

Spring 2021

Tidelands Health Wellness Department: Related to Sustainable Development Goals 3 & 4 in Georgetown County

Catherine McFadden
Coastal Carolina University, cemcfad1@coastal.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/goal-3-good-health>



Part of the [Sustainability Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McFadden, Catherine, "Tidelands Health Wellness Department: Related to Sustainable Development Goals 3 & 4 in Georgetown County" (2021). *Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being*. 4.
<https://digitalcommons.coastal.edu/goal-3-good-health/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Georgetown RISE UN Youth Corps at CCU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Goal 3: Good Health and Well-Being by an authorized administrator of CCU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact commons@coastal.edu.

Tidelands Health Wellness Department: Related to Sustainable Development Goals 3 & 4 in

Georgetown County

Catherine McFadden

Dr. Pamela Martin

Coastal Carolina University

Thesis Statement

Health education among employees at any institution is important, but particularly at Tidelands Health. Connected to this is healthy literacy, which is the ability to obtain and comprehend health information as well as have the knowledge and skills to use the information and make well informed decisions¹. Together, the concepts of health education and health literacy create the framework for better health amongst not only individuals, but their surrounding communities. It is a common misconception that health care workers are more immune from suffering from the very same ailments that plague their patients. This is simply not true. Through observation over time, it is evident that healthcare workers could benefit from receiving health education to improve their overall health literacy. As stated in the health literacy definition, health literacy goes beyond simply understanding a health term and goes deeper, dealing more with the application of the understanding.

The employee partners at Tidelands Health are offered extraordinary health resources through the Wellness Department. These incredible resources, which will be discussed in a later section, are always available to all Tidelands employee partners. One issue, in conjunction with health education and literacy, is access and connecting the employee partners to these resources. To address this issue of enhancing the connection between Tidelands employees and the Wellness Department, a web-based Wellness “newsletter” was created through the Tidelands Bridge webpage, in conjunction with physical newsletters sent to departmental leaders. The overarching goals of this web-based platform and newsletter is to enhance existing connections

¹ CDC, “What Is Health Literacy?,” January 28, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>.

to the Wellness Department, increase health education and literacy, and better the health of individuals and the Tidelands community. The Tidelands Health community is a microcosm of Georgetown County; its members all a part of this larger greater community. To improve the health of the Tidelands community is to improve the health of the Georgetown County community. This emphasis on improving health education directly ties into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of Good Health, Goal 3, and Quality Education, Goal 4. The creation of a web-based platform to connect Tidelands employee partners to better health furthers the goal of pursuing sustainability in Georgetown County.

Tidelands Health Wellness Department in Relation to the SDGs

The main two Sustainable Development Goals that the Tidelands Health Wellness Department encompasses daily are goals 3 and 4, which are Good Health and Well Being, and Quality Education. The Wellness Department plays a significant role in the Tidelands Health community, offering a wide array of services that embody the meaning of the two previously stated SDGs. The overarching service that the Wellness Department provides is serving as a bridge that connects Tidelands employee partners with their company health insurance. The Wellness Department provides services that allows employees to earn money towards their Health Reimbursement Arrangement (HRA) accounts. These services extend much further than the surface level purpose. To earn money toward their HRA accounts, employees must complete a “checklist” of tasks that embody the dimensions of wellness. They must come in for a fitness assessment, where their physical fitness is assessed, and their biometrics are taken. In addition, they must get their blood drawn, obtain a fasting glucose test, have a phone call with a financial company for their financial wellness, complete an online wellness assessment, and provide proof of a primary care provider visit. These are the baseline activities that need to be completed for

the employee partner to earn any HRA money. There are bonus activities too, such as participating in the group Shape Up challenge, participating in individual challenges, completing a Physical Strength and Agility Risk Assessment test (PSRA), and getting the necessary age/gender screenings done. Tidelands Health offers free personal training to employers if they are identified as failing the PSRA. They will also be offered a BMI care pathway and offered Personal Health Navigation (PHN) services if identified as having a condition that qualifies. In addition to these services, there is also the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that is closely related to Wellness. This program offers an additional array of services that mainly assists employees with achieving work-life balance. All of this is offered to all Tidelands employee partners at no cost.

