

National Student Nurses' Association ®

Guidelines for Planning Community Health Projects



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INTRODUCTION

Community health involvement by nursing students has become an important contribution to the health and well-being of the total community. Projects carried out at the local level by nursing students provide a service to the community while giving students an opportunity to utilize knowledge and skills. This booklet outlines activities, project ideas and resources available to help plan successful projects.

All NSNA® constituents* conducting community health projects are eligible to apply for the NSNA® Community Health Activity Award Program. Prizes are awarded for outstanding community health activities. Deadlines for these applications are printed in *NSNA News*® and *Imprint*® and on www.nsna.org.

NSNA® members serving as state community health chairpersons or directors may request to be placed on NSNA's® Community Health mailing list so that they are informed routinely of NSNA's® community health activities.

The following information provides guidelines for planning and implementing projects based on a community needs assessment and resources available. This booklet is a guide to get you started -- there are undoubtedly a variety of resources in your own community. Good luck with your projects!

*Refer to *Getting the Pieces to Fit 2009-2010* for constituency information and the Official Application for NSNA® Constituency Status which must be submitted to NSNA® annually.

PROJECT IDEAS

Many of NSNA's® community health project ideas come from resolutions and positions adopted by the NSNA® House of Delegates and the Board of Directors. They cover a wide range of health needs that nursing students are concerned with. Resolutions passed at state conventions will also provide direction for projects. The following is a list of ideas for

possible activities:

School

- Blood pressure, scoliosis, anemia, glaucoma, vision, hearing screening
- Recycling of paper, metal, glass
- Education about occupational health hazards in the hospital or other health care settings
- Cancer screening and prevention i.e., breast self-exam, mammograms, sun safety
- Adopt a grandparent program
- Nutrition, weight management, exercise
- Domestic violence prevention
- Suicide prevention
- Health needs of college students, (i.e. flu immunization- go to www.flu.gov)
- Drug awareness and recovery services
- Sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS
- Parenting and child safety classes
- Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) education
- Birth defects information
- Immunization and well child clinics
- Adolescent and young adult education: harmful effect of steroids; acquaintance/date rape; teenage pregnancy; eating disorders; suicide prevention
- Assisting with Special Olympics
- Fundraising projects
- The homeless: food and clothing drives; drives for shelters
- Education related to environmental health issues i.e., lead, pesticides
- Participation in disaster drills

State

Other ideas that work well for state-wide projects are:

- Environmental health education programs; resource recovery projects; occupational safety training.
- Supporting a hospital in need of supplies
- Purchasing equipment for handicapped adults and children
- Organizing a statewide program for AIDS counseling
- Supporting missing children efforts
- Collecting food or clothing for a shelter for the homeless

Note: State conventions are a good collection spot.

RESOURCES

Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS): The incidence of this disease is increasing rapidly. Persons at risk need to be informed about the disease and precautions to take to control the spread of AIDS. In addition, health care workers should be aware of the potential for needle stick injuries. Information: Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc., 129 W. 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, or www.gmhc.org and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National AIDS Clearinghouse 800-458-5231, or www.cdcnpin.org.

American Cancer Society, Inc., 1599 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329, or (800) ACS-2345, www.cancer.org To obtain materials or refer patients for services, contact the local office listed in the telephone book.

National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information, P.O. Box 2345, Rockville, MD 20847-2345, (301) 468-2600, 1-800-729-6686, TDD 1-800-487-4889, or www.health.org. Provides reprints, annotated bibliographies, publications and additional resources on alcohol abuse and alcoholism. Available in English and Spanish.

The American Health Care Association, 1201 L Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005, (202) 842-4444, or www.ahca.org. Provides public and professional educational materials on long-term care and sponsors National Nursing Home Week each May on Mother's Day. Write and ask about activities that can be sponsored or co-sponsored by nursing students and nursing homes during National Nursing Home Week.

American Red Cross, 8111 Gatehouse Road, Falls Church, VA 22042, or www.redcross.org, Public Inquiry. Informational pamphlets on a variety of topics including parenting, vital signs, community services, family health and home nursing, and community services.

American Social Health Association, P.O. Box 13827, Research Triangle Park., North Carolina 27709, (919) 361-8400, or www.ashastd.org, National AIDS Hotline, 1-800-342-2437 (AIDS), National STD Hotline, 1-800-227-8922, National Herpes Hotline, (919) 361-8488. Provides educational materials on research, professional education, public awareness, and citizen action about the problem of sexually transmitted diseases.

