



2011 CASE STUDIES

California Obesity Prevention **Community Grants**



The California Obesity Prevention Program (COPP) is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funded program of the California Department of Public Health. The program works to increase physical activity, improve nutrition, and prevent obesity among all Californians.

Specifically, the program addresses environmental and policy change strategies related to six obesity prevention target areas, including:

- Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Increase physical activity
- Increase breastfeeding initiation, duration, and exclusivity
- Decrease consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- Decrease consumption of high energy-dense foods (foods that are high in calories but have low nutritional value)
- Decrease television viewing time (screen time)

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Introduction

California, like the rest of the nation, struggles with the social and economic costs of the obesity epidemic. In California, obesity affects 24.8 percent of adults, 17 percent of children 6–11, and 17.6 percent of 12–19 year olds. Hispanic and African-American communities experience higher rates of obesity, and low-income communities suffer from both social and health inequities. To provide leadership and support for the implementation of environmental and policy change strategies across the state, the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) California Obesity Prevention Program (COPP) received a five-year grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in 2008. The goal of the grant is to create communities where healthy eating and physical activity are the easy and preferred choices for all Californians. The most promising strategies for obesity prevention are outlined in the 2010 California Obesity Prevention Plan: A Vision for Tomorrow, Strategic Actions for Today (Plan).

To support implementation of policy and environmental strategies outlined in the Plan and to evaluate their impact, COPP awarded mini-grants to seven local health departments and community organizations across the state. These grantees have delved into activities ranging from the promotion of active transportation and "complete streets" to improving the nutritional content of mobile food truck meals offered to migrant farm workers, increasing the amount and effectiveness of physical activity present in early childhood education settings, and measuring the percentage of healthy versus unhealthy food retailers in rural communities. Grantees are also revising General Plan and zoning policies to enable and promote the use of community gardens to increase residents' access to fresh fruits and vegetables.

These case studies are designed to share emerging and best practices in communitywide obesity prevention. A variety of strategies are used to increase physical activity, reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages and calorie-dense foods, and increase consumptions of fruits and vegetables. Cutting edge interventions in various community settings have been used by these seven California communities ranging from fayucas (snack trucks) and corner stores to farmers' markets, parks, and childcare centers.

These case studies are intended to motivate and inspire other communities across California and the nation to engage in the strategies from the Plan to impact obesity.

Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency



Demographics

- ◆ Mendocino County is located on the coast of California north of San Francisco. The county and its four incorporated cities (Fort Bragg, Point Arena, Willits, and Ukiah) have a population of 87,841.
- ◆ **Ethnicity**
 - 69% White
 - 22% Hispanic/Latino
 - 9% Other
- ◆ The Census Bureau estimated that in 2009, 17.5 % of residents lived in poverty compared to 14.2 % statewide, and the median household income in 2009 was \$41,488 (\$58,925 for California).

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Health Zones Project

Mendocino County's *Health Zones Project's* two main objectives are to:

- 1 establish a Food Policy Council to coordinate countywide activities to reduce hunger, increase health, and expand local food production and economic vitality
- 2 engage in policy and environmental changes to increase the availability of healthy food choices by allowing farmers' markets and community gardens to become established more easily and to decrease consumption of low-nutrient foods linked to obesity by either prohibiting new fast food outlets in certain areas or requiring a conditional use permit with a public hearing before a new fast food outlet is permitted

Background

In 2009, the Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency received a grant from The California Endowment that funded a Local Healthy Food Summit.

"After the Summit was held in May 2010 we realized there was a real need for a group to continue to focus on food policy," said Linda Helland, Health Zones Coordinator for Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency. "The timing of the California Obesity Prevention Program's Community Grant allowed us to use the Summit's momentum to form the Mendocino County Food Policy Council (FPC)."

As a first step, the Health and Human Services Agency conducted a study of the retail food environment in Mendocino County and found that there were twice as many fast food outlets and convenience stores as grocery stores and farmers' markets. In Willits, the city most oversaturated with fast food and convenience food, there were five times as many fast food outlets and convenience stores as places to buy fresh produce.

Results

In March 2011, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to support the independent Mendocino County FPC. All four incorporated cities have also approved the resolution. FPC will advise the Board of Supervisors at least twice a year on food and farming matters.

