



Advancing Healthy Lifestyles

Highlights from Year 1

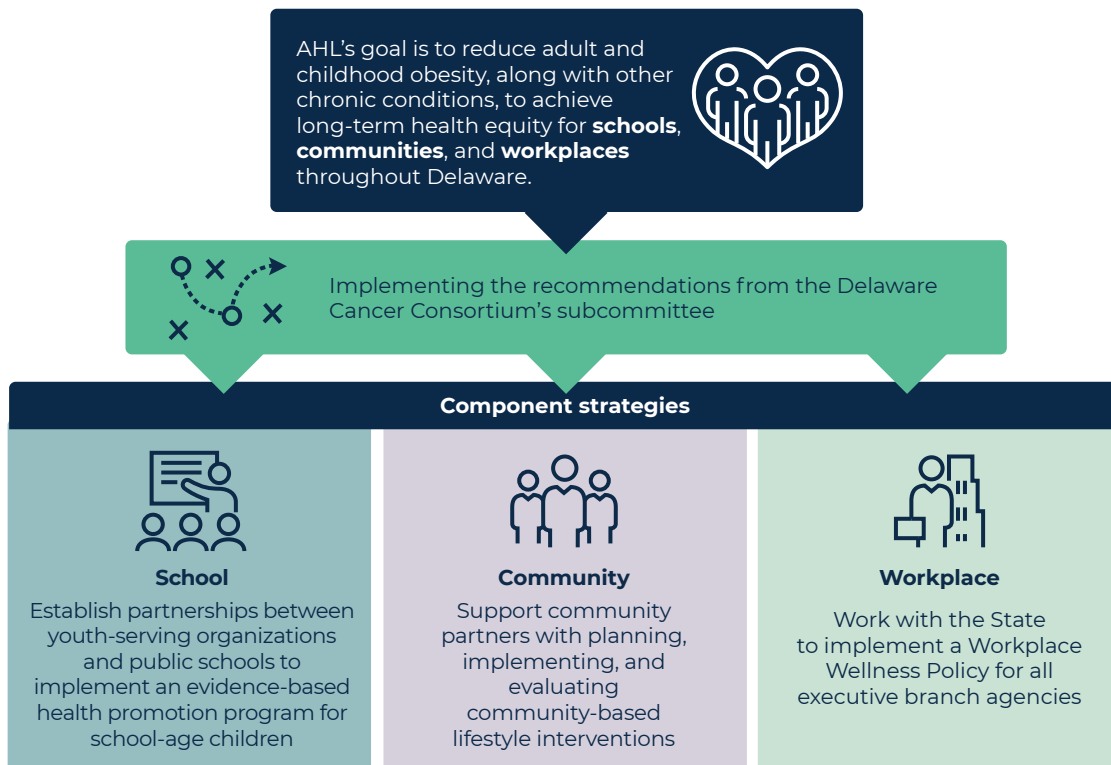
Background

Advancing Healthy Lifestyles: Chronic Disease, Health Equity, & COVID-19 (“Advancing Healthy Lifestyles” or “AHL”) is a statewide initiative launched in January 2021 by the Delaware Division of Public Health’s (DPH’s) Physical Activity, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention Program (PANO). DPH-PANO introduced the initiative as COVID-19 exacerbated health burdens already faced by many Delawareans.

The goal of AHL is to reduce obesity and other chronic conditions to achieve health equity among all Delaware residents. To accomplish this, AHL promotes the use of policy, systems, and environ-

mental change strategies in schools, communities, and workplace settings to reach Delawareans across their lifespan. Figure 1 shows AHL’s goal and the three components of its strategy.