Automobile Safety for Infants and Children: Many accidents and injuries to infants and children resulting from automobile accidents can be prevented by educating parents and others to use proper precautions. For information, contact: National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Office of Occupant Protection, 400 Seventh Street, SW, Washington, DC 20590, 1-800-424-9393 (Hotline), or www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Blvd., Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60007-0927, (847) 228-5005, or www.aarp.org (request car seat information, send self-addressed stamped envelope with your request); and, contact your state Office of Highway Safety located in the Governor's Office of your state capitol.

Office of Cancer Communications, National Cancer Institute, Building 31, Room 10A-24, Bethesda, MD 20892, (800) 422-6237, or www.rex.nci.nih.gov. Provides a publication list for health professionals and patients containing a number of publications on cancer and related topics.

Ronald McDonald House. There are 104 Ronald McDonald Houses in the U.S. where children with cancer and their families can stay while the patient is undergoing outpatient treatments. For information call your local Ronald McDonald House.

Take a Bite Out of Crime, Office of Justice Statistics, suite 1142, U.S. Department of Justice, 633 Indiana Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20531, (202) 307-0765, or www.ojp.usdoj.gov. Bureau of Justice Assistance, www.ojp.usdoj.gov/BJA.

National Diabetes Information Clearinghouse, 1 Information Way, Bethesda, MD 20892-3560, (301) 654-3327 or <http://diabetes.niddk.nih.gov>. Organizes and disseminates patient education information materials.

Drug Abuse and Alcohol Education: Dependency on alcohol and drugs is recognized as a significant problem in the nursing profession and possibly in the nursing student population. Local chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous can also provide assistance. President's Drug Awareness Campaign, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Washington, DC 20537, www.usdoj.gov/dea or 202-307-1000. Offers printed materials to use when conducting drug abuse prevention programs. One resource, Schools Without Drugs, provides practical knowledge for parents, educators, students and communities to help keep their schools drug free (call 800-624-0100 to obtain a copy of Schools Without Drugs).

American Dental Association, 211 East Chicago Avenue, Chicago, IL 60611, (312) 440-2500, or www.ada.org. Request publications list and information about dental health.

National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health, 2000 15th St. N., Suite 701, Arlington, VA 22201-2617, (202) 784-9770, or www.ncemch.org. Provides bibliographies on maternal and child health and parenting and provides abstracts for maternal and child health funded projects.

Environmental Protection Agency, Public Information Center, EPA, 401 M Street, SW, Washington, DC 20460, (202) 260-2080, or www.epa.gov. Public information materials on such topics as hazardous wastes, asbestos, air and water pollution, pesticides, and drinking water are available.

Activities With the Elderly: Nursing students working together with the elderly can develop innovative projects and increase communication and understanding between the two groups. For project ideas, contacts in your area, and resource materials, contact: Research Information Center, American Association of Retired Persons, 601 E Street, NW, Washington, DC 20049, www.aarp.org, (202) 434-2277.

Food and Drug Administration, Office of Consumer Affairs, 5600 Fishers Lane HFE-88, Rockville, MD 20857, (301) 827-4420, or www.fda.gov. To respond to inquiries from the public on issues related to FDA. Distribute consumer publications. General information on foods, drugs, medical devices, and x-rays.

Health Fairs: These usually last for a full day and screening is done for vision, glaucoma, hearing, blood pressure, alcohol awareness, nutrition, etc. Various lab tests and educational counseling on health care may also be done. Check your state's nurse practice act for limitations before getting involved in this type of activity. For basic information on how to plan and organize a health fair, contact your local American Red Cross and Lions Clubs.

Hypertension Screening and Education: A project for screening, referral, and education on hypertension is a valuable service to the community. A project can be a blood pressure screen-

ing held in the community or at your school. Projects should include referral and follow-up for therapy compliance. For resource materials and other information, contact: High Blood Pressure Information Center (address provided in Resources section), and the American Heart Association, 7272 Greenville Avenue, Dallas, TX 75231, www.americanheart.org, (214) 373-6300. Also, contact your local American Red Cross chapter.

Medic Alert Foundation International, P.O. Box 1009, Turlock, CA 95381-1009, (800) 344-3226 or www.medicalert.org. Medic Alert provides a unique system of emergency identification for persons having hidden medical problems, as well as other related services. Request publications list.

National Health Information Center, P.O. Box 1133, Washington, DC 20013-1133, (800) 336-4797 toll free or www.health.gov/nhic. The NHIC has identified many groups and organizations that provide health information to the public. When you contact NHIC, the Information Services Staff determines which organization(s) can best provide you with information. Write and ask for selected resource list which contains clearinghouses and information centers.