The creation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals was initiated through the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with the overarching goals of create a global partnership among countries to work towards improving lives and protecting the environment². While the SDGs were adopted on a global scale, looking at global perspectives, it is important to understand that sustainability on a global scale cannot be achieved if it cannot be implemented on the scale of our communities. That is why understanding the role of the Tidelands Health, Wellness Department in sustainability is crucial. Sustainable Development Goal 3's full definition is "to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages"³. The Wellness Department strives towards this goal daily through the services they offer. The offering of free and accessible health resources falls under SDG target indicator 3.8, which calls for access to quality essential healthcare services³. The Wellness Department strives to improve the quality of

² "THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development," 2020, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

³ "Goal 3 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs," United Nations (United Nations), accessed March 23, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>.

health and access to care of the community they serve. Sustainable Development Goal 4 is to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”⁴. The Wellness Department can achieve the previous Goal 3 because of the work they do with Goal 4. Providing health education resources and serving as a resource themselves is a primary responsibility of the Wellness Department. Employee partners come to Wellness in search of information, whether that be about what certain test results may mean, how to access their HRA benefits, steps they can take to improve their health, and everything in between. Personal Health Navigation, a service offered through Wellness, is a service that provides individuals with the tools and knowledge they need to manage their health. The Wellness Department serves as a vital source of information for the Tideland Community. Goal 4’s target indicators 4.7 directly mentions helping youth and adults achieve literacy and numeracy⁴. This ties in directly with the issue of improving health literacy in conjunction with health education.

To enhance the existing connections that the Wellness Department has with the Tideland community and expand upon providing health education resources and addressing health literacy gaps, the Wellness Department is creating a web-based platform to advertise and put this material where it can be easily accessed. This web-based platform incorporates both SDGs 3 and 4, as it promotes good health through providing quality and accessible education. The goals of good health and quality education rely heavily on one another in the Wellness Department and especially in this project of creating a web-based health education platform.

Overview of Georgetown County as it Relates to Sustainable Development

⁴ “Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed March 23, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>.

Georgetown County lies on the coast of South Carolina, wedged between Horry and Charleston Counties. The United States Census Bureau estimates Georgetown County's population to be 62,680 as of July 2019⁵. The population that Tidelands Health serves reside in Georgetown County and its surrounding counties. The Institute for Health Metrics at the University of Washington pulled health and risk factor data in 2014 for all counties across the United States, including Georgetown County. Georgetown County's life expectancy is 2 years below the national averages of 81.5 for females and 76.7 for males⁶. The county is above the national average in various risk factors such as smoking and obesity, as well as the female population falling short on recommended physical activity⁶. These health risk factors are a small sample of what the Wellness Department addresses on a regular basis, providing information and resources on how to improve one's health and eliminate risk factors. The Wellness Department needs better connections to the population they serve to help address their unique health needs. Because the Tidelands community mainly resides in Georgetown County and its surrounding areas, the conclusion can be drawn that many members of the Tidelands community may struggle with these health risk factors and would benefit from a web-based wellness newsletter, where they would have access to information regarding their health and learn skills to address their health risks. The issues that impact Georgetown County impact the members of the Tidelands Health community, and the benefits of this project could have implications beyond the smaller Tidelands community, extending into Georgetown County.

Overview of Tidelands Health Wellness Department as it Relates to the Planet

⁵ "U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Georgetown County, South Carolina," Census Bureau QuickFacts, accessed March 24, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/georgetowncountysouthcarolina/RHI825219>.

⁶ Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), US County Profile: Georgetown County, South Carolina. Seattle, WA: IHME, 2016.