Figure 1. Relationship between AHL’s goal and three component strategies



AHL has achieved several important accomplishments since its launch in 2021, including the following:

- / Developing a statewide action plan based on the recommendations of the Delaware Cancer Consortium’s Cancer Risk Reduction Committee’s Healthy Lifestyles Subcommittee
- / Launching an innovative school-community demonstration project between youth-serving organizations and public schools
- / Providing financial support and technical assistance to three community partner organizations with launching interventions to promote healthy lifestyles
- / Developing and supporting the implementation of a Workplace Wellness Policy for state employees in Delaware’s executive branch agencies

Development of a Statewide Action Plan

AHL spearheaded the development of a statewide action plan to implement recommendations of the Healthy Lifestyles Subcommittee (HLSC) within the Delaware Cancer Consortium’s Cancer Risk Reduction Committee. In January 2021, the HLSC released a series of policy recommendations that focused on improving health in three key areas: (1) children ages 0 to 18, (2) worksite wellness, and (3) community-level policies. The action plan translates the HLSC’s recommendations into specific strategies. To develop the action plan, AHL convened representatives from a diverse cross-section of Delaware agencies and organizations (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Agencies and organizations that helped develop action plan



The action plan proposes practical strategies to address the HLSC’s recommendations and identifies the state agency or program that should implement the recommendations, based on information collected through focus group

discussions and interviews with agency leaders. The final action plan provides guidance for next steps to implement each HLSC recommendation. Table 1 highlights examples of recommended actions from the action plan.

Table 1. Examples of key actions identified in action plan

Policy area	HLSC recommendation	Priority actions	Primary agencies
Children ages 0–18	Develop and implement out-of-school nutrition policies (before-school, after-school, sports).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Determine what schools' before- and after-school programs currently provide and identify interventions to adopt consistent nutrition standards. 2. Identify best practices from non-school programs that provide after-school food and drinks, to develop more consistent offerings across settings. 3. Review all policies that govern children's nutrition in a school-based context, focusing on consistency across policies. 4. Work with School Wellness Teams to expand nutrition standards to include before and after-school program. 	Department of Education, Office of Child Care Licensing
Worksite wellness	Create infrastructure for a formal workplace wellness program for state employers. Encourage private employers to adopt an infrastructure for workplace wellness programs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and launch a Department of Human Resources workplace wellness policy that will provide the infrastructure needed by executive branch agencies to establish and maintain workplace wellness initiatives. 2. Develop online toolkits for implementation of a wellness policy that includes programs and activities, along with logistical/operational plans for managing the program. 	Department of Human Resources, Statewide Benefits Office
Community-level policies	Strengthen the corner-store intervention model via federal food assistance programs to increase access to and consumption of healthier food, reduce food insecurity, and promote nutritious diets in targeted communities.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish incentives that encourage store owners to offer and promote healthier foods. 2. Explore ways that corner stores can have access to local food sources and keep costs manageable. 3. Establish a food-purchasing cooperative to leverage local store owners' buying power. 4. Increase store/vendor capacity to market and sell healthy food and beverage items. 	Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant and Children Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Social Services, Food Supplement Program Delaware Department of Agriculture

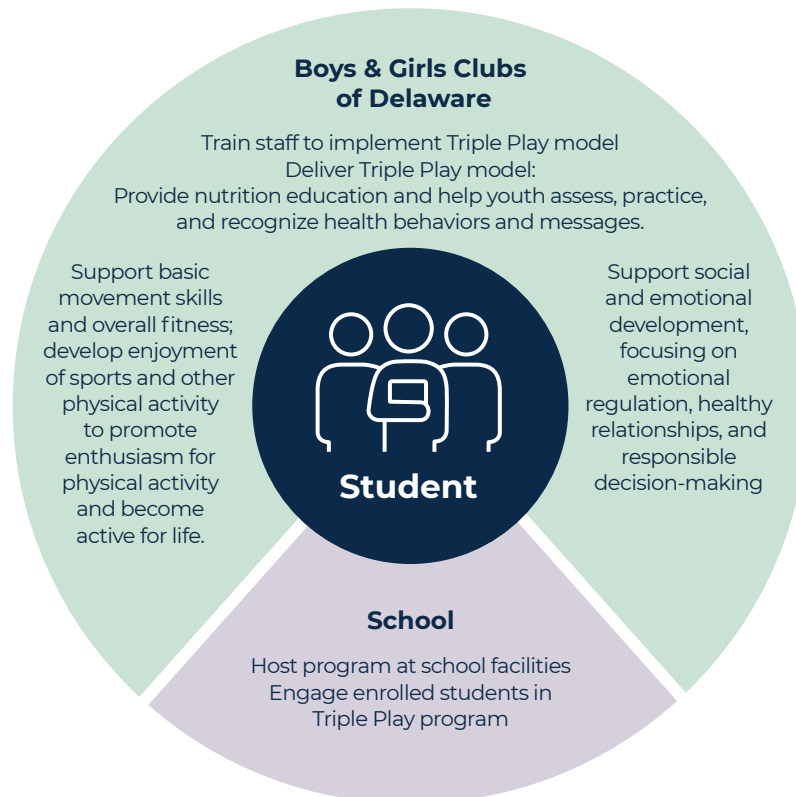
School-Community Partnership Demonstration Project

