



Center *for* Rural Health

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation Rural Health Grant Program Year 14

Kylie Nissen, BBA
Senior Project Coordinator

Shawn Larson, BA
Project Coordinator

Center for Rural Health
University of North Dakota
School of Medicine & Health Sciences
1301 North Columbia Road, Stop 9037
Grand Forks, North Dakota 58202

March 2020



ND *Caring*
FOUNDATION

**Blue Cross Blue Shield North Dakota Caring Foundation
Rural Health Grant Program (Year 14)
Funding Period: February 15, 2019 – February 15, 2020
Final Report**

What is the status of the Year 14 BCBSND Caring Foundation funded projects?

In February 2019, Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota (BCBSND) Caring Foundation funded **14** rural health grants. The grants were intended to stimulate new thinking among support providers and their communities as promoters of community wellness. The general purpose of the funded grant projects is to demonstrate collaborative efforts involving rural healthcare organizations and their communities in supporting physical activity and overall wellness for all people residing in rural North Dakota.

Overview - Rural Health Grant Projects Year 14

- Eighteen grant proposals were received, requesting a total of \$80,226.19.
- Fourteen awards were made, for a total of \$47,974.
- The funding period ran from February 15, 2019 to February 15, 2020.
- Awards ranged from \$1,500 to \$4,950.
- All of the 14 grant projects were completed by the February 15, 2020 deadline.

The focus areas addressed in these projects were:

- Activities that endorse and support physical activity (nine projects).
- Supplies that endorse and support physical activity (nine projects).
- Programs that endorse and support physical activity (three projects).
- Events that endorse and support physical activity (six projects).

Eleven of the 14 grantees indicated: They would not have been able to implement this project without BCBSND Caring Foundation grant funds.

Leveraging funds

Seven of the 14 grantees indicated that the BCBSND Caring Foundation grant enabled them to leverage funding from other sources.

Number and ages of people who participated in the community projects

The ages of participants ranged from infant to 65+ years. An exact number of participants is not available from all programs.

Facility experiences

All facilities reported a positive experience with the administration process of the grants (coordinated by the Center for Rural Health) and the project marketing components (coordinated by BCBSND Caring Foundation).

COMPLETED PROJECTS

1. Towner County Medical Center, Cando

Funds awarded: \$3,224

General purpose: The grant funds were used to purchase a recumbent elliptical striding machine for the Towner County Medical Center (TCMC) fitness center in February, 2019. TCMC employees have membership with the fitness center as part of their benefits, and the purchase of this piece of equipment was in response to a need voiced by the community.

Partners: TCMC was the lead applicant on the grant, with fitness center member Cathy Teubner and TCMC employee Vee Erickstad authoring the proposal. Push Pedal Pull, an exercise equipment store out of Fargo, was consulted to find the right kind of equipment for the community demographic, along with Brittany Pederson, a physical therapist at TCMC.

Activities completed: A recumbent elliptical machine was purchased and installed in the TCMC fitness center.

Focus area(s): Supplies that endorse and support activity.

Number and ages of participants: Ages varied from 20 to over 65 years of age.

Challenges/barriers: The biggest challenge wasn't in the process of obtaining the equipment itself, but in encouraging and educating the community of the benefits of exercise and being active. TCMC medical practitioners, chiropractors, physical and massage therapists have all played a part in promoting the fitness center attributes via word of mouth.

Impact measurement: The addition of the elliptical machine has brought increased usage to the fitness center, particularly for members who need low-impact exercise equipment.

Success story: An active retired gentleman, who was a regular on the fitness center's treadmills, had to have knee replacement surgery. He was able to successfully rehab on the elliptical machine and is now a regular user of both that and the treadmills.



2. CHI St. Alexius Health, Carrington

Funds awarded: \$3,500

General purpose: CHI St. Alexius Health Carrington used grant funds to purchase a treadmill for their staff fitness center. Health promotion workshops were also offered, which featured

exercises using an exercise ball and meal prep classes for staff.