The work that the Tideland Health Wellness Department does has implications for achieving the global indicators for sustainable development. Georgetown County is one county, lying within one state within one country that exists on a planet of many countries full of people of various cultures, races, and backgrounds. The work done within this one county may be at first hard to connect to global initiatives because of the relative scale it exists within. The UN Sustainable Development Goals rely on the work done within each country on a smaller scale. The global indicators cannot be achieved without the work done in local communities. So, while the Wellness Department may not be putting in work towards objective 3.3, which deals with ending the global AIDS epidemic or objective 3.1 with reducing infant mortality, the work they do can be found scattered in with other objectives³. Providing tools and resources to the community they serve impacts the prevention and treatment of substance abuse (objective 3.5) through their EAP and tobacco cessation program³. The work they do allows for the community they serve to have better access to healthcare, which is objective 3.8 and encourages women to seek regular reproductive healthcare services, which falls under objective 3.7³. The daily activities provided through the Wellness Department serves the Georgetown County community and its surrounding areas directly. Seeing how the daily tasks and work done by the Wellness Department have a role in fulfilling various SDG objectives highlights the connection to the larger global impact of fulfilling the objectives that support each SDG.

Existing Literature

It is important to examine the literature that already exists surrounding employee health, employee health interventions, and healthcare worker related issues. In one peer reviewed journal, a study was conducted on the impact of an employee health intervention's effects on cardiovascular disease and diabetes. The article is titled, "Improving Employee Health:

Evaluation of a Worksite Lifestyle Change Program to Decrease Risk Factors for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease” (Kramer, et. al, 2015). The conclusion of this study determined that worksite behavioral lifestyle interventions are effective and reasonable courses of action in significantly improving risk factors for type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease⁷. This conclusion supports the idea of implementing workplace behavior change mechanisms to see improved health among employees. Two of the specific risk factors mentioned in this study were improvements in physical activity as well as HbA1c levels⁷, which both are risk factors that the Wellness Department at Tidelands Health addresses often. While this study mainly focuses on improved health risks for diabetes and cardiovascular disease, we can look to apply workplace behavior change mechanisms for other health issues as well to see an overall improvement in wellness.

In another peer reviewed article, “Bridging the gap: Responding to resident burnout and restoring well-being” (Hategan, et. al, 2020), physician and resident burnout was addressed by creating programming that included online resilience curriculum, peer groups, and wellness newsletters. The authors reported that all aspects of the programming received positive feedback from the residents, with the peer groups reporting the highest positive feedback⁸. This research supports the use of resilience curriculums, peer groups, and wellness newsletters in restoring well-being among physicians and residents. While the individuals working at Tidelands Health range in a wide variety of professions apart from residents and physicians, this study provides

⁷ Kramer, M., Molenaar, D., Arena, V., Venditti, E., Meehan, R., Miller, R., Vanderwood, K., Eaglehouse, Y., & Kriska, A. (2015). Improving Employee Health: Evaluation of a Worksite Lifestyle Change Program to Decrease Risk Factors for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease. *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 57(3), 284–291. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000000350>.

⁸ Hategan, A., & Riddell, T. (2020). Bridging the gap: Responding to resident burnout and restoring well-being. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 9(2), 117–122. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-020-00567-3>.

important insight into the benefits of providing supportive programming in healthcare settings. Similar methods found in the study could potentially be applied to other healthcare settings where healthcare workers may experience some level of burnout. Apart from providing wellness information, creating a newsletter will aid in increasing engagement with the Wellness Department, in turn increasing engagement among peers.