Obesity: This is a common problem in the general population. Obese people are more prone to a wide range of health problems. Lack of knowledge about good eating habits and lack of support to change these habits are a big part of the problem. For information, contact: The Nutrition Foundation, Inc., 1126 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 659-9024, or www.isli.org.

Activities Related to Pregnancy Outcome: Nursing students can do a great deal in the area of teenage pregnancy, parenting, birth defects prevention, and sex education. For project ideas, contacts in your area, and resource materials, contact: The Youth Division, March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation, 1275 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605, (914) 428-7100, or www.modimes.org. Also, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Bureau of Community Health Services, Rockville, MD 20857.

Sexually Transmitted Disease Education: The federal government's Centers for Disease Control estimates that 8 to 10 million Americans will have gonorrhea, syphilis, genital herpes, trichomoniasis and other sexually transmitted diseases every year. College students and high school students should be targeted for education about the nature of these diseases and how to avoid getting them. Resources can be obtained by writing to U.S. Government Printing Office, 732 N. Capitol St., NW, Washington, DC 20401, (202) 512-0000, or www.access.gpo.gov.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Collaborative projects are those in which NSNA ® cooperates with other organizations in special interest areas which can provide information and assistance to implement projects. When contacting them, identify yourself as a nursing student and an NSNA ® member. When nursing students are invited to join community projects sponsored by other groups, involvement in the planning as well as the implementation, evaluation and follow-up is essential. Be careful to avoid limited participation such as performing technical tasks and not being involved in planning and instruction.

Nursing student leaders may receive mailings directly from collaborating organizations. Mail-

ings provide information on projects and issues relating to community health. NSNA ® has engaged in collaborative projects with the following groups:

March of Dimes: The March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation improves the health of babies by preventing birth defects and infant mortality. They carry out its mission through the "Campaign for Healthier Babies," which funds programs of research, community services, education and advocacy. Public health education materials are available for junior high school through adult levels, and several have been culturally adapted for the Hispanic population. Professional health education materials are available for perinatal nurses. For public and professional education catalogs, visit their web site www.modimes.org, or write to: March of Dimes, 1275 Mamaroneck Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605

Choice in Dying: A national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to serving the needs of dying patients and their families. CID is the largest provider of state specific advance directives (living wills and medical powers of attorney). It advocates the right of patients to participate fully in decisions about their medical treatment at the end of life. Provides literature and audiovisual materials. Request information about programs and publications. Choice in Dying, 1035 30th Street NW, Washington, DC 20007, 1-800-989-WILL (9455) or www.choices.org.

National High Blood Pressure Month: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has designated May as National High Blood Pressure Month. A comprehensive packet of materials containing patient education tools, information on conducting a blood pressure screening/awareness activity, promotional materials and posters are available by writing to: High Blood Pressure Information Center, P.O. Box 30105, Bethesda, MD 20824-0105

American Cancer Society's Great American Smoke out takes place every November. NSNA ® members participate in the Smoke out on their college campuses or at hospitals where they have their clinical practice. If you want information about conducting a Smoke out, contact your local chapter of the American Cancer Society and request either the campus or the hospital kit.

GETTING STARTED

NSNA ® encourages state and school chapters to conduct community health projects which will provide beneficial community services.

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

Once your school or state chapter has decided to conduct a community health activity, the selection of the activity is determined by assessing the community's health needs. A community can be:

- The students comprising the student body of your nursing program, another student population at your college or university, or may be open to all students (for example, a campus-wide health fair).
- People living in the community where the school of nursing or college/university is located. Segments of this population can be targeted for your project (i.e., elderly, children, high risk groups, women, men, homosexuals, drug abusers, etc.).

- Long-term care facilities, senior citizen centers, adult and child day care centers, rehabilitation centers, pediatric units in acute care settings, centers for homeless individuals and families, public and private schools, are all potential sites for community health projects.

A community assessment is a structured method for determining the health needs profile of a specific community. Students should seek the guidance of a faculty member, preferably one who teaches community health nursing, or from a local public health nursing service for assistance in conducting a community health assessment. In addition, several excellent community health nursing textbooks can provide specific steps for conducting the community assessment.

A community assessment is important since it can help to alleviate health problems by providing needed services that are not being adequately provided through other channels. Here are some general considerations when conducting a community assessment:

- **Community Demographics:** This information is available from statistics collected by the U.S. Census and is available at the library.
- General demographics can include: sex, race, age, and birth rates. Specific demographics can include: number of homeless people in the community; incidence rates for various communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and AIDS; cancer incidence; and teenage pregnancies. These statistics are available in the library and at the local health department.