Partners: Dietitian Brooke Fredrickson developed and presented meal prep plans; Kyle Smith, Director of Physical Therapy, developed and presented physical activity plans for the workshop; CHI St. Alexius Health Carrington coordinated the grant activities.

Activities completed: A treadmill was purchased and installed. Health promotion workshops were held to teach meal prep and physical activity utilizing fitness center equipment.

Focus area(s): Activities, programs, and supplies that endorse and support activity.



Age range of participants: Ages varied from 20 years old to over 65.

Challenges/barriers: The project did not encounter any challenges or barriers.

Impact measurement: The impact was measured by how many people attended the meal prep class (43) and the physical activity class (15). The level of involvement was considered a success.

Success story: The feedback from the workshop was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees stating that it was an uplifting experience.

3. St. Luke's Medical Center, Crosby

Funds awarded: \$2,500

General purpose: St. Luke's Medical Center, with assistance from community volunteers, sponsored a Color Splash 5k walk/run on July 20, 2019 in order to raise money for the purchase of irrigation control units for the Crosby Country Club. The event had 130 participants, raising \$10,000 in the process.

Activities completed: The St. Luke's Fifth Annual Crosby Color Splash 5k Fun Run/Walk was held on July 20, 2019 raising \$10,000. The funds were used to purchase and install irrigation control units for the Country Club.

Focus area(s): Activities and events that endorse and support activity.

Partners: Crosby County Club board member Jami Vandal was responsible for the collecting of funds and sponsorships and local business owner Marlo Stubbs was responsible for collecting sponsorships and set up staffing for the event. St. Luke's Hospital and Care Center employees

were responsible for advertising, marketing, collecting sponsorships, and provided staffing for the event.

Age range of participants: Ages varied from 13 to over 65.

Challenges/Barriers: There were no challenges encountered while planning or completing the project.

Impact measurement: The impact measurement was to analyze the amount raised, as well as the total number of participants (130) in hopes of increasing that number over past years' events. While the amount of individuals was less than last year, the total amount raised was higher.

Success Story: Participants young and old all had a great time and funds were raised for new irrigation control units for the Crosby County Club.

4. St. Joseph's Hospital and Health Center, Dickinson **Funds awarded: \$1,700**

General purpose: St. Joseph's Hospital and Health Center sponsored Dickinson's Second Annual Glow Run 5k on August 28, 2019. The intent of the event was to raise awareness for diabetes in the community, as well as replenishing funds for diabetes supplies for patients who do not have the means to obtain the supplies themselves.

Partners: The event committee and community volunteers helped to set up the event, take payments, ensured waivers were signed, distributed snacks, and sold fun glow apparel.

Activities completed: Dickinson's Second Annual Glow Run 5k was held on August 28, 2019.

Focus area(s): An event that endorse and support activity.

Age range of participants: Ages varied from children under 12 to adults up to 64 years of age.

Challenges/Barriers: The biggest challenge was finding a day/time for the event which didn't conflict with other events in town. Social media promotion was used heavily to obtain a good turnout.

Impact measurement: The event raised more money through sponsorships than the previous year.

Success story: Enough funds were raised to restock diabetes supplies, which would have ran out were it not for the event.

5. West River Health Services, Hettinger **Funds awarded: \$3,000**

General purpose: Employees of West River Health Services (WRHS) and local businesses completed the Walk Across America Challenge. Teams were created to compete in a walk across the United States. Participation was tracked using pedometers, and steps were converted into miles and reported back to participants, who were given their location on the virtual trail every week.

Partners: The Hettinger Chamber of Commerce recruited local business participation; Killdeer Mountain Manufacturing and area businesses encouraged employees to participate in the challenge; KNDC radio station handled advertisement and promotion of the event; Patty Ness from WRHS, facilitated the initial stages of the project, while Christopher South, also with WRHS, facilitated the completing and tracking of the program.



