

## 2014 Farm Show Report

### Where to find them:

Visit the Penn State Hershey (booth #5010) in the corner of the Main Exposition Hall next to the Pennsylvania Marketplace between 1 and 7 p.m. through Friday, and from 9 a.m. until noon Saturday.

Get a free flu shot between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. each day of the Farm Show at the PA Department of Health booth in the Main Exposition Hall located behind the Carousel.

Across from stands selling sausages and strudels, nurses from Penn State Hershey check blood pressure, calculate Body Mass Indexes (BMI), and discuss smoking, physical activity, healthy nutrition choices. Nurses are also seen chatting with visitors about the benefits of regular exercise as they walk on a treadmill. Along with staff from CBS 21, they encourage visitors at the 2014 [Pennsylvania Farm Show](#) to take a pledge against texting while driving,

On the other side of the Main Exposition Hall, other Penn State Hershey nurses administer free flu shots at the Pennsylvania Department of Health booth. An annual seasonal flu vaccine is important to reduce the chances that one will get seasonal flu and spread it to others. When more people get vaccinated against the flu, less flu can spread through the community. This is the third year that Penn State Hershey has been part of the annual Farm Show, and the second year it has helped give flu shots at the Department of Health booth.

Charles Wilson, Interim Chief Community Relations Officer at Penn State Hershey, said the Farm Show is a great place for the organization to engage with the larger community. “Given the number of people who come through -- and the range of geography, health and personal issues they may cover -- it’s a perfect venue to communicate our healthcare capability, help people identify issues, get care and financial aid.”

Wilson said although Penn State Hershey has always been involved in the community, efforts have increased in recent years. The Affordable Care Act requires organizations and businesses to focus more on wellness and prevention rather than simply providing care when needed.

A 2012 Community Health Needs Assessment done in conjunction with Holy Spirit Health System and PinnacleHealth found the region’s top three needs to be promotion of a healthy lifestyle, health education and access to affordable health care.

At the Penn State Hershey PRO Wellness Center table, kids spin a wheel to win prizes by completing fun exercises such as knee bends, jumping jacks or toe touches, or answer questions about portion size, healthy habits and nutrition.



“Right now, our main focus is to grow champions for making healthy nutrition and physical activity choices daily,” said Ellie Hogentogler, [PRO Wellness Center](#). Its [Healthy Champions](#) program partners with Kohl’s department stores and area schools to promote proper nutrition and physical activity education.

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On the table, long strips of sugar packets taped together showed how much sugar you'll find in popular beverages. Clear cubes compared the amount of fat or sugar in common foods. "Events like this help us get information out there about eating right and being active," Hogentogler said.

At the next table, nurses introduce visitors to Know Your Numbers with free blood pressure measurements and BMI screenings. "We are one of only three states in the nation that are still increasing our BMIs," said Community Outreach Coordinator Judy Dillon. "That shows why it is so important for us to be educating our

community about healthy lifestyle behavior and wellness."

Behind tables where volunteers encourage passersby to sign pledges not to text while driving, visitors spend time walking on one of two treadmills set up by the Penn State Hershey [Heart & Vascular Institute](#) for its "Reach the Beach" campaign to encourage movement and provide education about the heart-healthy benefits of regular exercise.

Organizers determined that if visitors walk 40 miles each day of the Farm Show's run, they would log 320 miles by Saturday – the distance between Harrisburg and Virginia Beach, Va.

At the [Opt in for Life](#) table, Daphne Greenawalt and other staff spread the word that HIV and AIDS infection rates have not gone down for many years – and rates of some sexually-transmitted diseases are actually on the rise. They encourage those living with HIV to beware of food interactions with their medicines and to eat a healthy diet. They also educate booth visitors about the concerns over teens influenced by Internet and social media without always understanding how to protect themselves during sexual contact of any type.

The education component of Penn State Hershey's Farm Show offerings extends to health-related finances, as Sue Zohner and staff from the patient financial services office provide information about applying for programs such as CHIP and Medical Assistance. They also help visitors make sense of the Affordable Care Act and hand out paper applications for coverage.

"Some people will avoid going to the doctor because they don't have insurance and they don't have money to pay for it," she said. "Our job is to let them know we have many options to help them if they want to take care of themselves and be seen."

Dillon said the week-long presence at the Farm Show allows the organization to focus on serving the community through prevention and education. "For so long, we [in health care] were focused on disease, but we know now the emphasis on health and wellness is really important," she said. "This a good place for us to be."