FPC completed its vision, mission, and operating procedures and is holding monthly meetings. In addition to County Supervisors and City Council members, members include representatives of the school, business, health care, and non-profit sectors. There is a standing Education Subcommittee, and ad hoc committees are formed for specific activities. In the coming months, members will develop an Action Plan with prioritized objectives.

MENDOCINO COUNTY

After a year of testimony by community advocates, the Planning Commission for the city of Ukiah (population 16,075) approved a downtown zoning code revision to allow community gardens and farmers' markets by right instead of through a permit process as was previously required. The code would also prohibit new chain fast food restaurants from opening. The Ukiah City Council is expected to vote on the code revision in the coming weeks.

Upon review of the zoning codes for two of the other cities in the county, Fort Bragg (population 7,273) and Point Arena (population 449), Helland suggested code revision language to improve access to healthy foods. It was positively received by the Planning Director of Fort Bragg and the City Manager and City Council of Point Arena. Helland also presented the results of the Retail Food Environment study to the Point Arena City Council to consider in the context of zoning for healthy foods. These cities plan to move forward with some of the suggested zoning changes in the near future.

The FPC also weighed in on the Ukiah Valley Area Plan to recommend preserving as much agricultural land as possible, rather than adopting the current proposal to re-zone land for housing and retail. The County Board of Supervisors adopted the Plan that preserved most of the land currently zoned for agriculture. Preserving land for growers means more local food is available to residents through farmers' markets, healthy food retailers, and farm to institution programs.

Facilitators and Challenges

The biggest challenge was time, according to Helland, who soon realized that one year is not enough time for major policy change. City planning departments are short staffed and overwhelmed, and writing new code language is slow. The planning commission discussion of the downtown zoning code took 18 months, and the city council review took six months.

While public health practitioners have known for centuries that policy change has been the means to impact population health, advocates have run into sentiments from some policymakers who believe education is the only way to improve eating habits, and that health considerations are peripheral to the realm of land use planning.

FPC lacks the resources for a formal community food assessment but is undertaking a partial assessment. "A comprehensive assessment would help us determine what policy changes we should pursue and where the gaps and opportunities are in our local food system," explained Helland.

Another challenge is getting farmers involved in policymaking. "Supporting our local farmers was one of the primary reasons we started the FPC," Helland explains, "but they're busy planting, weeding, and harvesting all day, and often aren't interested in sitting around in meetings. So we decided to go to them." FPC members take turns visiting area farmers' markets and asking farmers what barriers they face that FPC may be able to tackle. As a result of farmer input, FPC is currently working to clarify the regulatory requirements for small scale food processing.

Lessons Learned

Helland recommends the combined approach of easing the establishment of farmers' markets and community gardens by eliminating fees and permits and simultaneously restricting new fast food outlets. "It's a kind of 'carrot and stick' approach of making the good stuff easier to provide and the bad stuff a little less easy," she explained. "This way while we increase access to healthy food, we also decrease the ubiquity of unhealthy food in an attempt to create a more balanced food environment."

Looking back, Helland would have taken more time earlier in the process for community organizing and engaging youth in healthy food advocacy. Also, she wishes that funding would have allowed her to pay mileage to FPC participants from outlying areas of sprawling Mendocino County to attend meetings and to provide refreshments for advocacy trainings and strategizing sessions, especially with students.



Monterey County Health Department



Demographics

- ◆ Monterey County is located on California's Central Coast. The county and its 12 incorporated cities have a population of 415,057.
- ◆ **Ethnicity**
 - 55% Hispanic/Latino
 - 33% White
 - 12% Other
- ◆ The Census Bureau estimated that in 2009, 17.2% of Monterey County residents lived in poverty, compared to 14.2% statewide, with a median household income of \$57,647 (\$58,925 for California).

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Offering Healthy Food in Lunch and Snack Trucks

Monterey County implemented a restaurant program with the loncheras (lunch trucks) and fayucas (snack trucks) that serve nearly 1,300 farm workers in Reiter Affiliated Company's (RAC) berry fields. Activities are designed to increase and promote the availability of healthy food options and limit access to energy-dense foods and sugary beverages. The project goals are to:

- 1 increase the number of healthy menu items and assist vendors with the procurement of fresh fruits and vegetables and healthier snacks and beverages
- 2 work with the local employer, RAC, in the development and adoption of worksite policies to increase access to healthy foods, snacks, and beverages

An earlier grant, Steps to a Healthy Salinas, focused on working with local taquerias (taco shops) to offer healthier foods and beverages in their restaurants. Based on this experience, and in recognition of the large number of agricultural workers in the county, the focus moved to the vendor trucks serving these workers.