Activities completed: Pedometers were purchased and distributed to participants. Steps were tracked and recorded daily by the team leaders. Prizes were given not only to the team with the most steps, but also to the top six individual steppers.

Focus area(s): Activities and an event that endorses and supports physical activity.

Age range of participants: Ages ranged from 20 to older than 65.

Challenges/barriers: The biggest challenge was adapting to having more participants than expected. While the intention was to have approximately 20 individuals attend, the final number ended up being over 300, and so extra pedometers were ordered.

Impact measurement: The project outcome measurement for the program were the number of participants and steps made, with participants cumulatively walking 37,960 miles.

Success Story: Employees at West River Health Services were inspired to start partaking in more healthy activities, and participants continue to use the pedometers and make efforts to be more active.

6. LaMoure County Public Health Department, LaMoure Funds awarded: \$3,600

General purpose: Grant funds were used to install a disc golf course in LaMoure’s Sunset Park for a cost-free way to increase physical activity and outdoor recreation.

Partners: The LaMoure City Park Board collaborated with LaMoure County Public Health Department to obtain grant funds and community volunteers, who helped provide labor and time with course layout, design, and installation.

Activities completed: A disc golf course was installed in Sunset Park.

Focus area(s): Activities and supplies that endorse and support activity.

Age range of participants: Ages varied from 20 to over 65.

Challenges/barriers: There were no challenges except for weather conditions, for which patience was required.

Impact measurement: The impact has been measured by the number of visitors the course has seen. It has had a positive effect on the health of the community members.

Success story: A community church had a service in the park and invited a disc golf professional to speak and demonstrate how to throw a disc and other rules of the game. It was a great event that was made possible with funding from the BCBSND Caring Foundation grant funds.

7. North Dakota Veteran's Home, Lisbon

Funds awarded: \$3,000

General purpose: In October, 2019, North Dakota Veteran's Home completed the "Uffda Gym Project," obtaining various pieces of fitness equipment and training consultations for their employees, monitoring staff frequency.

Partners: Wanda Cavett, DON, and Karlee Dick, Wellness Coordinator, were in charge of purchasing the equipment, communication during the project, pickup and drop off of the equipment, and general oversight of the project. The Veteran's Home maintenance employees prepared the site and placed the equipment, and Kari Breker, a local personal trainer, directed fitness training for the equipment.

Activities completed: Multiple pieces of exercise equipment were purchased and installed and training on the equipment was given to the employees.

Focus area(s): Activities and supplies that endorse physical activity.

Age ranges of participants: Ages varied from 20-64.

Challenges/barriers: The biggest challenge was finding the most cost-efficient equipment. Funds had to be used wisely, so a substantial amount of research and communication went into finding the right pieces.



Impact measurement: Usage of the gym has been logged, keeping track of individuals and how often it has been utilized. Numerous employees have also invited friends to join, which has helped the membership grow.

Success Story: One employee shared that the creation and use of the gym has positively changed their mood, health, and energy. Being located at the workplace has made attending more convenient and overall increased employees' physical activity.

8. CHI Lisbon Health, Lisbon

Funds awarded: \$2,000

General purpose: Focusing on pool exercise and water aerobics, CHI Lisbon Health used grant funds to hold a "summer and water wellness" day on June 18, 2019. Education on healthy snack choices, hydration in the heat, drowning/water safety, and sun skin protection were also included in the activities.



Partners: The North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension Office educated attendees on healthy eating and staying hydrated in the heat; the Lisbon Park Board provided instruction for water aerobics classes; Ransom County Public Health educated patients on summer skin protection; Family Medical Clinic

provided education on what to do to prevent drowning and what to do when an individual is drowning; and CHI Lisbon Health hosted the water aerobics sessions.

Activities that were completed: Water aerobics classes were held the day of the event and continued throughout the summer. Water aerobics equipment was purchased. Two lifeguards were certified in water aerobics training. Education booths focusing on healthy eating, hydration, ski protection, and water safety were set-up at the event.

