



Wellness Policy ***03/2024 Assessment***

The below assessment of Stevens' implementation of the Wellness Policy has been developed based on feedback from a variety of sources, including:

1. Wellness Committee meeting
2. Results of the Youth Survey
3. Staff verbal feedback
4. Food Services staff observation

The areas of the Wellness Policy identified as meeting or excelling expectations are:

1. The Food Service Department's **compliance with regulatory expectations** in regards to food provided, food preparation, and safety is exceptional, per consistent feedback from the Board of Health.
2. Stevens' robust **performance quality improvement (PQI) system** is routinely engaged to improve the wellness of youth served. An example is the Hair Care PQI actively working to improve youth of colors' access to appropriate hair care products.

The areas of the Wellness Policy identified as needing improvement are:

1. Nutrition / Nutrition Promotion and Education

- a) Observation is that over the course of the past 6-12 months, more youth have presented with food-related behaviors, such as refusing to eat certain items, attempting to overeat preferred items, and generally showing poor food choices. One factor appears to be newer and younger direct care staff, who struggled to encourage youth to try new foods and make healthy choices. Direct care staff need verbal and written reminders regarding their role in this regard and support in implementation.
 - b) Youth at Stevens need a more comprehensive nutrition education than what is provided through PAYA and the Culinary Pre-vocational Class. The Education Department is exploring curriculums for this; and a Health Class is being planned that will include more thorough education and practice regarding food preparation, meal planning and nutrition.
 - c) The program will explore the impact of having more youth who are neurodiverse and/or have sensory issues that impact their food choices.
 - d) Food choices, including snacks, also need to be explored and addressed. There is a need to ensure that youth have some culturally-relevant meals and food choices.
2. **Physical Activity** - Although youth received a great deal of physical activity as part of the overall programming at Stevens, a goal has been identified to increase cardio physical activity youth are engaged in. Observation is that more youth are refusing to participate in physical activities with little consequence to them. A goal and action steps were identified to address this goal.
3. **Medication Errors** – A PQI is being started with the goal of reduction of medication errors, which have increased over this past year.