



Advocacy In Action

Since its inception, the Heart and Stroke Foundation (HSF) in Manitoba has advocated for heart-healthy changes at the grassroots level. Here are just a few of the positive outcomes that have occurred recently:

Physical education in schools: Acting as the past chair of the Physical Activity Coalition of Manitoba (PACM), HSF and PACM presented briefs on the importance of physical education in schools to the provincial government's 'Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures' task force.

Outcome: Physical education is now mandatory in all Manitoba schools.

Active transportation: The Foundation has advocated to the City of Winnipeg and the Province of Manitoba to increase active transportation, through a dedicated financial commitment, public awareness and better infrastructure.

Outcome: The city has organized an active transportation advisory committee and a member of PACM will sit on the committee. In September 2009, \$20 million was allocated through Canada's Economic Action Plan to parks and trails.

Recreation Leadership: The Foundation has advocated to the Province of Manitoba to create quality recreation opportunities that are accessible to everyone.

Outcome: The Province is updating their recreation policy.

Nutrition policies in schools: HSF previously worked with the Manitoba Council on Child Nutrition (MCCN), which advocated for healthy eating in schools. A 'Nutrition School Handbook' was prepared to assist schools in developing their own policies. The document was reviewed by HSF staff, and the Foundation is listed as a reference. Sample policies outlined in the document include: making snacks that include all four food groups available and encouraging healthy eating to students.

Outcome: The Government of Manitoba has made it mandatory for all schools in the province to have a nutrition policy in place.



Indoor smoking is out: With the Manitoba Tobacco Reduction Alliance (MANTRA), HSF advocated to the government to take major steps in reducing tobacco use and bringing awareness to the negative health effects it has on smokers and those exposed to second-hand smoke.

Outcome: Smoking in public places in Manitoba is illegal, with fines given out to people who smoke indoors and businesses that allow smoking to occur indoors.

Community health through food security: The Foundation is a member of a committee that addresses food security by working to increase the consumption of nutritious low cost foods by Manitobans. In addition, the Foundation worked with a committee to create a top ten list of foods needed by Winnipeg Harvest.

Outcome: A provincial nutritious food basket costing has taken place and a summary report is currently being developed. This report will let regions within Manitoba know what it costs to eat according to Canada's Food Guide recommendations. Provincial regions may use this information for program planning, informing policy decisions and/or supporting and promoting access to nutritious foods.

For Winnipeg Harvest, a list of the most needed healthy foods are now available, which encourage people to donate these wholesome items to those in need. In addition, the lists are a way to encourage donors to change their own food habits.

CPR saves lives: HSF advocated to the province to pass the Good Samaritan Protection Act. The Foundation has also advocated for more accessible Automated External Defibrillators in public places.

Outcome: The Good Samaritan Protection Act was passed in December 2006, which ensures that bystanders who perform CPR are not liable. Also, in June 2011 new legislation was passed that will require installation of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in public places once the Act is proclaimed.



Eliminating the effects of stroke: HSF took a leadership role in advocating for a Provincial Coordinated Stroke Strategy. The goal of the strategy is to see that all Manitobans have access to the very best stroke care, helping to reduce suffering, and saving lives.

Outcome: The Brandon Regional Health Centre was designated as the first provincial stroke centre in 2006, followed by the Health Sciences Centre (HSC) and St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg. The implementation of the stroke strategy has resulted in the following:

- The Foundation has hosted acute stroke workshops for health care professionals, including physicians, nurses and other health specialists, which provides them with new information regarding all aspects of acute stroke care.
- HSF works with MB Telehealth to telecast educational stroke sessions to hospitals and Regional Health Authorities throughout the province. Video-conferencing the stroke educational sessions is an excellent way of promoting the stroke strategy to medical and professional staff in Manitoba.
- The stroke prevention clinics in Brandon and Steinbach that were established with the financial assistance of HSF aim to reduce high-risk patients' chances of having a stroke through rapid access to diagnostic screening and individualized medical counselling.
- An aggressive awareness campaign to educate Manitobans that stroke is a medical emergency, the five warning signs of stroke, and the importance of seeking immediate medical attention, is held each June during Stroke Month. This donor-funded campaign is advertised through rural and urban radio, television and newspaper outlets, as well as using outdoor advertising such as on buses.

Although there have been many advances in the fight against heart disease and stroke, it is still the number one cause of death in Manitoba. Our goal is to lose that "number one" status.