Focus area(s): Activities, events, and supplies that endorse and support activity.

Age range of participants: Ages varied from younger than 12 to older than 65.

Challenges/barriers: The biggest challenge was getting the word out about the event. To overcome this, social media, the newspaper, and the local civic and commerce newsletter were used, as well as word of mouth. Clinic providers also informed patients of the event.



Impact measurement: The event was a success, drawing in 68 attendees. Water aerobics were continued throughout the season, eventually seeing 276 people attend.

Success story: The biggest success was the number of attendees who participated in the event and the classes throughout the summer.

9. Nelson County Health System, McVille **Funds awarded: \$4,000**

General purpose: Nelson County Health System (NCHS) used grant funds to create a playground for children at the facility's Child Care center. A variety of equipment was purchased to provide an environment that promotes, supports, and encourages physical and emotional development.

Partners: Steve Forde, CEO/CFO of NCHS, managed the financial records and ordered the equipment; Brandvold Construction set up the equipment.

Activities completed: Playground equipment was purchased and installed for the NCHS Child Care facility.

Focus area(s): Supplies that endorse and support physical activity.

Age range of participants: Children under the age of 12.

Challenges/barriers: There were no challenges encountered.

Impact measurement: The biggest impact was seeing the social and physical skills of the children develop over the summer.

Success story: One child, who was a little more timid than others when trying new things, slowly began initiating play with others and encouraging them to do the same. By the end of the summer she was a regular on most of the pieces of equipment and had developed her social skills significantly.

10. Presentation Medical Center (School), Rolla **Funds awarded: \$3,000**

General purpose: Grant funds were used to update playground equipment at the Rolla School that was over 25 years old. The playground is available to anyone during the summer and after school.

Partners: Kristin Mitchell, the Rolla School Elementary Principal, along with the Rolla School Playground Committee, picked out the equipment based on what was most appropriate for the school and community.

Activities complete: Four churches had two volunteer each complete training with the NDSU Extension Center. The volunteers then performed evaluations within their faith community and implemented evidence-based health and wellness curricula.

Focus area(s): Supplies that support and endorse physical activity

Age ranges of participants: Children under the age of 12.

Challenges/barriers: Acquiring enough funds to purchase the equipment was a challenge. Numerous fundraisers were held, but the grant pushed the project to the point where the equipment was finally able to be procured.

Impact measurement: The impact of the grant is demonstrated in how many kids are using the equipment, and it has also been noted that the public has also been using the playground after school and on weekends.

Success story: Kristen Mitchell noted how much the school kids were using the new equipment during recess and were enjoying it every day.

11. Presentation Medical Center (Daycare), Rolla **Funds awarded: \$3,500**

General purpose: Funds were used to purchase a merry-go-round for Rolla Community Day Care. The day care had a limited amount of equipment, and the grant has allowed the facility to provide another source of outside play.

Partners: Sarah Gailfus (Rolla Day Care President) and Brandi Swanson (Rolla Day Care Director), in collaboration with Presentation Medical Center, selected and ordered the equipment. Community volunteers (day care parents) installed the merry-go-round and safety mat.

Activities complete: A merry-go-round was purchased and installed on the day care grounds, with a safety mat being put in around the equipment.

Focus area(s): Supplies that support and endorse physical activity

Age ranges of participants: Children from two years of age to 12.

Challenges/barriers: The biggest challenge was in finding a day when parents (volunteers) could install the merry-go-round. The Rolla Day Care Board chose a day and received enough support from parents to have the equipment installed.

Impact measurement: The measured outcome is the number of children who get to go outside and enjoy using the equipment and play with one another.

Success story: The success story happens daily with the project, as children everyday are able to go outside and use the merry-go-round and play with one another.

12. Heart of America Medical Center, Rugby

Funds awarded: \$1,500

General purpose: Heart of America Medical Center, in conjunction with Pierce County Public Health, held a Health and Wellness Fair in March of 2019, to introduce area residents of all ages to the health, wellness, and fitness resources available in the community.