To improve health and wellness of school-age students in Delaware, AHL has launched an innovative school-community partnership between youth-serving organizations and public schools throughout Delaware. For example, the Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware and a select number of schools in Delaware will implement the Triple Play model, a healthy lifestyle program that offers more than 200 activities for participants focused on mind, body, and soul. Triple Play seeks to improve students' knowledge of healthy habits related to nutrition and physical fitness, increase students' participation in physical activity, and strengthen students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships. AHL will pilot Triple Play in three urban and rural locations in Delaware in 2022. The demonstration should yield important lessons about successful school-community partnerships, as well



as a model that may be scaled to other sites across Delaware. Figure 3 describes the partnerships between a select number of schools and Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware in implementing the Triple Play model.

Figure 3. Role of schools and Boys & Girls Clubs of Delaware in implementing Triple Play model





Building Capacity of Community Partners

AHL has supported and strengthened the capacity of three community partners: American Lung Association, University of Delaware–Cooperative Extension, and Delaware State University. These partners received financial support to implement their health promotion models, while receiving intensive technical assistance to support planning, implementation, and evaluation of their programs. The University of Delaware–Cooperative Extension (highlighted below) is implementing a program that connects food producers, retailers, and communities to increase access to healthy foods. The American Lung Association is implementing staff and student training and supporting policy changes in schools that promote lung health and physical activity among students with asthma. Delaware State University is implementing a physical activity program for children with developmental disabilities, paired with a nutrition education program for their parents.

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University of Delaware–Cooperative Extension model to promote equitable access to healthy foods

University of Delaware is working with community-based partners, food producers and distributors, and local retail sites in the pilot communities of Harrington and Dover to promote equitable access to healthy, locally produced food. Both cities have a high percentage of residents and families who are poor and speak a language other than English, and this project will advance health equity by improving access to healthy foods to these vulnerable populations.

The goals of the pilot are as follows:

- Improved alignment between community members' needs and capacities of food retailers/producers
 - Increased opportunity for healthy, local food products to be in community retail sites
 - Increased opportunities for community members to access healthy food from retail sites within their neighborhoods
 - The long-term goal of the project is to increase the number of sites that will provide improved food security among Harrington and Dover residents, as well as access to fruits, vegetables, and healthy food options.▲
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Improving Workplace and Employee Health

AHL is leading the development and implementation of a Workplace Wellness Policy for the State of Delaware's executive branch agencies. The Workplace Wellness Policy will support the organizational capacity and implementation of health promotion activities by executive branch agencies and departments. Health topics addressed by the policy include

healthy eating, physical activity, mental wellness, and lactation support, among several others (Figure 4). AHL is also developing a toolkit to support the implementation of individual workplace wellness initiatives. A workgroup with representatives from 18 state agencies, along with staff at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Workplace Health Program, provided input to develop the policy and toolkit. The state aims to implement the Workplace Wellness Policy in 2022.

Figure 4. Organizational capacity building supports and health promotion topics included in the Workplace Wellness Policy



This brief was prepared on behalf of the AHL Initiative by Mathematica, the contractor supporting AHL's work in the areas of workplace and community capacity. Mathematica partners with Concept Systems Inc., which led the statewide action plan and is supporting the school-community partnership demonstration.