An American Hospital Association survey was conducted in 2015 that collected data on various wellness programs offered at hospitals located across the country⁹. This survey collected information on all elements related to wellness programming offered at hospitals. Some data collected focused on the specific types of programming offered to hospital employees under the category of Wellness. The list is comprehensive, with 19 individual categories. The Tideland Health Wellness Department offers nearly all 19 of the specified categories, ranging from an Employee Assistance Program to personal health coaching, to biometric screening, and more. The only category the Wellness Department did not previously participate in is producing a wellness newsletter. In 2015, when this data was collected, 63% of hospitals in the United States produced wellness newsletters⁹. This signifies the importance of incorporating a wellness newsletter in some form alongside other wellness programming. This puts into context as well how a wellness newsletter fits into the culture of hospital employee wellness and is utilized by most hospitals already in the United States.

Empirical Evidence

⁹ Health Research & Educational Trust. (2016, October). Health and wellness programs for hospital employees: Results from a 2015 American Hospital Association survey. Chicago, IL: Health Research & Educational Trust. Accessed at [www. hpoe.org](http://www.hpoe.org).

The state of South Carolina's Health Department, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC), collects data from around the state on various public health issues. One such study they conduct is the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS is a useful tool in understanding the state of health of South Carolina's population. It serves as a tool to better understand the population's needs and aids in identifying areas where health interventions and further education may be needed. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System is conducted annually, but on the SCDHEC website, the 2011 survey has the most detailed breakdown of information. The information for the 2011 BRFSS is broken down by regions, which are groupings of counties. The county of interest is Georgetown County, so for the purpose of this research the focus is on Region 6, which encompasses Georgetown, Horry, and Williamsburg counties. The surveillance survey asked the respondents many questions with a wide variety of aspects regarding their health and health behaviors. Instead of looking at data for each survey question asked, data was only pulled for health issues and topics that the Tidelands Health Wellness Department frequently encounters. Such health issues are the issues of diabetes/diabetes management, hypertension, BMI, and participation in physical activity.

Respondents of the BRFSS were asked if they had ever been diagnosed with diabetes. The number of respondents for Region VI was N=1480. Then number of respondents that reported they had been diagnosed with diabetes before was 246, which is 11.6% of the population surveyed¹⁰. A similar question asked respondents if they had ever taken a diabetes self-management class. Of the 243 respondents with diabetes in Region VI, only 127 (53.50%) said that they had¹⁰. What this data shows is that only about half of those with diabetes in the

¹⁰ SCDHEC. (2011). Retrieved March 05, 2021, from <https://scdhec.gov/2011-brfss-annual-survey-results>.

Georgetown County region are receiving diabetes self-management education, and there is a need for diabetes education in this region. In another question, respondents were asked if they were ever told by a healthcare professional that they had high blood pressure. For Region VI, N=1,476. Respondents who reported “yes” to this question were 719, which signifies that Region VI may have issues with hypertension and need health programs and interventions in this area¹⁰. The biometric data inputted for each respondent was calculated by a computer to generate a BMI reading. Of the 1,425 respondents for Region VI, 509 were overweight and 464 were obese on the BMI scale¹⁰. While BMI is only one indicator of health, it does indicate that this region may have a large weight problem. In relation to this question, respondents were asked to report whether they had participated in physical activity outside of work in the past 30 days. Of the 1,416 respondents for this designated region, 1,039 reported yes and 377 reported ‘no’¹⁰. These results indicate that many respondents in the Georgetown County region do engage in physical activity, however these results do not specify if the respondents are receiving enough physical activity. What this data indicates is that Georgetown County has a need for more health education and interventions. Tideland Health lies in the parameters of these counties, and so the health issues of this region are also the health issues that impact the Tideland community.

