
VHCIP Provider Sub-Grant Program Final Report



RiseVT

Embracing Healthy Lifestyles in Franklin and Grand Isle Vermont

AUTHORS
DOREY DEMERS
JONATHAN BILLINGS
JUDY ASHLEY



December 10th, 2016

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
Discussion.....	7
Project Description.....	7
Expected Outcomes	8
Lessons Learned	9
Project Evaluation	10
Individuals	11
Businesses	14
Schools	15
Municipalities.....	16
Project Sustainability	18
Conclusion.....	19

Appendix A: RiseVT Scorecards

Appendix B: UVM Center for Rural Studies Evaluation

and lower healthcare costs where we live, work, play, and learn.

Acknowledgments

Funding for this report was provided by the State of Vermont, Vermont Health Care Innovation Project, under Vermont's State Innovation Model (SIM) grant, awarded by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Innovation Center (CFDA Number 93.624) Federal Grant #1G1CMS331181-03-01.

Executive Summary

We envision a region that supports and embraces healthy lifestyle. We see bike and pedestrian friendly communities with easy access to fresh and healthy local produce and foods. We see an environment that fosters and promotes healthy gathering places, events, municipalities, worksites, and neighborhoods. Thriving downtowns, rural destinations, and recreational landscape will capture the imagination and attention of many as they bring forth the essence of Northern Vermont's vibrant and sustainable farms, diversified agriculture, alternative energies, and deeply rooted family heritage.

In 2014, a multi-sector group of leaders from throughout Vermont's Franklin and Grand Isle Counties led by the CEO of Northwestern Medical Center and District Director of the Vermont Department of Health, formed the 'Community Committee on Healthy Lifestyles.' Their intent was to improve the health of adults and children through primary prevention. Using an intensive Results Based Accountability process, the committee identified the need to focus on reducing obesity by increasing physical activity and enhancing healthy eating.

The RiseVT name and logo emerged from the work of the Community Committee on Healthy Lifestyles and built a foundation in best practice. Research shows that long term, evidence-based prevention approaches like the RiseVT community-wide campaign improves a community's overall health and ultimately reduces healthcare costs. After successfully piloting RiseVT with individuals, families, businesses, schools, and municipalities, this innovative effort to engage our entire community in healthier lifestyles launched in June 2015.

RiseVT is an innovative, engaging, community-based best practice wellness initiative that provides a formal framework – we call them scorecards – for individuals, families, schools, child cares, businesses, and municipalities to use in assessing and guiding their wellness efforts. RiseVT amplifies local resources while partnering with others on creative, positive approaches to engage our community in healthy behavior change.

It sparked interest in people from all ages, from 0 to 92, and from small businesses with only two employees to large businesses including almost 1000 employees. RiseVT has engaged

municipalities within a rural setting with less than 2000 residents, to larger, more urban destinations with over 12,000 people. Through its innovation and engagement, RiseVT is changing the wellness landscape within our region and we confident that it will change the landscape of all of Vermont. RiseVT is a movement that continues to gain momentum as more and more of people explore embracing healthier lifestyles

More than 12,600 individuals have already connected with RiseVT – that is approximately 10% of our population in northwestern Vermont. We are reaching individuals who are engaging in more physical active and healthier food choices. Many families are getting involved and a growing number are taking advantage of the free health coaching resource through RiseVT. To ensure individuals are surrounded by a culture that supports their efforts to make healthier choices, RiseVT is involved with 46 businesses, 15 schools, and 9 municipalities, and 4 child care sites. These collaborations resulted in policy and infrastructure changes such as smoke-free business sites and community parks, establishing and implementing Safe Routes to School, boosting access to recreational opportunities, including sidewalks in municipal plans and infrastructure changes, facilitating healthier eating by offering healthier options, and establishing or strengthening worksite wellness programs. At the same time, RiseVT is reaching out to the most vulnerable populations by having a monthly presence at the Agency of Human Services and integrating into other community resources, including Martha’s Kitchen (soup kitchen) and the Champlain Valley Office of Equal Opportunity (food shelf). RiseVT also extends its reach by collaborating with the public libraries and school nurses throughout our region.

The beauty of RiseVT’s approach is meeting each person, family, business, school, child care, and municipality where they are and encouraging and supporting them on their individual path to better health. What kind of things show up on the scorecards? For individuals and families, the scorecard starts with the simple step of taking the RiseVT pledge to working towards a healthier lifestyle. The scorecards include strategies such as keeping a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter so the easy choice becomes the healthy choice, as well as things like trying new recipes, taking time to dance to your favorite song, and creating a smoke-free zone inside your house. You do not have to adopt healthy habits all at once because it’s about the journey to better health.