"The agricultural fields are geographically isolated, so the food choices for the workers are very limited," said Claire Richardson, Chronic Disease Prevention Coordinator with the Monterey County Health Department (MCHD). "The majority of workers purchase one or two meals a day, plus snacks from these mobile vendors. If we want to impact workers' health we need to work with the food vendors who come to them."

RAC, the largest fresh berry supplier in North America, approached MCHD to replicate an initiative in Ventura County to provide nutrition education for lunch truck owners serving RAC employees. MCHD recognized an opportunity to use the California Obesity Prevention Program's Community Grant for Obesity Prevention to broaden the scope to include assisting food vendors in implementing healthy changes and shaping RAC's healthy food and beverage policy.

Results

With guidance from RAC, an employee advisory committee, and individual field managers, Angelica Chavez, Chronic Disease Prevention Specialist with MCHD began identifying and contacting the 11 companies and individuals operating the many loncheras and fayucas selling food to RAC employees.

Over the course of the project, three trainings were held for vendors on preparing and promoting healthier foods. Staff worked one-on-one with vendors to make recommendations to improve the nutritional value of the foods served. Many of the loncheras offered some healthy choices, or could easily modify their practices

MONTEREY COUNTY



by adding fresh produce, giving cheese and sour cream only on request, grilling instead of frying fish for tacos, and avoiding dipping corn tortillas in oil prior to heating them. Most of these changes were done without requiring a price increase or a profit loss, a concern of vendors.

Subsequently, two of the vendors, Watsonville Catering and Reyna's Catering (formerly El Rinconcito) won a Golden Carrot Award from the United Way of Santa Cruz in July 2011—the first time a mobile restaurant had received such recognition.

Reyna's Catering is considered a "model vendor" due to the many healthy changes they made. Two menu boards were designed and provided by MCHD for permanent placement on the side of the trucks to clearly display the healthy options available. Providing menu boards was an attractive incentive for this vendor to make menu changes and also promoted sustainability by ensuring the healthy options are now permanently part of the menu.

Facilitators and Challenges

RAC provided many resources to the project to help guide its success, including employee health initiatives that included classes developed with the University of California, Davis, University of California, Berkeley, a Health Programs Coordinator, and two promotoras on staff.

An unexpected challenge was how time consuming it was to identify the vendors and work with them one-on-one. Getting a complete list of trucks required contacting RAC's 40 field managers. While the individual consultations took time it was the most effective way of establishing relationships that resulted in healthy changes.

Another challenge was measuring the impact of the changes. Richardson intends to continue working with the vendors to collect any available purchasing and sales data and possibly

conduct intercept surveys of workers as they make lunch and snack truck purchases. Anecdotal information indicates that vendors are willing and able to make changes, and workers are interested in eating healthier food, which indicates the changes are sustainable.

Lessons Learned

"It's important to remember when working with people in non-health related industries that it can take some time to convey the health issues and really sell the idea of this type of health initiative," explained Richardson. "Fortunately many of these vendors have a long relationship with the farm community—some are former farm workers themselves—and they liked the idea of being a part of an effort to improve workers' health."

Richardson also believes that their efforts were aided by how they approached vendors.

"Instead of making vendors feel like they were serving unhealthy food that needed to change, Chavez really helped increase their confidence by showing them what they were doing well first, then moving on to more changes if they were able to," explained Richardson. "I really believe in this positive reinforcement model for this type of work; it worked really well for us!"



City of Rancho Cucamonga

Demographics

- ◆ Nestled in the base of the foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains in San Bernardino County, is an ethnically and racially diverse suburban community. As one of Southern California's fastest growing communities, Rancho Cucamonga's population of 165,269 has grown 350% since 1977.

The Census Bureau estimates that from 2005–2009, 5% of Rancho Cucamonga residents lived in poverty, compared to 13.2% statewide, with a median household income of \$77,871 (\$60,392 California).

