

CONNECTIONS

AUGUST 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE FULTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS PARTNERSHIPS TO IMPROVE COMMUNITY HEALTH (PICH) PROGRAM



Spread The Word!

During August, the Fulton County PICH Program is sharing details about the hazards of secondhand smoke, publicizing Atlanta's new bike share program and encouraging visits to the many farmers' markets throughout the County.

Raise Your Secondhand Smoke IQ

It's a well-known fact that smoking is deadly. But many people don't know that tobacco smoke contains at least 250 toxic chemicals. The National Cancer Institute's list of these includes ammonia, arsenic, cyanide and formaldehyde. A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that secondhand smoke exposure contributes to 41,000 deaths each year.

Knowing that, it's no surprise that the air near spaces that contain smoke is unhealthy. In multi-unit housing, tobacco smoke from neighbors easily seeps through vents, open windows, the spaces between water pipes, and even through electrical outlets, into other apartments. An air-quality study by Georgia State University School of Public Health (GSU-SPH)

found that pollution levels in Fulton County bars and restaurants that allow smoking are over 10 times higher than in non-smoking establishments.

The takeaway from all this evidence: People are at risk for heart disease, lung cancer, stroke, asthma and sudden infant death just by being in the vicinity of smoke others are generating. That GSU-SPH study, which was funded by the PICH Program, also surveyed public opinion about secondhand smoke. It found that a majority of Fulton County residents are aware of the hazards and overwhelmingly support smoke-free policies in bars, restaurants, parks and apartment complexes.

The PICH Program and its partners at the Health Promotion Action Coalition are sharing information on the health risks of and attitudes toward secondhand smoke with bar and restaurant owners, landlords and residents in Fulton County, both in person and through a multi-media campaign using messages like the one shown above. PICH also is supplying data to officials considering proposals to make County parks and recreation areas smoke-free.

Now that you know the facts, help spread the word that secondhand smoke is toxic and the public favors smoke-free policies.



Atlanta Bike Share Debuts

Those new cyan-colored bikes at racks around Atlanta announce the arrival of Relay Bike Share, the convenient and affordable transportation program that allows users to pick up, ride, and drop off one of 100 bicycles parked at 10 stations around Atlanta. The PICH Program enthusiastically supports Bike Share as a new opportunity for physical activity to help city residents lead healthier lives. Relay Bike Share was implemented with support from public and private groups including the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition, the City of Atlanta, PICH Program partner the Atlanta Regional Commission, and CycleHop, the Bike Share operator. By the end of 2016, Atlanta hopes to have 500 Relay Bikes in 50 locations. For more information, visit relaybikeshare.com. Find Bike Share locations at relaybikeshare.com. Nothing near you? Text **678-647-7176** to request a station in your neighborhood.

ACTIVE LIVING

Creative Phys Ed Comes to Atlanta Schools

After successfully bringing creative physical education curricula to Fulton County Schools during the 2015-2016 term, PICH is doing the same for the Atlanta Public Schools (APS) during the new school year.

The first phase of the project trains teachers in the techniques for the Sports, Play, and Active Recreation For Kids (SPARK) curriculum. On July 29, 2016, about 125 health and PE teachers gathered at Coretta Scott King Young Women's Leadership Academy to learn new games and activities that help students get more moderate-to-vigorous exercise during the school day.

Research confirms that physically active students have better concentration, cognition and classroom behavior, leading to better academic performance. SPARK, a research-based PE curriculum, stresses healthy practices throughout the day—in the classroom, during recess and at lunchtime. It is considered a national model for programs that increase physical activity and combat childhood obesity.

PICH and its partners at APS and Atlanta Regional Commission will hold additional SPARK teacher training sessions in October 2016 and January and February of 2017.



Visit Fulton Farmers' Markets

National Farmers' Market Week is August 7-13. It's a yearly celebration sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to highlight the important role the country's more than 8,500 farmers' markets play in the national food system. Research indicates that the fresh-air produce markets are not only economic drivers and food access hubs for communities across the country, but also play a vital role in supporting rural livelihoods, preserving farmland, and protecting the environment.

The 19 farmers' markets in Fulton County are critical community assets and public spaces that bring families from all backgrounds together to socialize, purchase healthy, affordable food and support their local farmers. The PICH Program is collaborating with the Fulton County Cooperative Extension to promote the healthy nutrition options offered by the Fulton Fresh Farmers' Market, which brings nutrition education and fresh produce in County neighborhoods until August 24, 2016. Get the list at bit.ly/2aNli05.