Habits are changing. Social media is abuzz with people enjoying active play and the pleasure of healthy foods. Policies are shifting. Worksites are going smoke free, businesses are becoming breast feeding friendly, schools are addressing healthy food choices and physical activity, and municipalities are addressing walk-ability and recreation.

Discussion

Project Description

RiseVT is a collaborative and community-based approach to achieving improved population health outcomes using a community-wide campaign, a recommended strategy for increasing physical activity and improve nutrition as identified in The Community Guide (www.communityguide.org). RiseVT was designed using the Vermont Prevention Model (Socio-Ecological Model) to enhance the health impact by targeting policies, infrastructure, education, the environment and culture within municipalities, worksites, schools and families by providing a structure of support.

RiseVT encourages and celebrates healthy behaviors, targeting, schools, worksites and municipalities. Organizations can work to achieve higher RiseVT status levels. For example, a school providing education promoting walking/biking to school would earn a bronze level, while fully implementing a Safe Routes to School Travel Plan including the 5 E's (Education, Enforcement, Engineering, Encouragement, and Evaluation) could achieve a Gold level. The same would be true at a worksite level. A worksite that offers worksite wellness classes only would earn a bronze level. A worksite that implements a comprehensive wellness program with financial incentives and supportive policies for employees to actively engage, along with those classes, would achieve gold level recognition. Our scorecards are in Appendix A.

In addition, RiseVT provides support and health coaching to individuals across Franklin and Grand Isle. As individuals engage with RiseVT, they are encouraged to take the RiseVT Individual Scorecard (see Appendix A), which guides them through simple questions about their health to receive their personal score once completed. The score is based out of 100 and an individuals' goal should be to achieve the closest score to 100 that they can get. After their completion, they have the opportunity to engage in one-on-one health coaching or be referred to local community resources such as tobacco cessation, diabetes education, primary care and more. RiseVT is aligned with Northwestern Medical Center's Lifestyle Medicine Department and encourages RiseVT participants to engage in their offerings such as well coaching or the Complete Health Improvement Program (CHIP). The goal of the RiseVT individual scorecards is to provide education and encourage individuals to access available community resources.

RiseVT developed a central clearinghouse for all things health and wellness which addresses a long-term community need. This includes a robust and engaging, free online presence available around-the-clock and without the need for RiseVT membership. The RiseVT website carries information about how to engage with RiseVT, a Healthy Waypoints Map to identify local parks, paths and trails in our region, a community calendar, blog postings and more. By allowing various organizations to submit events and

resources to be listed, we can engage additional community partners, increasing buy-in and increase collaborations in our efforts.

The RiseVT Team is made up of a RiseVT Coordinator, health coaches, wellness specialists and advocates. The team works together to implement policy change; provide technical assistance; and leverage community interest, involvement, and ownership in improving health. The RiseVT Team actively engages municipal leaders, employers, and other organizations within their community on policy changes and resource development. They help organize, facilitate, and mobilize grass-roots efforts regarding population health, based on the needs of that specific community by encouraging participation in an upcoming program, taking on a community challenge, passing a smoke-free parks ordinance, building a bike path, increasing Safe Routes to School, etc. By having these initiatives emerge from within the community, ownership and sustainability are enhanced. Encouraging communities to expand access to recreational facilities and programming has proven effective in getting northwestern Vermont moving forward with a variety of efforts, including Fit & Healthy Swanton and Fit & Healthy Enosburg.

Built from effective practices outlined in The Community Guide, RiseVT is a highly visible community-wide campaign incorporating multi-component strategies to an all-inclusive audience. It's positive and if sustained over time it will influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of the community. RiseVT is focused on moving forward. And, most important to Franklin and Grand Isle counties, it serves as an all-important brand that moves us from the bottom of the healthcare demographic to the top.

Expected Outcomes

1. Increase the overall health of residents by decreasing the percent of overweight and obese individuals*
2. Increase the number of employers offering a wellness program in which 50% of employees participate
3. Expand resources for biking and walking
4. Increase fruit and vegetable consumption by 10% *
5. Decrease the number of people with no leisure time physical activity from 26% to 19%*
6. Increase the number of students walking/biking to school from 15% to 20%*

*Please note that items 1, 4, 5 and 6 are populations health outcome measures from the Behavior Risk and Reduction Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) where data is only released on indicators every 2 years.

RiseVT is designed to achieve a progression of significant short-, medium-, and long-term output and outcome goals. In our first year and a half, we have already exceeded all our three-year engagement goals. We are working toward our mid-range goals of increasing physical activity during leisure time, increasing the consumption of fruits & vegetables, etc. All our

measures align with our long-term goal of reducing obesity in our community and decreasing the illness and expense associated with it. Based on the EPODE¹ model and using best practices, baseline BMI surveillance data will be collected starting in 2017 in school-based settings (ages range 6-12 years old). These data will be collected in partnership with schools, pediatricians, families and include an intensive information communication campaign for the community. The development and implementation of themed campaigns directly targeting children and families will be “solution-oriented and motivational for positive behavior changes without stigmatizing any culture or people.”² The Scientific Advisory Board and Lifestyle Medicine Medical Director will provide oversight to ensure these data are collected in an appropriate and non-stigmatic manner and the communication campaign reflects official recommendations.