◆ Ethnicity

- 43% White
- 35% Hispanic/Latino
- 10% Asian
- 9% African American
- 3% Other

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Healthy RC Kids

Through the Healthy RC Kids Partnership, the City of Rancho Cucamonga is working to change community systems to significantly improve opportunities for healthy eating and active living for children and families throughout the city, placing special emphasis on reaching children who are at greatest risk for obesity. Project goals include:

- 1 improving access to healthy food, especially fresh produce, through land use policies and strategies to encourage community gardens and farmers' markets
- 2 implementing a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program at Southwest Rancho Cucamonga schools to enable and encourage all children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
- 3 developing communitywide policies across the organizations serving Rancho Cucamonga youth so that children consistently encounter healthy messages and healthy choices that are easily accessible as they go about their daily activities

Background

Southwest Cucamonga, the focus of the project, is a predominantly Latino community with higher rates of poverty and few neighborhood amenities—key risk factors for obesity and related chronic diseases. There are no grocery stores selling fresh produce, and there is limited access to safe open space for physical activity. Two out of every three residents are considered obese or overweight, and three out of every four school children do not meet fitness standards.

In response to these alarming health statistics and environmental conditions, the City of Rancho Cucamonga established Healthy RC Kids, a collaborative effort of local residents and over 50 community stakeholders, including elected officials, city staff, the County Department of Public Health, hospitals, schools, non-profits, faith based groups, community-based organizations, businesses, and local universities. Healthy RC Kids mobilizes community resources to advance policies that support healthy eating and active living opportunities.

Results

Healthy RC Kids conducted an extensive community outreach process in Southwest Cucamonga, including a community forum to identify barriers to healthy eating and active living. Over 150 adult and youth participants identified challenges and potential solutions that ultimately became the work plan for the California Obesity Prevention Plan Community Grant.

Focus groups, stakeholder interviews, and site visits determined how land use policies could be amended to create more opportunities for community gardens and farmers' markets, two priorities identified through the community forum. While both were permitted uses, they were not legally defined uses in the City's munic-

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pal code and were only allowed in limited areas of the city. The results of the community outreach process and the work of the Healthy RC Kids Partnership led directly to the policies presented to the City Council aimed at creating access to healthy food, especially fresh fruits and vegetables, in areas at greatest risk for obesity.

The City Council amended the development code to permit publicly and privately owned vacant land in residential districts to be used by the community or a neighborhood for the growing of fruits, vegetables, and culinary herbs for personal consumption and/or to be offered for sale on site or at a local Certified Farmers' Market. The Council also waived the Conditional Use Permit fees normally associated with this type of use. The approved definition for farmers' markets requires that at least 75% of the products sold are farm produce or products made from farm produce. The code also allows farmers' markets in Community Commercial Use areas in a broad swath of the city.

Shortly after this Council action, a new farmers' market opened in Rancho Cucamonga, and plans are currently underway for a market to open in Southwest Cucamonga. Healthy RC Kids recently received a United Way grant to implement the Bringing Health Home program—a "double bucks" program that provides matching dollar subsidies of up to \$50 per month for Southwest Cucamonga residents purchasing fresh produce at local farmers' markets. The City also encourages farmers' markets to accept payments from participants in food assistance programs and provides a resource packet to markets to facilitate the use of food stamp electronic benefits transfer cards.

In an effort to advance the Healthy RC Kids initiative, the City integrated a leadership training program into its obesity prevention work. "Campeones para la Comunidad" (Community Champions) is designed to equip residents with the skills they need to meaningfully participate in the policy-making process and build their capacity to change their environments to promote health.



Additionally, Healthy RC Kids, in partnership with the County of San Bernardino, implemented an SRTS program at three schools in Southwest Cucamonga. Schools participated in stakeholder workshops, student assemblies, and bike rodeos. An SRTS toolkit was developed to support continued implementation at these sites, as well as the five new schools this year. The City recently received a mini-grant from the National Center for Safe Routes to School to develop school-wide student-led SRTS activities that celebrate International Walk to School Month at one Southwest Cucamonga school. The Community Champions conducted a walkability audit to provide data to support a SRTS infrastructure grant application to construct a missing sidewalk in Southwest Cucamonga. The SRTS work will impact nearly 6,000 students.

Healthy RC Kids conducted a policy scan of partner agencies' existing policies and practices impacting children's opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating. By identifying key policy opportunities and adopting complementary policies, the goal is to change community systems to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Assessments are being conducted to support the development of a Healthy Food and/or Beverage Policy, as well as a Breastfeeding-Friendly Workplace Policy for both the City and partner organizations.

