening with their family showed some of the greatest percent increases.

**Health Careers Program** provides K-12 students opportunities to explore health care careers through clubs, conferences, summer camps, hands-on demonstration, shadowing, mentoring and interaction with health care professionals. Over the past two years, 8,836 youth were engaged in Health Career Program activities.

**Healthy South Texas Recognized Campus** is a designation granted to schools that are committed to programs for youth and families that positively impact health. Edcouch-Elsa ISD was the first campus to be recognized. McAllen ISD supported a series of Healthy South Texas rallies, reaching thousands of kids with the message of physical activity and nutrition.



# WELLNESS RESOURCES AND OUTREACH

As prescription costs continue to rise and present a significant out-of-pocket expense for uninsured and underinsured individuals, **access to affordable medications has become increasingly important**. Healthy South Texas strives to make it possible for Texans to get the medications and resources they need to live healthier.



## ABOUT:

**Medication Assistance** provides resources to secure free or nearly free medications to those who could not afford them otherwise, improving medication adherence and chronic disease management. By working through pharmaceutical companies' patient assistance programs, retail pharmacies and indigent programs, the Medication Assistance Program helps uninsured and underinsured South Texans get the medications they need to treat and control their chronic conditions, including diabetes, cardiovascular disease and respiratory illness.

**Community health workers** provide additional assistance by connecting those in need with community resources to improve their lifestyles, including transportation, food, clothing, housing, financial assistance, clinical care and much more. They also follow up with participants of Healthy South Texas' clinical programs to provide continuous support and resources for achieving health despite having a chronic disease, such as diabetes or asthma.

**Working on Wellness (WOW)**, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is focused on improving the health environment of Hidalgo and Starr counties by increasing residents' access to healthy foods and places to be physically active. Activities focus on increasing knowledge of healthy behaviors, promoting greater collaboration with health-oriented community groups and increasing community-wide practices to promote the availability of both healthy foods and safe areas for physical activity.

**Diabetes screenings** were conducted at community events, flea markets, health fairs, farmers' markets, churches and schools to identify those who may have or are at risk for developing diabetes.

**Worksite wellness programs** provided employees at local businesses with comprehensive health education, motivation, support and resources to help them achieve and maintain healthy lifestyles. Sessions were led by a registered nurse, certified diabetes educator, registered dietitian, exercise physiologist and/or community health worker, all under physician supervision. Topics included nutrition, meal planning, physical activity, goal-setting, stress management, self-monitoring and more.

## RESOURCE IMPACT

**1,968**

*received medications*

**\$8.9M**

*savings in prescription costs*

**7,809**

*received resources*

**7,217**

*participated in WOW*

**6,051**

*screened for diabetes*

**56**

*participated in Worksite Wellness*

**13,046**

*educational materials distributed*

# UTILIZING VOLUNTEERS

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension increases the reach of Healthy South Texas even further through the work of trained volunteers. These volunteers are local people with an interest in a particular subject. Extension provides further training that **increases their knowledge and skill** in that area. Volunteers use what they have learned to **facilitate educational programming in their communities**.



## VOLUNTEERS

**510**

*volunteers engaged*

**40 HRS**

*of education and training*

**40 HRS**

*volunteer service to Texas A&M  
AgriLife Extension Service*

## ABOUT:

**Master Wellness and Master Gardener Volunteers** In the past two years, 92 volunteers received extensive training in health and wellness subjects in order to provide outreach education. Additionally, there are more than 418 Master Gardeners in the 27 county area.

Trained volunteers in the Healthy South Texas area have contributed more than 3,000 hours of service in health education, school and community gardens, and in nutrition education related to gardening.

**Growing and Nourishing Communities** is a six-week program focused on starting and maintaining a community garden, with the goal of increasing the availability of healthy foods, especially fresh produce. As produce was harvested, participants learned how to prepare healthier meals for their families. Pre- and post-surveys indicate participants had an increase in gardening knowledge, as well as an increase in the availability of vegetables and fruits in the home.

# PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Delivering a multifaceted, community-based approach to promoting preventive health requires a highly-skilled and knowledgeable health workforce. To build and support that group, Healthy South Texas **develops and delivers needs-based training** for health professionals, community health workers and extension agents that **strengthens public health competencies**.



## ABOUT:

**Community health worker training workshops** were held across the 27-county region to provide Texas Department of State Health Services-certified continuing education credits for community health workers. Regional workshops prepared 467 participants to educate communities about chronic disease prevention and management. They also provided networking opportunities to build collaboration toward the common goal of a healthier Texas.

**Continuing education** was provided to physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, nurses and other licensed health care professionals to improve clinical care for diabetes, asthma and infectious disease patients.