Lessons Learned

There were several key elements that were considered in the design and implementation of this initiative. First and foremost, determining why obesity must be prevented and understanding the determining factors for prevention were important to quantify. Secondly, identification of key stakeholders that go beyond health professionals to include politicians, economic stakeholders, local stakeholders, teachers, media, town planners, and others all have a role to play. It was important to maintain the key stakeholder group to a manageable number (~25) to ensure robust conversation and the ability to act move the initiative forward. Stakeholders should be grounded in the local data including overweight and obesity for youth and adults; inactivity; no leisure time; limited fruit intake; consumption of vegetables, tobacco use. These data are available through the Vermont Department of Health and the hospital Community Needs Assessment. After reviewing data, the key stakeholders should agree that the issue is important and that they are willing to commit time to identifying interventions for their community. Census data should be used to identify areas of need in the county and local knowledge of community readiness, including champions/community activators who can carry the message forward, is essential in determining target areas. After examination of the relevant data, the Community Committee on Healthy Lifestyles engaged in the Results Based Accountability (RBA) process to identify performance measures. The Vermont Prevention Model (socio-ecological model) illustrates that there are many factors in play that influence individual and population health. This model supports the need for inclusive strategies addressing multiple levels simultaneously over time across age, gender and culture. The areas listed above provide a strong foundation for the launch of RiseVT and is highly recommended as part of the statewide rollout strategy. The ability to respond

¹ EPODE ‘Ensemble Prévenons l’Obésité Des Enfants’ (*Together Let’s Prevent Childhood Obesity*)

² Borys, JM Bodo YL Henauw SD Moreno LA Romon M Seidell JC Visscher TLS (2011) *Preventing Childhood Obesity*: 103

quickly and make adaptations during the roll-out are fundamental to the success of the community-wide campaign.

During the implementation of the community-wide campaign we continually observed our numbers increase across all identified objectives. We purposefully selected objectives and outcomes that were challenging but obtainable to show success and maintain momentum. The traditional and social media areas of implementation showed great promise immediately and gained increased traction over time which propelled RiseVT into the limelight. Continuous marketing and promotion proved to be key to making headway into schools, businesses, and municipalities.

A unique challenge included working with small business owners (under 15 employees). Many of Franklin and Grand Isle businesses are limited in staff and may only have one or two employees. This is extremely challenging when you are trying to create wellness challenges or policy changes. Often the feedback would include “what is the point, there is only two of us.” To respond to this gap, in the summer of 2016, the RiseVT team created the RiseVT Small Business Umbrella. The Small Business Umbrella caters to businesses with less than 15 employees and provides expertise to increase wellness collaboratively across the small business community. The Small Business Umbrella network meets 4 times a year and provides webinars that focus on health and wellness in the workplace. In addition, the umbrella offers free health coaching and biometric screenings, organized health challenges, participation in a Worksite Wellness Program, and community recognition through traditional and social media. Currently, four local business are actively involved with a goal to increase participation in 2017.

Another challenge we observed in working with schools was the use of one universal scorecard for the school. This scorecard would be completed by the school administration but frequently did not reach the children and teachers in the classroom. At the request of classroom teachers, RiseVT developed scorecards for individual classrooms and further refined them to address the stages of development for each age group increasing their ability to take part in wellness opportunities. This proved to be very successful and is in use in many of the local schools.

The use of the Cerner Wellness Solution as a health management platform was not as successful as originally hoped. While there are currently 337 people registered in Cerner. It is unclear how many are active on the site. There are many competing sites like this including apps that can be used to track and assess individual’s health behaviors including weight and food intake. In addition, private insurance companies have similar sites that are also linked to “rewards” for participation and improved health outcomes.

Project Evaluation

In addition to the following, a formal evaluation with the Center of Rural Studies at the University of Vermont is included in [Appendix B](#).