Facilitators and Challenges

The Healthy RC Kids comprehensive and holistic approach to health facilitated long-term environmental and policy changes, according to Erika Lewis-Huntley, Management Analyst for the City of Rancho Cucamonga.

"Bringing representatives from all city departments together to work on health initiatives makes our efforts much more effective," said Lewis-Huntley. "Departments aren't only focusing on one health issue or one way of addressing it, but instead can come up with solutions together they might not have on their own."

Lessons Learned

"You need to go beyond community engagement and really educate residents on the issues and how to effectively advocate," said Lewis-Huntley. "The Community Champions program has changed the dynamics of the community and now residents are working side-by-side with city staff and elected officials to make positive changes in their neighborhoods. This increases their sense of ownership and leads to sustainability of the changes."

United Way of Santa Cruz County



Demographics

- ◆ Watsonville is located in Santa Cruz County on California's Central Coast. Watsonville has a population of 51,199.

The Census Bureau estimates that from 2005–2009, 19.2% of Watsonville residents lived in poverty, compared to 13.2% statewide, with a median household income of \$47,526 (\$60,392 California).

- ◆ **Ethnicity**

- 81% Hispanic/Latino
- 14% White
- 5% Other

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Jóvenes SANOS

The United Way of Santa Cruz supported the efforts of Jóvenes SANOS (Saludables, Actividades, Nutriciones, Opciones, Sabudiria), a Watsonville-based high school leadership and advocacy program, to advance policy and environmental change efforts to:

- 1 encourage corner stores to offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and make connections with local farmers to provide produce
- 2 work with the City of Watsonville to write healthy food criteria into the business permit process for new restaurants
- 3 complete an assessment of Watsonville park facilities in order to help the City prioritize parks in need of improvements and seek funding to increase park safety

The United Way of Santa Cruz formed Jóvenes SANOS five years ago to involve youth in addressing high obesity rates in the southern part of the county, particularly in the city of Watsonville. Affiliated with the 150-member countywide Go for Health! Collaborative, the youth group's 15–20 high school students were selected by current members through an application and interview process. Retention is good, with most members staying active for at least two years.

"The Jóvenes SANOS youth did some research and found out that while 80 different fruits and vegetables are grown in their region, community members don't have access to these healthy foods due to lack of transportation to grocery stores and other factors," said Kymerly LaCrosse, Community Organizer, United Way of Santa Cruz. "The Jóvenes SANOS presented to the Watsonville City Council, which resulted in the formation of a task force with Jóvenes SANOS, City Council and community members and restaurant owners to see how the food environment could be improved."

The California Obesity Prevention Programs' Community Grant for Obesity Prevention came at an opportune time, as the future of Jóvenes SANOS was in question due to funding and staff changes.

Results

While the task force originally considered crafting a moratorium on new fast food restaurants in the city, over time it was decided that a Healthy Options Ordinance would be more feasible. The Ordinance would require any new Watsonville restaurant or restaurant that wants to expand to offer a minimum number of healthy choices. Jóvenes SANOS members met one-on-one with many City Council members and presented to the Council the night of the vote on the motion. Unexpected opposition from the California Restaurant Association and several hours of delay in hearing the motion caused some last minute scrambling among Jóvenes SANOS members, but the heartfelt testimony of the youth encouraged council members to pass the ordinance on a 5-1 vote in October 2010.

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"This issue was brought to us by the youth. They're the ones who are proposing public policy," said Watsonville City Councilmember Manuel Quintero Bersamin. "They're saying 'why don't you guys use your ability to help us end this addiction to fat, salt and sugar?' How could we not act?"

Karen Serrano, a three-year member of Jóvenes SANOS says, "The Healthy Options Ordinance took a lot of time and work but in the end we passed it as a community. I learned a lot by working on the ordinance."

"Now the City Council considers Jóvenes SANOS as a partner and voice in the community, and members request their input," said LaCrosse. "Our new mayor requested that Jóvenes Sanos be included in a recent meeting on health issues."