The health issues observed in the Georgetown County region are not isolated occurrences. Diabetes, hypertension, and diabetes are widespread health issues and indicators of needed health intervention at both a national and global level. According to the International Diabetes Federation, in 2019, the North American Continent saw 48 million adults living with diabetes, with that number expected to increase 33% by 2045¹¹. From a global perspective, there

¹¹ International Diabetes Federation (IDF). (2021). “Global diabetes data report 2010-2045.” Accessed April 28, 2021. <https://diabetesatlas.org/data/en/world/#:~:text=Global%20%20%20At%20a%20glance%20,%20%20-%20%2019%20more%20rows%20>

are 463 million adults with diabetes, that number expected to increase by 51% to 700 million by 2045¹¹. When looking at the incidence of hypertension at a global level, 1 in 4 men and 1 in 5 women experience elevated blood pressure¹². In addition to this, in 2016, the World Health Organization found that 1.9 billion adults were overweight, and of those, 650 million were considered obese¹⁶. These numbers indicate that the issues seen on a regional level in Georgetown County exist on a much larger level and have widespread global impacts. The work done to improve these numbers on a regional scale will contribute to the work done on a larger scale and aid in global initiative to improve health and well-being.

While the BRFSS examines county and regional data, the empirical evidence for the need of health education initiatives in the Tidelands community is anecdotal and observational, meaning the data comes from personal experiences and conversations had. Over the course of time spent with the Wellness Department, there were encounters with possibly hundreds of employees. With every encounter came their own unique conversations and interactions. A number of these interactions were with individuals who already had a grasp on what their various indicators and biometrics meant. These individuals displayed competencies in comprehension and did not ask questions, not due to social factors but due to already understanding. However, in other interactions it was clear that many who may know what the numbers meant were unable to apply those numbers and definitions to their own health and needed further clarification and assistance in this application. These individuals could be identified because they would often ask for verbal clarification or repeat back information to ensure understanding¹³. Through

¹⁰ SCDHEC. (2011). Retrieved March 05, 2021, from <https://scdhec.gov/2011-brfss-annual-survey-results>.

¹² WHO. (2019). "Hypertension." Accessed April 28, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/factsheets/detail/hypertension>.

¹³ Observations gathered over the course of months spent interacting with Tidelands employees, spouses, and the Wellness Department (2021).

observation it appeared that many individuals feel somewhere in this category of understanding but not completely. This applies directly to the modern concept of health literacy, which encompasses having the ability to apply the information, not simply just know it. And apart from these individuals were the ones who displayed a lack of knowledge or understanding of how to manage their health conditions altogether. These individuals were not seen as often in typical interaction through biometric screening. Awareness of these individuals often appear through interactions with Personal Health Navigation. Many can be flagged for this program and not have a clue what criteria they were flagged for, unaware of the condition they may have. In one conversation with an individual who runs Personal Health Navigation, an anecdote was told about someone who was flagged through the company insurance claims for Personal Health Navigation because of the medication they took for diabetes¹⁴. When this person was contacted, they were highly confused, stating that they did not have diabetes, their doctor told them the medication was for having a high A1c and not for diabetes¹⁴. This interaction displays a clear disconnect in how health information is disseminated from doctor to patient and displays a need for improving education, so individuals have the skills to manage their health issues.

Other observations that provide important insight occurred at an end of year meeting with the company that manages Tidelands' insurance utilization information. The people who use the company's insurance are the people who work at Tidelands and are in the population of interest, so the information discussed in this meeting was valuable in terms of understanding the health issues of the population. Specific data cannot be shared because of the nature of the information and privacy concerns, however the observations and general notes taken are still valuable. The

¹⁶ WHO. (2020). "Obesity and overweight." Accessed April 28, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>.

¹⁴ Conversation had with the individual who runs the Personal Health Navigation program (2021).

Tidelands community has a high incidence of chronic conditions, with hypertension, hyperlipidemia, and diabetes among the highest reported¹⁵. In addition, there is a large prevalence of comorbidities, which is having two or more conditions at the same time¹³. This information is consistent with the observations that are taken through general daily interaction through Wellness and Personal Health Navigation, where hypertension and diabetes are commonly discussed and observed^{14,13}. Both observations from this meeting and observations of individual interactions with the employees are consistent with one another, which indicates that the health problems observed are problems that exist consistently throughout the community, and so providing the community with tools and resources to manage their health would have an impactful and relevant benefit.