RiseVT

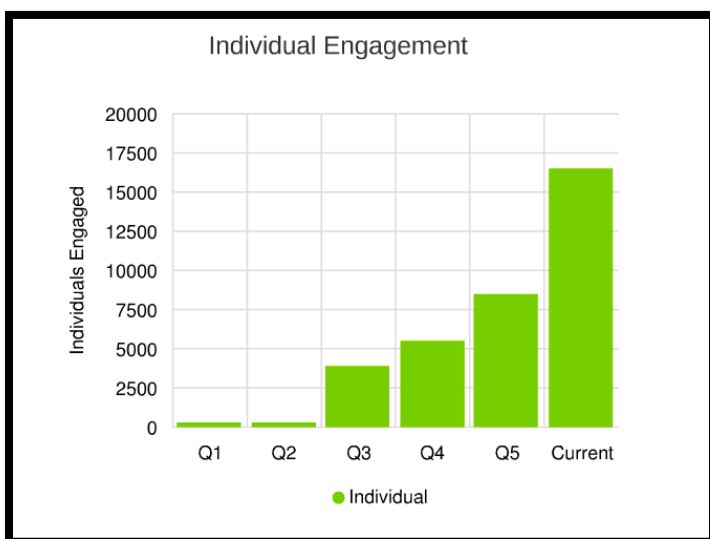
Embracing Healthy Lifestyles in Franklin and Grand Isle Vermont

Individuals

RiseVT engages individuals through the individual scorecard, Cerner online wellness portal, health coaching offered at worksites, social media as well as attendance at community events.

The goal of individual engagement is to increase connectivity and provide education about community resources that are available within the community. In addition, one-on-one health coaching has been

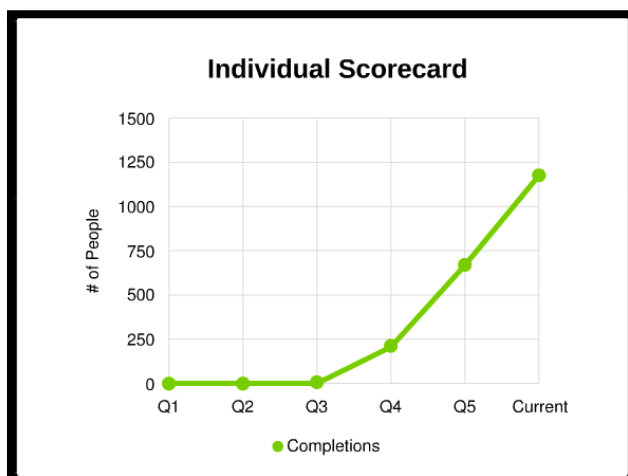
offered to small worksites with less than 50 employees.



The graph to the left shows the current engagement for RiseVT over the past two years. Currently, RiseVT has engaged with over 16,000 individuals. 12,637 people have seen RiseVT at events across Franklin and Grand Isle, 2,214 people have taken the RiseVT Pledge or taken the Health Assessment, 1,175 people have completed the RiseVT Individual

Scorecard and know their score, 337 people are using the RiseVT Wellness Dashboard (Cerner), and 257 individuals have participated in health coaching. A community engagement goal was not identified in the original grant, however, this graph positively shows how our engagement has thrived, sustained and increased during our campaign.

One of our biggest challenges for individuals was having them complete the individual scorecard. When we first launched the RiseVT Scorecard Challenge, participants had to download a scorecard and complete it over a three-month period. During this time, individuals would be challenging themselves and their families to add wellness activities into their daily life. Once they completed the three-month challenge they would be entered to win prizes and recognition. Unfortunately, during the first three quarters, we saw zero returns. We took feedback from participants, which included “it’s too time consuming,” or “I wish it was faster.” From there we launched and developed the individual online scorecard in Quarter 4. This scorecard guides them through simple questions about their health that



will give them their RiseVT score (based on a total of 100 points) instantly once completed. After their completion, they will have the opportunity to engage in one-on-one health coaching or referral to local community resources such as tobacco cessation, diabetes education, primary care, or additional opportunities to improve their personal score.

The graph above shows the increase in participation from the scorecard challenge. From this technique, over 1000 individuals have taken the challenge and we have referred 149 individuals to health coaching, 23 to primary care for a primary care provider, 14 to tobacco cessation and 20 to dental providers.

Health coaching at worksites is effective and meaningful for our participants. Currently, health coaching is offered free on-site at 8 different locations to 175 people. The success of this initiative can be seen the results of health coaching at one site, Swanton village, population 2,386.

The RiseVT Health Coach began working with Swanton Village employees in May 2015. By May 2016, 24 employees or 66% of village employee population participated in health coaching. During the initial screening, 38% of these 24 individuals were identified as pre-hypertensive which put them at moderate risk for developing cardiovascular disease. By the end of the year, only 8% of these 24 individuals screened were pre-hypertensive which means that 30% of employees taking part in health coaching reduced their cardiovascular disease risk to low risk. In addition, over 108 total pounds were lost, the overall population reduced their cholesterol by 4 points, 1 Individual quit smoking, 21% started using the gym and 16% decreased or stopped medication. It can be suggested through this project, that health coaching at small non-profit businesses positively impacts the health of employees. As of this writing, Swanton village employees have continued to engage in wellness activities including a worksite community garden.