An unexpected result was a tightening of the nutrition requirements for the County of Santa Cruz Golden Carrot Awards for restaurants with high standards for food safety and nutrition. <http://www.unitedwaysc.org/go-health>

Jóvenes SANOS also works with three local markets and corner stores to encourage them to sell local fruits and vegetables. The youth help the markets to highlight healthier foods, especially near the check-out counters and remove or relocate candy, chips, and other unhealthy items. The Jóvenes SANOS youth also survey accessibility to local parks by walking the local area and assessing the safety and access.

"Jóvenes SANOS really has had an impact on our store. We sell bananas and oranges at the check-out register and have never sold so many!" said owner of De L'Colmena Market. "The sales are good but even better is how we feel about selling healthy food to our community."

Facilitators and Challenges

According to LaCrosse, the fact that the group is youth-driven helps with recruitment and retention, as members feel ownership and responsibility. Recruitment fairs have attracted up to 60 youth, and now siblings and other relatives of current or past members are joining Jóvenes SANOS, contributing to the group's sustainability.

Lessons Learned

"Adult mentors need to be very organized in order to most effectively use the limited time youth have," advised LaCrosse. "It is essential to the success of the group to have an agreement about how you're going to work together and specifically develop mutual respect. The students help keep each other in check and it is my job to make sure we're staying on track and following the rules."

LaCrosse also stressed the importance of having fun together to keep the youth motivated and working together. Jóvenes SANOS members play games at some meetings, have meals together, enjoy arcade nights and holiday events, and are planning a summer camping trip.

A final note about advocacy: youth need to understand that government meetings don't always go as planned, and flexibility is essential. It's important to prepare youth advocates for changing schedules and long meetings, in addition to providing a good background on the subject matter.

View this video for more on the work of Jóvenes SANOS: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGU1z1RvQ9M>



San Francisco Department of Public Health



Demographics

- ◆ San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) is the eighth largest school district in California, educating over 52,900 students in Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade.
- ◆ **Ethnicity**
 - 33% Chinese
 - 24% Hispanic/Latino
 - 12% White
 - 10% African American
 - 21% Other
- ◆ 61% of students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

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Shape Up San Francisco

Shape Up San Francisco undertook an assessment of physical education (PE) in 28 SFUSD schools with the following goals:

- 1 determine the quality and quantity of PE in elementary, middle, and high schools
- 2 use assessment data and develop policy recommendations for SFUSD
- 3 present data and policy recommendations at a PE Forum for school and community stakeholders
- 4 advocate for the inclusion of PE in state ranking and scoring indices

Background

Shape Up San Francisco, a public-private initiative, began in 2006 to address chronic disease prevention, health disparities, and policy and systems change focusing on physical activity and nutrition. Shape Up SF turned its attention to PE after the 2010 release of *Physical Education Research for Kids (PERK)*, a study by the California Task Force on Youth and Workplace Wellness. PERK outlined a menu of options for policy makers, with the first priority area to improve content and evaluation of PE.

“We went to the state hearing and it became clear to us that physical education is a phenomenal way to address physical inactivity, help to close the achievement gap and support academic success,” said Christina Goette, Senior Health Program Planner at the San Francisco Department of Public Health.

A group of PE advocates convened in May 2010 to discuss PERK recommendations and draft a plan of action, which included collecting needed data on PE programs in San Francisco schools.

Goette said, “The opportunity for the California Obesity Prevention Program’s Community Grant came at the perfect time for us to capture the momentum to embark on the physical education assessment.”

Results

Led by Kristine Madsen, MD, MPH, of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF)’s Center for Obesity Assessment, Study and Treatment, the assessment included direct observations of 5th, 7th and 9th grade PE classes in 20 elementary, four middle, and four high schools. Each PE class was observed three times during the study period (March–May 2011) using the validated System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time (SOFIT) tool. Facilities assessments were done, along with student surveys and interviews with PE teachers, principals, and Parent-Teacher Association presidents at each school.

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"This study was modeled on an assessment conducted by UCSF with schools in Oakland, so we were able to move quickly after the grant was awarded," said Marianne Szeto, Shape Up SF Program Specialist.

While complete analysis of the data is ongoing, Shape Up SF was able to share preliminary findings and policy recommendations at a PE Forum in August 2011. The first event was a two-hour session with SFUSD staff, including a superintendent, teachers, and administrators serving a group of underachieving schools. The discussion focused on the relationship between brain development and physical activity and the important role PE can play in academic success.

