



[Programs](#)
[Learn](#)
[Awards](#)
[Events](#)
[Media](#)
[About](#)
[Store](#)

HCSC



The Story

Childhood obesity poses a serious long-term threat to the United States and its health care system. In the U.S., one-third of children and two-thirds of adults are classified as overweight or obese. To address this issue head-on, in 2006 Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), identified The OrganWise Guys (OWG) Comprehensive School Program (CSP) as a strategic opportunity to collaborate with a comprehensive, scientifically-proven program that reduces the incidence of childhood obesity, in order to affect and promote child wellness in its Plan communities.

The HCSC OWG program is a dynamic, interactive, cross-curricular program using fun characters based on body organs (such as Hardy Heart, Peri Stolic, the large intestine, and Sir Rebrum, the brain), coupled with high energy activities, to teach children how to make positive health and fitness choices. HCSC funds this schoolbased curriculum that consists of the Core Kit (containing grade-specific and schoolwide nutrition and healthy living materials), WISERCISE! (which combines academic objectives and physical activity in lively 10-minute desk-side sessions), individual student activity books and an experiential cafeteria component called Foods of the Month Club (FoM).



2009 saw the first full year of implementation of FoM, which brings the OWG classroom lessons to life, as students are taught about nutrient-dense foods and thus encouraged to select these types of foods served in their school cafeterias. FoM also includes programming to teach parents, teachers, and school staff about the nutritious characteristics of nutrient-dense foods and why these foods are important components of daily meals.

OWG programming is directly linked to the curriculum standards in each state in which HSCS does business as the local Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan, making it easy and effective for busy teachers to integrate into classroom plans.

Using a collaborative approach that engages schools, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition education programs, University/County Extension, Area Health Education Centers, and other community-based organizations, HCSC offers OWG programming to its member organizations who, in turn, involve local partners to make this a truly community-wide effort.

By working with University Cooperative Extension Services' in each of its Plan states, HCSC's OWG effort is leveraged to reach a greater number of students.

Through this collaboration, expert Nutrition Educators implement OWG as part of their statewide nutrition education programming known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service plans. This allows the Universities to draw down federal matching dollars from the USDA to help sustain and expand the OWG program, as well as to

provide other healthrelated services needed in their communities.

The goal of HCSC's time and financial investment in OWG is to create a long-term, replicable, sustainable initiative that would address a national concern using a science-based program that took hold at the local level of its Plan Communities.

From the initial pilot in 2006 through HCSC's commitment to OWG through the year 2012, 500 schools (approximately 400,000 children) and the communities in the footprints of these schools, will have participated in and benefitted from HCSC OWG.

Business Strategy

The HCSC OWG program addresses childhood nutrition and fitness by helping children learn healthy choices at an early age. Health care costs are a critical issue for the health insurance industry and contribute to rising costs for all stakeholders.

Obesity contributes to chronic conditions that are costly to the system. By working to reduce childhood obesity, HCSC is helping address health care costs. However, the problem cannot be solved by any one group, therefore HCSC is taking a lead through OWG collaborations, which align with and support the efforts of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move national campaign, designed to unite existing and new solutions to raise a healthier generation of kids.

Moreover, HCSC is working to help develop a healthy workforce for the future, as the economic viability of any business or community depends not only on having an educated workforce, but a healthy one as well.

Evaluation and Impact

HCSC sought to invest in a program that showed comprehensive, efficacious results.

OWG CSP, based on a four-year quasi-experimental study, demonstrated just such results. Specifically, children in program implementation schools experienced statistically significantly greater improvements in age- and gender-specific body mass index (BMI) percentiles and weight z-scores, and statistically significant improvements in systolic and diastolic blood pressure measures. Additionally, program children achieved statistically significantly higher Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) math scores as compared to children in control schools.



To our knowledge, this is the first very large (n~4,500) school-based study that resulted in statistically significant differences between intervention groups. Furthermore, both the health and academic improvements were especially strong among low-income, minority children. These healthy, smart results are published in the Journal of the American Dietetic Association, the American Journal of Public Health and the Journal of Healthcare for the Poor and Underserved (all in Spring, 2010).

In addition to compelling research data, OWG programming provides the opportunity to build effective collaborations in diverse communities. Each of HCSC's states has different demographics and community needs. The flexibility of OWG allows for each partnership to grow organically and be fully responsive to local needs. OWG has helped position HCSC as a strong advocate for children's wellness with key stakeholders, including business and civic leaders, doctors, members, other business partners and national organizations.

It is critical to HCSC that our community investment dollars show a demonstrable impact and support our mission. The OrganWise Guys program allows us to do both.

[Back to Awards home \(/awards/default.htm\)](/awards/default.htm) | [Next Submission > \(/awards/2010_uscommunity_loews.htm\)](/awards/2010_uscommunity_loews.htm)