Engagement has been a key component for individuals and RiseVT is constantly looking at our engagement and how we can create innovative and fun ways for our community to become involved in RiseVT. An example of this innovation has been our RiseVT Smoothie Bikes. They have become a staple at our events. Our stationary bikes include blenders on them and participants can spin on the bike and make a delicious healthy smoothie at the same time. We often source local ingredients to increase awareness of local food availability for participants. We have utilized the smoothie bikes at schools, events, businesses and the bikes have achieved a notoriety of their own.

An equally important piece of individual engagement has been Rise VT's social media presence on several social media sites including Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram. Social media is an incredibly huge part of a community campaign. According to the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, social media can, "Increase the timely dissemination and potential impact of health and safety information, leverage audience networks to facilitate information sharing, expand reach to

include broader, more diverse audiences, personalize and reinforce health messages that can be more easily tailored or targeted to particular audiences, facilitate interactive communication, connection and public engagement and empower people to make safer and healthier decisions.” Integrating social media into health communication campaigns and activities allows health communicators to leverage social dynamics and networks to encourage participation, conversation and community – all of which can help spread key messages and influence health decision making” (www.cdc.gov) RiseVT has been most successful on Facebook while continuing to be active on other social media platforms. Currently, over 9,573 individuals “like” RiseVT on Facebook and the weekly reach runs between 15,000- 20,000 people. It is a positive way to engage with our population and we have seen a “virtual” wellness community growing organically from these efforts. Users post recipes, questions and activities that they are utilizing in their lives and communicating back and forth to each other. It has increased brand recognition and positively impacted the overall success of RiseVT.

In the summer of 2015, RiseVT launched a series of “RiseVT Show Up Events” in the center of our largest municipality, Saint Albans. The event was publicized solely through social media. During the free RiseVT Show Up Events, participants engage in physical activity with a local fitness champion in a public park. Because of the popularity of these events, by the summer of 2016, weekly Show Up Events were offered in 4 different municipalities and averaged 15-20 participants at each event.

This simple, low cost strategy increased the visibility of physical activity in a community. The public visibility of the events increased interest and participation by businesses and others.

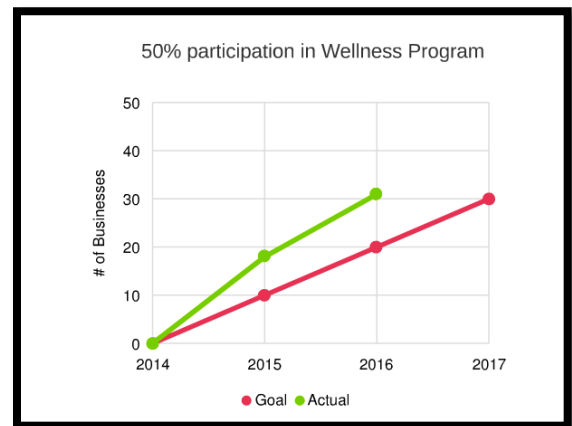
The St. Albans Messenger newspaper is a strong partner for RiseVT. The Messenger devotes two-pages every week to RiseVT that includes recipes, outdoor recreation, success stories and more. This collaboration strengthened the RiseVT brand and helped connect to populations that may not be on social media.

We are aware that, over the past 18 months, RiseVT is reaching early adopters or innovators. To expand reach and address this issue, RiseVT table talks were launched in the spring of 2016. This innovative approach seeks to engage with vulnerable populations by developing relationships and rapport with vulnerable populations. RiseVT partners with local community organizations such as the food shelf, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, Agency of Human Services, Abenaki Tribal Council and others. Each month, RiseVT staff rotate among these organization and engage the clientele by providing linkages to needed services as well as offering blood pressure checks. Being a consistent presence RiseVT staff have been able to address and refer clients to a host of community resources such as tobacco cessation, housing, primary care, domestic violence support and more.

Individual engagement is a vital component of RiseVT and maintaining a level of engagement, enthusiasm and motivation throughout a campaign is challenging. Thus, innovative and unique approaches must be trialed to continue the success of RiseVT while addressing community needs.

Businesses

During our initial funding, RiseVT projected that by the end of 2017, we would be working with 30 local businesses. Our goal was to increase their wellness offerings, support the development of policies and practices that support a healthy work environment and increase their worksite wellness participation to 50% in their employee population. Currently, RiseVT is working with 46 local businesses. The graph on the right shows the number of employers with over 50% employee participation in a wellness program. Our goal was to have 30 businesses by 2017 reach this goal. RiseVT met the goal in middle of 2016 and currently have 32 businesses that have wellness programs where over 50% of their employees are participating.