Future Recommendations

The creation of a wellness web-based newsletter and information source will have lasting impacts on the Tidelands Health community. A newsletter would assist with information being continuously updated; therefore, the resource remains current, and the engagement is promoted. This project is not intended to be left alone after its creation and will need continual maintenance to have its desired long-term effects. Regular feedback should be gathered as well, ensuring that the content provided is helpful and relevant to the audience. This feedback could be gathered through polls sent through individual emails, or conversations had with Tidelands employees in the following months after the initial release. Apart from gathering regular feedback from the community, other indicators of success should also be monitored. Indicators such as monthly

¹⁵ Year-end meeting with insurance data analyst company, (2021).

¹³ Observations gathered over the course of months spent interacting with Tidelands employees, spouses, and the Wellness Department (2021).

¹⁴ Conversation had with the individual who runs the Personal Health Navigation program (2021).

viewers, how many members have access to the resources, and number of page clicks should be monitored regularly as well. These indicators, paired with word-of-mouth feedback, will allow the Wellness Department to see a full picture of how the web-based newsletter is received by the community. It will also allow them to make changes to the content if deemed as necessary. This newsletter will contribute to the work Tideland Health does to reach the Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4. The Wellness Department is a small fraction in the organization, but the work done for Good Health and Quality Education within the Wellness Department builds onto the larger organization's contributions towards the SDGs. The creation of this newsletter will allow for continual effort in the dimensions of Good Health and Quality Education. Health and wellness are a fluid, ever-changing field and this health resource should be viewed in a similar light. It should be flexible and meet the unique, changing needs of its intended audience. Health and wellness will always remain a constant need, and information and education will also always be an essential service. The educational resources provided through the newsletter will serve the current needs of the community, as well as have the capacity to meet future needs as well.

Bibliography

“Goal 3 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed March 23, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal3>.

“Goal 4 | Department of Economic and Social Affairs,” United Nations (United Nations), accessed March 23, 2021, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>.

“THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development,” 2020, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

“U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Georgetown County, South Carolina,” Census Bureau QuickFacts, accessed March 24, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/georgetowncountysouthcarolina/RHI825219>.

CDC. (2021, January 28). “What is health literacy?” Retrieved March 23, 2021, from <https://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/learn/index.html>.

Conversation had with the individual who runs the Personal Health Navigation program (2021)

Hategan, A., & Riddell, T. (2020). “Bridging the gap: Responding to resident burnout and restoring well-being. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 9(2), 117–122.” <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-020-00567-3>.

Health Research & Educational Trust. (2016, October). “Health and wellness programs for hospital employees: Results from a 2015 American Hospital Association survey. Chicago, IL: Health Research & Educational Trust.” Accessed at [www. hpoe.org](http://www.hpoe.org).

Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). (2016). "US County Profile: Georgetown County, South Carolina."

International Diabetes Federation (IDF). (2021). "Global diabetes data report 2010-2045."

Accessed April 28, 2021.

<https://diabetesatlas.org/data/en/world/#:~:text=Global%20%20%20%20At%20a%20glance%20,%20%20-%20%2019%20more%20rows%20>

Kramer, M., Molenaar, D., Arena, V., Venditti, E., Meehan, R., Miller, R., Vanderwood, K., Eaglehouse, Y., & Kriska, A. (2015). "Improving Employee Health: Evaluation of a Worksite Lifestyle Change Program to Decrease Risk Factors for Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease." *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 57(3), 284–291. <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000000350>.

Observations gathered over the course of months spent interacting with Tidelands employees, spouses, and the Wellness Department (2021).

SCDHEC. (2011). Retrieved March 05, 2021, from <https://scdhec.gov/2011-brfss-annual-survey-results>.

WHO. (2019). "Hypertension." Accessed April 28, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/hypertension>.

WHO. (2020). "Obesity and overweight." Accessed April 28, 2021, from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/obesity-and-overweight>.

Year-end meeting with insurance data analyst company, (2021).