The second event was held at the Community Health Network and was co-sponsored by SF's Bay Health Improvement Program and SF General Hospital's Wellness Initiative. This talk was geared towards researchers, providers, clinicians, teachers, and kinesiology students. The third event was held at Sports Basement, a Shape Up SF partner for many years that used its resources to attract a wider audience of parents, PE teachers, and physical activity advocates.

A key finding of the assessment was that when PE is occurring, students are engaging in an adequate amount of moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA). However, the study showed that elementary schools are far below the mandate for number of scheduled minutes of PE per week. Eighty percent of the elementary schools in the study did not meet the mandated 200 minutes of PE scheduled every 10 days. It is very difficult for students to get the recommended health-enhancing 60 minutes of MVPA per day when there is not sufficient time for PE scheduled into the school day.

Shape Up SF's PE advocates developed recommendations in three categories below with strategies outlined for each:

- 1 increase awareness about the benefits of PE and physical activity
- 2 increase the amount of MVPA that students receive to meet state mandated minutes for PE
- 3 develop and implement measures of accountability to ensure quality PE throughout the school district

"Fortuitously, the day before the PE Forum, the California Department of Education released its "Blueprint for Great Schools" report, giving more weight to our recommended strategy of including fitness test scores in state rankings, specifically the Academic Performance Index," said Goette.

Facilitators and Challenges

Time constraints were the major challenge, according to Goette and Szeto. The observations were originally planned for the fall, but several factors delayed the project start until the spring. Having UCSF already as a partner made it possible to complete the project within the time allotted.

"Dr. Madsen and her team were just awesome," said Szeto. "Getting the funding right as the school year started and still being able to get all the university and school district approvals and accomplish the assessment by the end of the school year was amazing. UCSF staff worked around testing schedules, bad weather, cancelled Physical Education classes... you name a barrier and they worked around it."

Another time constraint concerned access to school administrators for sharing assessment findings and recommendations. Shape Up SF had been hoping to present to all principals at the district's Administrators' Institute, however in the end they presented during two hours of a professional development day to a smaller group of administrators and teachers. To make the most of their time with the district and to reach a wider audience, Shape Up SF arranged for their keynote speaker, Dr. Ratey, to have lunch with District Superintendent Carlos Garcia. They held an evening PE Forum at Sports Basement and are planning future presentations of their finding and recommendations to other audiences in the coming months. Next steps include developing case studies showcasing how mandatory minutes are being achieved. The cases studies and policy recommendations will be promoted to policymakers as they work towards implementation.

Lessons Learned

Regarding the scheduling of the assessments, Goette said, "In hindsight it still would have been better to start in the fall to avoid the spring testing schedule and rainy weather. Having the funding come earlier in the year, or having a longer grant period would have allowed for more planning to be able to start in the fall."

"We need to use the physical education assessment data to continue building awareness and support for providing physical education in an equitable way, so all children benefit," said Goette. "One of the main drivers for doing the assessment was to gather data to support the process. It takes time to create a movement and to develop an advocacy base of people to encourage the district to prioritize time and funding for physical education."

*Resources: Blueprint for Great Schools, California Department of Education
<http://www.cde.ca.gov/eolin/bp/bpcontents.asp>*

Shasta County Public Health



Demographics

- ◆ Shasta County is located in Northern California. The county and its three incorporated cities have a population of 177,233.

The Census Bureau estimated that in 2009, 18.5% of Shasta County residents lived in poverty, compared to 14.2% statewide, with a median household income of \$42,552 (\$58,925 for California).

◆ Ethnicity

- 82% White
- 8% Hispanic/Latino
- 10% Other

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Healthy Shasta

Shasta County Public Health worked to improve the environment for fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Their project goals are to

- 1 work with local growers' associations to expand the number of farmers' markets that accept Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) for CalFresh, formerly known as food stamps
- 2 increase support for and development of safer, more connected bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in the following ways:
 - a work with the City of Redding to form a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 - b install convenient bicycle racks at Shasta College
 - c educate decision makers on the importance of and best practices for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure

Background

Healthy Shasta is a countywide collaborative of partners addressing obesity and increasing levels of physical activity and healthy eating. Each partner organization makes a commitment to "Walk the Talk" by setting and implementing organizational goals for policy, environmental, or systems changes that make healthy eating or physical activity easier for the people they serve, including employees, volunteers, community members, customers, patients, and students.