RiseVT utilizes the RiseVT Business Scorecard to interactively engage, inspire and motivate employers to adopt healthy behaviors and practices within their organization. A great example of a business who has utilized the scorecard to increase their wellness offerings is the Franklin County Home Health Agency (FCHHA). During their year collaborating with RiseVT they rose from bronze status to gold and adopted many health policies and practices that are listed below.

- Established a worksite wellness committee was established made up of staff members from both the Enosburg and St. Albans locations. This committee worked to spearhead the changes that followed within FCHHA.
- Increased utilization of resources available to them through Blue Cross Blue Shield's Accountable Blue program.
- They became a Tobacco Free business and have ordered signs from the Department of Health to display outside their building.
- Achieved Breastfeeding Friendly Employer status with the support of the Vermont Department of Health St. Albans District Office.
- Conducted a health assessment of their employees to better identify appropriate wellness programming.
- Offered \$100 employee wellness benefit towards the purchase of personal wellness gear and activities.
- Staff educational opportunities are available, such as, planning advance directives, Lyme disease, Alzheimer's disease awareness and empathic communication.
- Adopted an agreement for discounted gym memberships with local sports facilities Duke's and Collins-Perley Sports Complex.
- Built a raised bed "salad garden" at the worksite.

- Replaced unhealthy food with healthy food for internal meetings.
- Organized a one-week health goal challenge to allow employees to focus on one aspect of their health that they would like to improve.
- Collaborated with Restorative Justice to conduct a conflict resolution workshop.

These changes are not unique to just Franklin County Home Health. RiseVT has supported adoption of over 40 policies in local businesses including smoke free, breastfeeding friendly and healthy eating practices at meetings and celebrations.

A unique challenge while working with Franklin and Grand Isle businesses involved their small size where they may only have one or two employees. This is extremely challenging for the small business when trying to create wellness challenges and policy changes. In the summer of 2016, RiseVT responded to this gap by creating the RiseVT Small Business Umbrella. The Small Business Umbrella caters to businesses with less than 15 employees and offering a networking opportunity for small businesses to increase wellness collaboratively. The Small Business Umbrella holds 4 meetings per year and provides webinars on health and wellness in the workplace. In addition, these businesses have access to free health coaching and biometric screenings, support to organize health challenges, participation in a Worksite Wellness Program, and public recognition for their efforts. Four local business are actively involved in the small business umbrella and a goal of 2017 will be to increase this participation.

As RiseVT continues to grow, capacity is always challenging, with our businesses. A business collaboration is a timely task but reaps many results. Finding the correct capacity and workload for the RiseVT team will be needed during the next year to maintain sustainability and interest in RiseVT Business Collaboration.

Schools

Schools have been a key collaborator with RiseVT. Currently, RiseVT is working with 15 schools that include primary and secondary education. RiseVT utilizes the RiseVT School Scorecards to engage with schools and help them adopt and develop a healthier school environment.

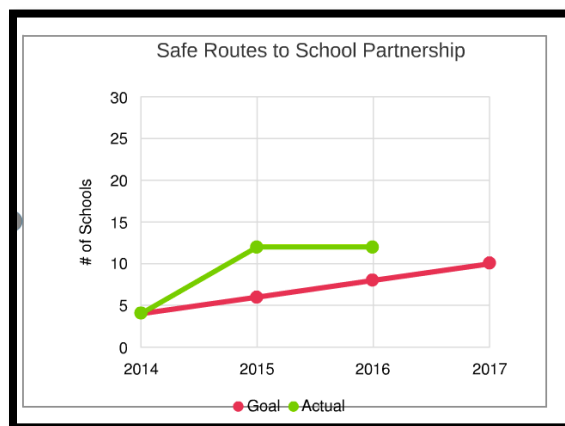
During year one, the RiseVT approach utilized one scorecard that aimed to encompass all schools. After one year, we quickly learned that the needs of a primary school environment were completely different than a secondary learning environment. In year two, the RiseVT team developed two different scorecards for the different age groups.

RiseVT

Embracing Healthy Lifestyles in Franklin and Grand Isle Vermont

RiseVT also learned quickly that not only did the overall school want to develop healthy policies and practices. Classrooms were also motivated to make changes in their classrooms. In the winter of 2015, RiseVT created the Classroom scorecard, which challenged classrooms to develop their own policies in their class such as not withholding physical activity or recess as a punishment. Over 20 classrooms participated in this scorecard during the first year. The feedback we received after the first year, set us up to revamp our second year. Teachers and students wanted different activities, and different ideas so RiseVT responded. During the summer of 2016, the RiseVT team created a classroom scorecard challenge for grades K-8. Each grade level now has their own scorecard tailored to their learning abilities and comprehension. It challenges them to participate in daily brain breaks, physical activity and more. In addition, every week, teachers receive a newsletter from RiseVT, which includes ideas, and strategies from the CDC School Health to increase wellness. Since this launch in the fall, over 60 classes are participating and rising towards better health.