Once you have determined what the health problems in your community are, do some research to find out which health problems are being addressed and which are not. Contact local health groups, watch newspapers, and ask community leaders for information about services and projects currently provided. By the process of elimination, you can determine where the needs are and how resources can best be utilized. Once the focus of your project has been determined, plan your project.

PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING

After completing the community assessment, use the data collected to plan the project. Form a project team to identify goals, the number of nursing students involved, where and when the project will take place, community organizations that might help with the project, and how many people you think might participate. Ask faculty to guide you--especially those faculty who teach community or public health.

Implement the project. Be sure to publicize the activities to the target population. Keep copies of any publicity, photos, flyers, press releases. Remember to thank cooperating community organizations and sponsors for their participation. Recognize those involved in the project by highlighting their participation in newsletters and college newspapers.

Evaluate the project. How was it conducted? What was learned that would be beneficial to others?

COMMUNITY HEALTH AWARD PROGRAM

NSNA ® offers the following community health awards:

- Most Successful Statewide Community Health Project, Certificate and \$100.00
- Most Successful School Community Health Projects, Certificate and \$100.00;

Winners will be announced at the NSNA ® 58^h Annual Convention, please refer to the 2010 Awards and Honors Booklet for the specific date for each award. Mail applications to NSNA ® at the address on the application form. Award applications must be received by the deadline date to be eligible for consideration.

A WORD ABOUT THE IMAGE OF NURSING...

Participating in community activities not only provides an important community service, it also increases visibility for the nursing profession. Every contact we make with the public has a lasting impression. The way we speak, our appearance, and the way we dress and act convey our individual and collective image. We all have a responsibility to enhance and foster a positive image of the profession. Conducting community health projects is one way to let the public know that we care enough about their health and well-being to do something about it.

FOR AWARDS APPLICATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION

A member of the NSNA ® Board of Directors is responsible for community health projects and registered nurses on staff to assist you. NSNA ® has model projects which describe award-winning projects and can serve as a guideline when planning similar projects. If you need additional resources or require specific information on a particular community health project, you can write to: Community Health Projects Program, National Student Nurses' Association, 45 Main Street, Suite 606, Brooklyn, NY 11201; phone call (718) 210-0705, or e-mail: nsna@nsna.org.

Community Health Projects School Chapter Committee Responsibilities*

If you do not yet have a community health committee at your school, use the following list of responsibilities to help form one:

1. Evaluate effectiveness of community health activities conducted in the past.
2. Review resolutions relevant to community health that were passed at school, at your state convention and at NSNA's ® Annual Convention.
3. Identify two or three goals and a theme for the year.
4. Become familiar with NSNA ® and state community health contests and applications.
5. Read NSNA's ® *Community Health Project Guidelines*.
6. Conduct a community health needs assessment.
7. Plan and implement a community health project based on community health needs assessment.
8. Publicize community health activities.
9. Initiate and facilitate appropriate partnerships with community health organizations.

*See your chapter bylaws for the Community Health role and responsibilities specific to your school or state chapter.

NSNA ® Leadership U
Earn credit when you
Participating in Community Health Projects

As a student leader, you'll learn and practice important leadership skills by participating in community health projects sponsored by your school NSNA ® chapter. NSNA ® members may earn formal credit for the leadership service learning that is inherent in community health activities. Consider approaching faculty to explore the possibility of having your start-a-chapter experience counted toward course requirements or independent study elective credit. Use your course syllabus to see if you can meet the objectives with the following leadership activities.

Community Health Project Activities

- Establish a Community Health committee, or;
- Participate in a committee already established.

By participating in this activity, you will be able to:

- Identify and list your personal leadership attributes;
- Evaluate your personal capacity for leadership;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the complex role organizations play to serve the community health needs.

Please visit www.nsnaleadershipu.org for more details on how you can earn academic credit and recognition for participating in NSNA's ® Community Health Projects Program.

Get Fit, Stay Fit: Wellness, Fitness, and Prevention

1. Emphasize and encourage illness prevention and health maintenance
2. Extend the Shaping-Up competition in order to promote individual health
3. Emphasize a "go green" approach

Community health involvement by nursing students has become an important contribution to the health and well-being of the total community. Projects carried out at the local level by nursing students provide a service to the community while giving students an opportunity to utilize knowledge and skills.

Shaping Up in 2009-2010

NSNA encourages nursing students across the country to keep healthy and take the time to ensure that they eat right, exercise, and reduce stress. Keep watching the Community Health pages on the NSNA web site for more tips to include healthy habits in your daily lives.

