Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change for Obesity Prevention

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The Heart of the Problem

- Energy In: Calories consumed in food
- Energy Out: Calories spent
  - Metabolism, Activity, Growth
- Balance Matters:
  - If In = Out, weight is stable
  - If Out > In, weight falls
  - If In > Out, weight rises
Excessive Caloric Intake: Coke Sizes Over the Years
Excessive Caloric Intake: Hershey Bar Sizes Over the Years
Inadequate Caloric Expenditure:
Time (and motion!) saving devices
Want to take a walk to get lunch?
Let’s do an experiment in self-reflection…
Q and A for You

• Take out a pen or pencil and a piece of scrap paper

• Think of one unhealthy or unsafe behavior you engage in, one thing you know would be better for you if you didn’t do it or did it less….
  – Don’t worry, I’m not going to ask you to share it!! 😊

• Write down the biggest reason you can think of for why do that thing or why you don’t stop doing it?

• Stand up if you listed….
  ✓ Things related to your knowledge about the health effects of that behavior
  ✓ Things related to your attitudes about your health or about that behavior
  ✓ Things related to a lack of skills to change the behavior
  ✓ Things related to convenience, access, time, affordability of the behavior or of its healthier alternative
Addressing Childhood Obesity

An ecologic approach is required

Individual  Family  Community  Society
Health Impact Pyramid

- Counseling, Education
- Clinical Interventions
- Long-Lasting Protective Interventions
- Changing the Context to Make Individuals’ Default Decisions Healthy
- Socioeconomic Factors

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2836340/
Making health easier

or

“if you build it, they will come”

(sort of)
What do we mean by "Policy"

- a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency, facility, etc.: “We have a company policy to flex schedules so employees can work out.”

- a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, ruler, political party: “As a matter of policy, the preference of the United States is to capture terrorist suspects.”

- action or procedure conforming to or considered with reference to prudence or expediency: “It is good policy to allow people to telecommute in today’s cost-controlling environment.”

- “Big P, little p”
What is "Policy?" – The “Big P”

- A city council passes an ordinance to ban the inclusion of toys in children’s meals not meeting certain nutrition standards

- A county board adopts a policy to implement a “complete streets” approach in all transportation projects

- A state passes a law requiring minimum minutes of daily physical education in public schools

- The U.S. Congress votes to keep SNAP funding in the Farm Bill

- *Educate yourselves and constituents about policy issues, disseminate effective approaches from other places, share research on best practices with policy makers*
  - FOLLOW FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDANCE!!
What is "Policy?" – The “Little p"

- A church include salads and/or fresh fruits and vegetables in every meal
- A school decides to do only healthy fundraising (either nutritious low-calorie food or no food at all)
- A YMCA sets minimum minutes for physical activity in all children’s programming – even tutoring
- A worksite develops a health committee to work with leadership on healthy policy initiatives
Systems Change

- Systems interventions are changes that impact all elements of an organization, institution, or system.

- A shift in the way that an institution or a community makes decisions about policies, programs, and the allocation of its resources.

- Types of systems include: school, transportation, parks and recreation, etc.

- Sometimes takes “Big P” and sometimes “small p”
Examples of Systems Change

- Department of Transportation decides it will prioritize pedestrian safety in all infrastructure projects

- Board of Education decides it will consider all health-related agenda items immediately after those focused on educational achievement, and before any others

- Community-based organization decides it will use a “health in all policies” approach in all decision-making
Environmental Change

- Making improvements in the built and physical environment that will support healthy eating and physical activity
  - Pertains to “access” and making sure the healthy option is the easy option

- Sometimes takes “big P” policy
  - Laws, ordinances, zoning codes can change environments

- Sometimes takes “little p” policy
  - Organizations, businesses, community residents can make their environments different
Examples of Environmental Change

• Local stores and restaurants make fruits and vegetables more available

• Permanent signage promotes healthier items in retail establishments

• School opens its playground to community for physical activity after school hours

• Community cleans up vacant lots to create play spaces

• Municipal government removes obstacles to walking and biking
So, what’s with the “sort of?”

- Policy, systems, and environmental changes alone won’t change behavior – usually
  - Store owners talk about un-purchased fruits and vegetables
  - School food workers talk about healthy food getting tossed in the trash
  - Park staff talk about lack of use
  - Cyclists talk about drivers not following the rules of the road (and vice-versa)

- City of Chicago – Childcare Policy Study Example
  - Policy ≠ Change in Childcare Practices
  - BUT…
    - Training and resources for providers DID lead to change!
Closing Thoughts…

- PSE alone will not change the world – but it sure does help!

- Policy and environmental change are not always easy but can go a long way!

- Policy and environmental change can start with anyone!

- Many communities are in the same boat!
CLOCC Resources for PSE Change

• Website: www.clocc.net

  – Blueprint for Accelerating Progress in Childhood Obesity Prevention in Chicago

  – Policy and Legislation Page
    • Compendium of evidence-based obesity prevention strategies
    • CLOCC Policy Agenda
    • Protocol for Requests for CLOCC’s Support of Policies

  – Healthy School Environment Fact Sheets

  – …and much, much more!
THANK YOU for YOUR ATTENTION