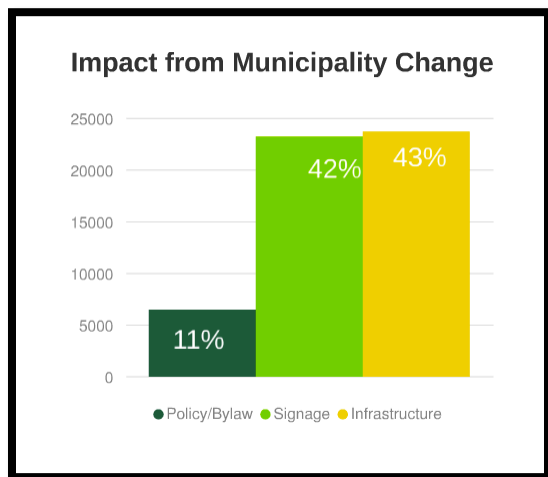
A major goal of RiseVT as noted above was to increase our local school participation in Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to School is a best practice approach that engages schools to increase the number of students and staff walking or biking to school. The graph on the right shows that our goal was to increase our local participation to 10 schools regionally and RiseVT increased participation to 12 as of 2015. During the past two years, the statewide Safe Routes to School program lost funding due to federal cuts, which resulted in the loss of the statewide coordinator. This had a huge effect on our local region while the state organization came up with their sustainability plan. Currently, there are regional Safe Routes to School champions that RiseVT is working with to hopefully increase our number of schools that are adopting strategies to increasing walking and biking to school.



In addition to increasing walking and biking to school, RiseVT also wanted to provide education to students on safety and rules of the road. In 2015-2016, RiseVT partnered with Local Motion to provide onsite training and a bike trailer to students at 10 schools across Franklin and Grand Isle. This training reached 2000 children and they received a combined 7,300 hours of BikeSmart Curriculum.

Municipalities

RiseVT is currently working with 9 municipalities. Like our other components, RiseVT utilizes the RiseVT Municipality scorecard to engage with our local towns and cities. This innovative approach includes best practice and evidence based strategies to improve community wellness.



During our collaborations with municipalities, our focus has been on policy and infrastructure development. In Franklin and Grand Isle there are approximately 55,000 people. The graph on the left shows the percent of individuals impacted from our policy and infrastructure changes at the local level. These policies include breastfeeding friendly parks and paths, recreation committee creation, removal of unhealthy snacks at community pool, path signage and smoke free locations.

In addition, providing and supporting physical activity and healthy eating infrastructure has been a big piece of our municipality collaboration. The list below indicates all the projects that were completed through RiseVT with support and funding.

- Imagination Playground – an interactive playground that is portable for all ages available in Saint Albans City
- Ballroom Dancing was supported to bring together the older population in Franklin County.
- Library Family Pool Passes are available at Georgia, Saint Albans, Fairfield and Swanton for check out.
- Saint Albans City Twilight Games which offers free drop in play for students in the evening during the summer.
- Walking bridge creation in Montgomery Vermont that connects local recreational facilities and school.
- 40 Bike racks dispersed throughout the community at schools, parks and recreational facilities.
- Outdoor play kitchen for toddler age children to encourage play with healthy food and imagination.
- Highgate Library put in a composter for their raised bed that is open to the community encourage healthy gardening.
- Raised beds were created at our local Abenaki Tribal Council to increase healthy eating in the tribe.
- Taste Tests throughout the region (current served 1000 individuals to try fresh, local produce.)
- Signage throughout the town at recreation paths and recreation facilities in Highgate, Swanton, Saint Albans Town, Saint Albans City and South Hero.
- Water Fountain at Highgate arena, which serves their sports teams and recreational path. As of March 2016, 10,000 bottles of water were saved.
- Snowshoes are available for check out across all libraries in Franklin and Grand Isle
- Swanton Enhancement Project Collaboration with NOTCH to offer Summer Camp. RiseVT has helped fund this two-week camp FREE camp for children in Swanton during the Summer of 2016

