

Public Health in Your School

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Objective

The objective of the exercise is to supplement the concepts discussed in the HHMI December 1999 Holiday lectures “2000 and Beyond: Confronting the Microbe Menace” by encouraging students to undertake a public service project to impact public health in their school.

Preparation

Students should watch the HHMI December 1999 Holiday lectures “2000 and Beyond: Confronting the Microbe Menace.” Viewing the three lectures “The Microbes Strike Back” and “Outwitting Bacteria’s Wily Ways” by Brett Finlay, and “Emerging Infections: How Epidemics Arise” by Donald Ganem would be most useful. However, the information required to complete this exercise will not be limited to what the students have viewed in the HHMI Holiday Lectures. Students should be encouraged to utilize other resources such as the Internet and the library.

Assignment

Students are divided into small working groups of two or three students. Students should propose a small project, which addresses one of the two following public health efforts:

- To decrease illness in your school during the cold and flu season.
- To decrease the spread of food-borne illness

There are many creative ways that students could improve public health in your school. Their efforts might be to change school policy regarding a public health issue. In one of our schools, a young girl lobbied the school to provide hot water in the bathrooms so that hand washing would be more effective (the school was currently providing only cold water). Similarly, the students could undertake a project to increase student and teacher awareness of public health topics. Students could produce informative posters, brochures, or public service announcements to be read during the school announcements. The final result of the student’s efforts should enhance the public health in the school by either changing the habits or lifestyles of their classmates or increasing awareness in the area of infectious diseases

Resources

Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://www.cdc.gov/>

This is our national resource for information on infectious disease. The website contains a wealth of information targeted at many audiences. The students may find useful information and ideas here.

CDC Health Topics A to Z <http://www.cdc.gov/health/default.htm>

This link page provides links to all the disease and health topics covered at the CDC website.

CDC Kid's Page <http://www.bam.gov/>