- The annual Diabetes Conference hosted 602 health care professionals over the past two years to deliver the latest advances in medical management and prevention of complications for patients with diabetes.
- In 2016 and 2017, the Tropical and Infectious Disease Conference provided 188 participants with updates on commonly encountered infectious diseases and tropical medicine issues making their way into the United States.
- The first annual Asthma Conference, held in April 2017, attracted 132 diverse health care professionals who learned the latest on identifying and proactively treating asthma to prevent exacerbations, hospitalizations and mortality related to asthma.
- Peer reviews, grand rounds, workshops, online and distance education reached an additional 3,269 health care professionals throughout Texas and beyond.

**Health care students** rotated through in medication assistance and diabetes education programs. Through affiliations with regional higher education institutions, 494 students rotated through Healthy South Texas programs, including those in dietetic nursing, pharmacy, community health and dental hygiene programs.

## CONTINUING EDUCATION

**4,658** professionals trained

**494**

health care students rotated

- Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Texas A&M School of Public Health
- Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy
- Texas A&M University-Kingsville Dietetic Internship Program
- Del Mar College Dental Hygiene Program

# WHAT'S NEXT?



Healthy South Texas is an enormous endeavor. Shifting culture towards healthy living is challenging on many levels, but is vital if we are going to eliminate the health disparities that plague the state. Creating sustainable change that turns preventable diseases into history is our goal. When the Healthy South Texas project launched two years ago, it seemed like an ambitious goal. Today, we see change happening in so many communities that has resulted in healthier lives.

Every day, the Healthy South Texas workforce is teaching people how to manage their chronic diseases. In the case of diabetes, health educators are working with individuals to help them make healthier food choices, to move more, and to better monitor their blood sugar. These changes add up to healthier lives. On page seven you saw just ten examples of people in our program who have lowered their hemoglobin A1C to a healthy range. For each one of those examples, there are thousands more who have had similar success.

Our outreach and impact does not stop with diabetes care. Asthma is the top cause of missed school days in the nation, but we are changing that for the kids we've reached through Healthy South Texas. Our programs are preventing asthma flare ups so kids are able to attend more school, and are learning and living more.

Our work has also extended to preventing infectious diseases. As chair of the U.S. Olympic Committee Infectious Disease Advisory Group, I saw firsthand the devastation the Zika virus can cause during our preparation for the 2016 Olympics. So when the virus landed in Texas last year, I made sure Zika prevention was a top priority for Healthy South Texas. Together with our community partners, we put together and disseminated more than 6,000 Zika prevention kits. Extension agents, community health workers and health educators taught pregnant women and their communities about preventing Zika and other infectious diseases so we don't lose our children to preventable illness.

We have continued to grow our network of public and private partners, leveraging our resources to reach more people in areas of need. From hospital systems and private corporations to counties, municipalities and school districts, our network crosses all sectors for the greatest impact. An extensive list is provided on the next page.

As we continue to expand and intensify our proven programs in South Texas, we will begin introducing them to additional regions of the state through our Healthy Texas expansion. This expansion will serve more people while also providing unique opportunities for health care students to engage in interprofessional education. In today's rapidly evolving health care environment, it is essential for teams of health professionals to work together. Healthy Texas can prepare our future providers to deliver value-based care that improves overall patient health, promotes self-care and helps patients effectively manage their chronic health conditions. As a result, patients in our state will receive optimal care that focuses on prevention rather than reactive treatment, leading to improved health for all Texans.

I am proud of all we have accomplished in South Texas and our work is never done. Please join us as the Texas A&M Healthy Texas program eliminates health disparities across the state and makes every Texan a Healthy Texan.

***Carrie L. Byington, MD***

Dean, College of Medicine

Senior Vice President, Health Science Center

Vice Chancellor for Health Services, Texas A&M University System



# PARTNERS

Healthy South Texas leverages partnerships with local businesses and organizations to ***create an effective community-based model for better health***. We have been fortunate to partner with other governmental entities, school districts, hospital systems, health clinics, chambers of commerce, private businesses and nonprofit organizations.

## CLINICAL

Access Esperanza Clinic  
Amistad Federally Qualified Health Center  
Atascosa County Federally Qualified Health Center  
—Central Texas  
Care Regional Medical Center  
CHI St. Luke's Brazosport Hospital  
CHRISTUS Spohn Family Health Centers  
CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital  
Community Health Center of South Central Texas FQHC  
Corpus Christi Medical Center  
Cuero Community Hospital  
Deleon Pharmacy  
DeTar Hospital  
Doctors Hospital at Renaissance  
Driscoll Health System  
El Milagro Clinic  
HCA Bay Area Hospital  
Hector P. Garcia Family Clinic  
Hope Family Health Center  
Karnes County Community Health Center  
Matagorda Regional Medical Center- Matagorda  
McAllen Dental Associates  
Molina Healthcare (Hidalgo County)  
Nuestra Clinica Del Valle  
OHO Kaiser Medical Center  
Port Lavaca Memorial Medical Center  
Post-Acute Medical Specialty Hospital of Corpus Christi  
Refugio Community Hospital  
Rio Grande Regional Hospital  
South Texas Health System

## COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Affordable Homes of South Texas, Inc.  
Alamo Community Resource Center  
Aransas-San Patricio Master Gardeners  
American Diabetes Association  
AVANCE, Rio Grande Valley  
Baylor Hunger Initiative  
Behavioral Health Center of Nueces County  
Boys and Girls Club of Corpus Christi and Weslaco  
Coastal Bend Asthma Coalition  
Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living  
Community Action Committee of Victoria  
Easter Seals, Rio Grande Valley  
Food Bank  
Good Samaritans

Gulf Bend MHMR  
Health Information Network of South Texas  
Humane Society of Rockport  
Mid-Coast Family Services  
Mission of Mercy  
Nueces County Community Action Agency  
—Head Start Program/Community Services  
Texas Area Health Education Center East-Victoria Region  
Texas Healthy Communities Coalition  
Victoria Food Bank  
Victoria Immunization Coalition

## COUNTY/CITY

Alice Natatorium  
Alton Community Resource Center  
Aransas County  
Bee County  
Brazoria County  
Brooks County  
Calhoun County  
Cameron County  
City of Alice  
City of Aransas Pass  
City of Kingsville  
City of Los Fresnos  
City of McAllen  
City of McAllen Health Department  
City of Rio Grande City  
Community State Park & Swimming Pool  
Corpus Christi Housing Authority  
Corpus Christi-Nueces County Public Health District  
DeWitt County  
Donna Public Libraries  
Duval County  
Goliad County  
Harlingen Housing Authority  
Hidalgo County  
Hidalgo County Community Center  
Hidalgo County Head Start Center  
Jackson County  
Jackson County Hospital District  
Jim Hogg County  
Jim Wells County  
Johnny S. Calderon County Building  
Karnes County  
Kenedy County  
Kingsville Housing Authority

Kingsville Recycling Center  
Kleberg County  
Lavaca County  
Live Oak County  
Matagorda County  
McAllen Fire Department  
McAllen Police Department  
Monte Alto Community Center  
North San Juan Community Resource Center  
Nueces County  
Progreso Community Resource Center  
Raymondville Chamber of Commerce  
Refugio County  
Regional Transportation Association  
Rio Grande Public Library  
San Carlos Community Resource Center  
San Patricio County  
San Patricio Health Department  
Starr County  
Transportation Coordination Network  
Rural Economic Assistance League  
Victoria County  
Victoria County Public Health District  
Victoria County Sheriff's Department  
Victoria Housing Authority  
Webb County  
Weslaco Public Library  
Willacy County  
Zapata County

## **SCHOOLS/EDUCATION**

Corpus Christi Independent School District  
Cuero Independent School District  
Edinburg Independent School District  
Education Service Center, Region 2  
Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District  
Lyford Consolidated Independent School District  
Region One Education Service Center  
San Benito Consolidated Independent School District  
Weslaco Independent School District

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Center for Health Organization Transformation  
Coastal Bend College  
Del Mar College—Dental Hygiene & Nursing Programs  
South Coastal Area Health Education Center (AHEC)  
South Texas College  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Office, Research & Development  
Texas A&M College of Medicine  
Texas A&M College of Nursing  
Texas A&M Family Practice Residency Program  
Texas A&M Irma Lerma Rangel College of Pharmacy  
Texas A&M School of Public Health  
Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi  
Texas A&M University—Kingsville  
Texas A&M University Colonias Program

University of Houston-Victoria  
University of Houston-Victoria Student Health Organization  
University of Houston-VRT  
University of Texas Medical Branch, Brazoria

## **STATE AGENCIES**

Area Agency on Aging  
Texas Department of Agriculture  
Texas Department of State Health Services  
Federal Programs  
Children's Defense Fund  
WIC Program  
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

## **PRIVATE**

Babies"R"Us  
Brighter Bites  
Carolina Nisimblat  
Citgo Refineries  
Coastal Bend Health Foods  
Cooking Depot  
First National Bank in Hebbronville  
Four String Farm  
Fox Run Apartments  
Golden Crescent  
H-E-B  
King Ranch Corporation  
Knolle Jersey Farms  
Redfish Lillie's Seafood Restaurant  
Scott Electric  
Sherwin Alumina  
STP Nuclear Operating Company—Matagorda  
Superior Health Plan  
Sweetlifebake.com  
Toastmasters International Emcee  
United Healthcare  
Valero Refineries  
Walmart, Angleton  
Weight Watchers  
Wells Fargo Bank—Cuero and Victoria

## **FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS**

Church Unlimited  
Cornerstone Church  
Cuero Area Ministerial Alliance  
Diocese of Corpus Christi—Catholic Schools  
First United Methodist Church  
in Alice, Corpus Christi, Rockport, Kingsville  
Karnes Ministries  
Methodist Healthcare Ministries  
Metro Ministries  
Solid Rock Church  
St. Vincent de Paul  
Victoria Christian Alliance

 [healthytexas.tamu.edu](http://healthytexas.tamu.edu)

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**HEALTHY SOUTH TEXAS**