



# FESTIVAL OF CONTAGIOUS IDEAS 2016



NEW SOUTH WALES  
**HEALTH INNOVATION**  
Symposium 2016

## Preventive Health

### Physical activity 4 everyone: Preventing the decline in physical activity Hunter New England Local Health District

#### Challenge

Finding better ways to get more children to be more active is a key focus of our work. In 2011, the physical activity levels of adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds came into sharper focus with results of the fourth NSW School Physical Activity and Nutrition Survey.

The Survey showed that these adolescents were less likely to accumulate the 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per day necessary to reduce the risk of certain non-communicable diseases, e.g. heart disease, diabetes and some cancers. Physical activity also declines by seven per cent per year during adolescence, and the decline is higher among those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We needed to find a way to reduce the decline in moderate to vigorous physical activity among adolescents.



#### Solution

We searched for existing, successful school-based physical activity programs, but found that they were mostly for primary schools, with few



targeting secondary schools, let alone those located in disadvantaged communities. We overcame this problem by taking the best bits of what existing programs had to offer and based them around the World Health Organisation Health Promoting Schools Framework.

#### Results

Physical Activity 4 Everyone is the first program globally to demonstrate (via a randomised controlled trial) a positive impact on both physical activity and weight status among adolescents from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The students receiving it performed seven minutes more physical activity each day and gained almost one kilogram less weight.

A model to scale up the intervention has been developed and Physical Activity 4 Everyone has been awarded an inaugural NSW Health Translational

Research grant to evaluate the intervention.

#### Acknowledgments

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