- Blenders for Saint Albans City Pool to replace soda for a fresh healthy snack during the day.
- Outdoor Elliptical Machine and Exercise Bike to added to Houghton Park in Saint Albans
- Richford Day Camp- Catch Equipment added for the group of 100+ kids who meet daily in Richford over the summer
- Breastfeeding friendly stations with changing tables were created at the following locations with the help of the Vermont Department of Health - Swanton Library, Georgia Library, Swanton Recreation
- Outdoor winter ice rink added behind local senior center and is being utilized by all the community.
- Toddler Playground added in Alburgh where there currently are playgroups and active story times.
- Town of Saint Albans- Trail Plan by Sinocity which provided a trail cleanup day, and a long-term vision currently being championed by a group of advocates in Saint Albans City.
- Mark Fenton came and provided a walkability study for 5 municipalities which now all have 5 active sidewalk and infrastructure committees.
- Swanton Recreation is adding a skate park and kayaks for check out.
- Richford collaboration between NOTCH, Town of Richford and RiseVT.
- Outdoor musical instruments at Taylor Park in Saint Albans.
-

Working within municipalities is an important component of RiseVT. By creating a community where walking, biking, and healthier options are accessible, we are creating a community where the healthiest choice is the easiest choice.

Project Sustainability

Sustained investment in primary prevention represents one of the strategic keys to improving population health and bending the cost curve of healthcare expenses long-term. The Prevention Institute says, “For every dollar we spend on prevention, we see a five-to-one return on investment in just five years. We simply can't fix our economy without it.” That is a powerful research-based finding and perspective which represents a significant opportunity for Vermont.

RiseVT was initially funded in Franklin & Grand Isle Counties by this grant which was matched \$1 for \$1 by Northwestern Medical Center through the hospital's operating budget. Each source contributed \$200,000 per year for the first two years. In the second year of RiseVT, the hospital increased its contribution to \$300,000 through a budget reconsideration with the Green Mountain Care Board. In the third year of RiseVT, the grant has ended and the hospital is now carrying nearly all the approximately \$500,000 expense in its operating budget, with some small operational grants assisting. This is a financial challenge for the hospital, as there are internal and regulatory pressures to continue to reduce expenses within hospital budgets to help make healthcare more accessible for patients. Even with those pressures, the NMC Board and Leadership remains committed to investing in prevention for the long-term health of the community, as that is true healthcare reform in action.

Currently, RiseVT is pursuing transformational funding through the State's All Payer Model with the evolving approach to accountable care organizations in the state. This would provide temporary funding to establish RiseVT infrastructure at the state level and begin to roll out RiseVT initiatives in communities around the state in a planned manner. We expect to submit that application in January of 2017. The remainders of the local expenses for that roll out (including the existing expenses of FGI RiseVT) would be born through hospital operating budgets or other sources to be determined.

Moving forward, a multi-faceted approach to funding primary prevention will be needed to achieve sustainability. Diversifying funding will enhance sustainability, as it better ensures continuity of effort should one source temporarily waiver or permanently close. We envision a mixture of funding sources including:

- the Accountable Care Organization(s);
- hospital operating budgets;
- insurance companies, such as Blue Cross/Blue Shield;
- public/private partnerships providing new or re-directed funding or in kind contributions, from partners such as the Vermont Department of Health, major employers, municipalities, etc; and
- grants and philanthropic support to advance population health.

Conclusion

RiseVT began as a hope that became an idea and quickly evolved beyond being a program and became a movement. It is flourishing in our local community with individuals, families, businesses, schools, and municipalities actively embracing healthier lifestyles. The emphasis on positive energy and encouragement (avoiding negative messaging, shaming, or scolding) has helped many be open to participating. The emphasis on amplifying existing resources has avoided duplication and turf battles. The emphasis on collaboration has drawn in many partners. All of this combines to enable a movement to emerge. Our progress on our short-term indicators, which evidence shows align with long-term culture change and health improvement is encouraging and has drawn significant interest from key leaders around Vermont. As we work to continue to expand RiseVT's impact within Franklin and Grand Isle Counties, there is a formal Statewide Stakeholders group actively working to create and launch a sustainable roll out of RiseVT across Vermont. As the nation and Vermont progress through healthcare reform and the system shifts from fee-for-service medicine to a population health approach, the strategic business need for primary prevention to help reduce demand for costly medical treatment will be even clearer. Primary prevention is the path to healthier lifestyles, improved quality of life, and lower healthcare costs long term. RiseVT is an evidenced-based approach using best practices from The Community Guide, the CDC, and EPODE that offers a path forward toward a healthier future for all through primary prevention. The time to rise is now.

Appendix A:

The RiseVT Scorecards in an Embedded PDF:



Rise-Business-Scorecard-v1.1.pdf



Rise-Childcare-Scorecard-v1.0.pdf



Rise-Municipality-Scorecard.pdf



Rise-School-Scorecard-Grade-7-12.pdf



Rise-School-Scorecard-Grade-K-6.pdf



Rise-Small-Business-Scorecard.pdf



RiseVT Individual Scorecard - RiseVT.pdf

Appendix B:

UVM Center for Rural Studies Evaluation as an embedded file:



RiseVT 10-21 UVM
Rural Studies.docx