CALENDAR OF NATIONAL HEALTH OBSERVANCES

September

- Disaster Preparedness Month
- Nat'l Sickle Cell Month
- Leukemia Society Month
- Voter Registration Week
- Adopt-a-Grandparent Programs
- Baby Safety Awareness Month
- Children's Eye & Health Safety
- Muscular Dystrophy Assoc. Telethon

October

- Child Health Month
- Domestic Violence Awareness
- Family Health Month
- Nat'l Breast Cancer Awareness
- Campaign for Healthier Babies
- Mental Illness Awareness Week
- World Food Day
- Adult Immunization Awareness
- Health Fair
- Canned Goods for the Homeless
- Family Sexuality Education
- Nat'l Liver Awareness Month
- Nat'l Hepatitis Awareness
- Nat'l Lupus Awareness Month
- Nat'l Spine Bifida Prevention
- SIDS Awareness Month
- Talk about Prescriptions Month
- Nat'l Respiratory Care Week
- Nat'l Nurse-Midwifery Week
- Nat'l Depression Screening Day
- American Heart Walk
- Nat'l Infection Control Week
- Amer. Heart Assoc. Heart Fest
- Nat'l Pharmacy Week
- Nat'l Health Education Week
- Nat'l Red Ribbon Celebration

November

- Child Safety & Protection Month
- Nat'l Alzheimer's Awareness
- Nat'l Diabetes Month
- Nat'l Epilepsy Month
- Great American Smoke-Out
- Ronald McDonald House
- Homeless Food/Clothing Drive
- Christmas Seal Campaign
- Diabetic Eye Disease Awareness
- Nat'l Hospice Month
- Nat'l Diabetes Education Week
- Flu & Pneumonia Campaign
- Patient Education Week

December

- Nat'l Drunk/Drugged Driving Awareness
- Safe Toys Month
- World AIDS Day
- Nat'l Plastic Anemia Awareness
- S/S HIV in Women
- Food/Diaper Drive for Battered Women & Children Shelters
- Family Violence Prevention Teaching
- Toy Drives
- Fundraising for Ronald McDonald House, shelters, low-income families, & community assistive organizations

January

- Nat'l Birth Defects Prevention
- Nat'l. Black Health Week
- Nat'l. Eye Care Month
- Glaucoma Awareness
- Nat'l. Volunteer Blood Donor
- Activities with the Elderly
- Geriatric Health Fair
- Prenatal Teaching
- Environmental Protection Teaching

February

- Nat'l Burn Awareness Week
- Nat'l Child Passenger Safety
- American Heart Month
- Valentines for the Elderly
- Valentines to Vets (Ann Landers project.)
- CPR Training for Post Myocardial Infarction client families
- Go Red Healthy Heart projects

March

- Nat'l Red Cross Month
- Nat'l Eye Donor Month
- Nat'l Kidney Month
- Nat'l Nutrition Month
- Nat'l Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Awareness
- Easter Seals Telethon
- Foot Health Month
- Child Safety Teaching Month
- Adolescent Counseling Month (Sex Ed., Prenatal, Birth Defect Prevention)
- Cataract Awareness Month
- Hemophilia Month
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation Week
- American Diabetes Alert

April

- Nat'l Child Abuse Prevention
- Nat'l STD Awareness Month
- Nat'l Organ & Tissue Donor Awareness
- World Health Day
- Walk America Project
- Special Olympics Projects
- Youth Sports Injury Prevention Month
- Alcohol Awareness Month
- Cancer Control Month (Prevention teaching)
- Early Intervention/prevention of Child Abuse (includes sexual abuse prevention)
- Public Health Week

May

- **National Student Nurses Day (May 8) and Nurses' Week**
- Asthma & Allergy Awareness
- Nat'l Nursing Home Week
- Better Hearing & Speech Month
- Mental Health Month
- Nat'l Arthritis Month
- Nat'l High Blood Pressure
- Nat'l Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention
- Stroke Awareness Month
- World Red Cross Week
- Nat'l Hospital Week
- Nat'l Osteoporosis Prevention
- Nat'l Digestive Diseases Awareness Month
- Nat'l Trauma Awareness Month

June

- Nat'l Safety Week
- Helen Keller Deaf-Blind Awareness
- Missing Children Efforts
- Nat'l Hernia Month
- Nat'l Scleroderma Awareness
- Nat'l Aphasia Awareness Week

July

- Nat'l Therapeutic Recreation Week
- Nat'l Sobriety Checkpoint Week
- Nat'l Plasma Awareness Month
- Lead Poison Control Week

August

- Nat'l Exercise for Life Week
- Sexual Assault Protection Teaching
- Substance Abuse Awareness Campaign