Partners: Heart of American Medical Center, Lake Region District Health Unit, and Pierce County Public Health planned and enacted the event and activities, with individuals from each facility teaching classes during the event.

Activities complete: The event offered yoga and drumming classes, diabetes and healthy eating instructional classes, and classes on proper car seat use and loan programs. Information encouraging well-child visits was provided along with additional information on tobacco cessation, Women’s Way, environmental health, family planning, and WIC programs. Also included were demonstrations and information provided by local private businesses and healthcare professionals in private practices.

Focus area(s): Activities, programs, and events that support and endorse physical activity

Age ranges of participants: Ages varied from younger than 12 to over 65.

Challenges/barriers: Finding a time that would attract all ages and encouraging youth to attend was a challenge. Because of this, a Saturday morning was chosen for the event, and social media was used for advertisement. An extra credit assignment was also offered to the local high school health class in order to encourage attendance.

Impact measurement: The event was attended by 75 people, and most of the evaluations completed indicated that they learned new information and intended on sharing it with friends and family.

Success story: One individual, who had been recommended to see a professional about their cholesterol, was able to benefit from the T2 Diabetes Prevention Class’ low cost, which led to positive results after the next meeting with their doctor.

13. Mountrail County Health Foundation, Stanley

Funds awarded: \$4,950

General purpose: Mountrail County Health Foundation used grant funds to hold “Skittle Skool 2,” a day for presenters to speak to 7th-12th graders at Stanley High School about hidden dangers that are present throughout their daily lives and how to cope with them. The event is a continuation of the first iteration, which was held the year prior. Presenters cover topics such as sexting, human trafficking, bullying, and drug use.

Partners: Stanley High School hosted the event, while Mountrail County Health Foundation was the lead applicant and coordinator.

Activities complete: Skittle Skool 2 was held in April of 2019.

Focus area(s): Activities, programs, and events that support and endorse physical activity

Age ranges of participants: Teenagers form 13 years of age to 19.

Challenges/barriers: There were no challenges for the event.

Impact measurement: Last year the number of children reporting suicidal tendencies at Stanley High School was in the double digits; this year they have had two.

Success story: Overall helping our children face the issues they are experiencing, but may not know how to handle.

14. CHI St. Alexius Health, Williston

Funds awarded: \$2,500

General purpose: CHI St. Alexius Health Williston used grant funds to hold a personalized “Step Across America” challenge. The challenge was a 40-day competition between all fifth and sixth grade classrooms to collectively walk the equivalent to the distance across the United States. Students were given pedometers to keep track of steps, and learned about healthy living and physical activity along the way.

Partners: CHI St. Alexius Health Williston Primary Care Clinic provided education and kick off assembly coordination; CHI St. Alexius Health Williston Foundation handled the general analytic support and grant reporting; Bakken Elementary School and Williston Trinity Christian School executed the day-to-day program activities; Williston Area Recreation Center was a challenge in-kind sponsor, coordinated the kick off assembly and ran the coaching and education associated with the 40-day challenge.



Activities complete: Pedometers were purchased and distributed to students to track daily steps. An educational booklet including outlined goals, health facts, entrance/exit surveys and daily tracking log was distributed to students. Finally, an assembly was held on preventative healthcare and life-long healthy habits.

Focus area(s): Activities and supplies that support and endorse physical activity

Age ranges of participants: Children under 12.

Challenges/barriers: Keeping track of the pedometers was a challenge. Students were instructed to put a piece of tape with their name written on it on the back of their pedometers so they could be returned if lost. Additionally, parents and teachers were prepared to be advocates for their students and give them structure and support that allowed them to easily keep track.

Impact measurement: Project outcomes and impact were measured through entrance and exit surveys, which tracked age, participation levels, knowledge of physical activities available, and motivation.

Success story: The program inspired the schools involved to create their own weekly program aimed towards physical activity and healthy eating.