



Public Health Professionals & Safe Routes to School

Talking Points

Public Health Professionals are among the stakeholders to engage as part of a community's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) effort. While some Public Health Professionals may be familiar with the program, others may not be. It's important to explain the purpose of Safe Routes to School, how public health professionals can be an integral part of the effort, and what they will gain by participating. Here are some brief talking points for an initial conversation as well as some basic resources to share.

Introduce Yourself and the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP)

Whether your first contact is by phone, email or in person, it will be important to introduce yourself and give some background information. SHIP is a Minnesota Department of Health program that works with schools, businesses, faith groups, farmers and many others to create healthier communities across the state by expanding opportunities for active living, healthy eating and tobacco-free living.

Give a Brief Overview of the Minnesota Safe Routes to School Program and its Benefits

Minnesota SRTS is an effort to improve walking and bicycling conditions for our youth and support active living for the whole community. The Minnesota Department of Transportation, SHIP, and many other partners across the state are working together to help schools and communities develop SRTS programs.

SRTS is more than just a program. A comprehensive SRTS strategy is where partners work together on education, engineering, enforcement, evaluation, encouragement and equity. An effective SRTS initiative can help create a healthier community for generations to come by instilling life-long physical activity habits.

Some of the many benefits of the program for participants and the community include:

- Kids and families are more active
- Students arrive ready to learn
- Communities become more connected and safer for all
- Reduced congestion and traffic at schools and on local streets

What can Public Health Professionals bring to the program?

- Understanding of public health concerns such as injury prevention, physical activity, and obesity
- Knowledge of additional resources related to health and wellness
- Encourage increased physical activity

What can Public Health Professionals gain from the program?

- Improved health outcomes
- Opportunities to coordinate other public health efforts with SRTS programming

Resources

Program website: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/mnsaferoutes/>

Email updates and newsletters: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNDOT/subscriber/new>