The California Obesity Prevention Program's (COPP) Community Grant was able to meet three needs identified by Healthy Shasta:

- 1 Mountain Growers Association (MGA), a collaborative operating three farmers' markets, approached Healthy Shasta for assistance setting up a program to accept EBT at its markets. Shasta Growers Association (SGA), which began accepting EBT at its Redding Market in 2009, approached Healthy Shasta for assistance in obtaining a second wireless point-of-sale device to use at its Anderson Farmers' Market
- 2 Healthy Shasta has hosted local trainings on walkability and bikeability, as well as worked with local cities on these topics. The City of Redding's new Bicycle Transportation Plan recommended the creation of a Bicycle Advisory Committee to focus on improving walkability and bikeability
- 3 Healthy Shasta provided Shasta College a bicycle rack designed by the Viva Downtown Association and manufactured by a local company as a prize in a Bike Commute Challenge. At that time, Shasta College expressed an interest in additional bike racks in new locations to improve bicycle parking on this community college campus

SHASTA COUNTY

Results

Melinda Shaffer, Shasta County Public Health Nutritionist, assisted MGA with the process required to accept EBT at their farmers' markets. This brought the total number of MGA and SGA markets accepting EBT to five with over 1,000 community members swiping their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards between July and October 2011. With the help of Health and Human Services Association's Community Relations Department, Shaffer designed and placed ads in local publications to promote EBT acceptance at MGA farmers' markets. The "Healthy Shasta Market Money" program was expanded this year to include all five markets in order to improve fruit and vegetable accessibility for CalFresh recipients. During 2011, \$84,412 in tokens were redeemed.

The City of Redding (population 89,861) completed its bike plan and they, along with two other cities, are in the process of applying for California Bicycle Transportation Account funds.

Budget constraints and staffing cuts at the City of Redding postponed the development of a formal Bicycle Advisory Committee, although the Shasta Cascade Bicycle Coalition now fills some of that role. However, prior to receiving the COPP grant, the City of Redding incorporated bicycling and pedestrian coordinator duties into part of one employee's job description, establishing an 'in-house expert' to work with various city departments to improve walkability and bikeability. COPP grant funds were used to send this planner to the ProWalkProBike Conference to build internal capacity at the city, learn best practices, and identify additional potential funding sources.

In the spring of 2011, Redding's City Council ranked "complete streets" as a top priority, which will benefit all transportation users. Healthy Shasta continues to work closely with local cities, including the City of Redding, to support their efforts in creating walkable and bikable communities.

The City of Anderson (population 9,932) showed its commitment to active transportation at its May 31st ribbon cutting for a new paved trail that links low-income housing, schools, and businesses. The COPP grant provided for a "walkabout" for engineers, planners, Planning Commissioners, and City Council members to experience the new trail and learn about features that increase walkability and bikeability in the community. Although a "bikeabout" in Anderson was postponed due to thunderstorms, another "bikeabout" is planned with leaders in the City of Redding. The COPP grant also provided print resources, including the American Planning Association's new *Complete Streets: Best Policy and Implementation Practices* for all cities in Shasta County.

To meet Shasta College's (student body > 10,000 students) request for additional bike racks, 19 racks were provided and the college provided the manpower and materials for installation. The racks are located in front of key buildings around the perimeter of the campus to supplement older racks in the center of campus that are only accessible via pedestrian paths.

Facilitators and Challenges

According to Shellisa Moore, Community Development Coordinator for Shasta County Public Health, challenges involved with getting EBT accepted at the MGA farmers' market had to do with the fact that MGA's board consists of volunteers who are busy working on their farms; the organization does not have any paid staff. Shaffer provided valuable support during the process, including driving to farms to obtain required signatures. When MGA proposed opening a farmers' market in the very low-income Enterprise area of Redding, they learned that the Temporary Use Permit required by the city would cost nearly \$1,000. Healthy Shasta overcame that challenge by working with the City of Redding, a Healthy Shasta partner, and the fee was waived.

"As a Healthy Shasta partner, the City of Redding is committed to supporting farmers' markets and healthy environments," explained Moore. "They have buy-in and commitment to the Healthy Shasta movement and that encouraged them to waive the fee."

Lessons Learned

The main lesson learned with this project is that current budget constraints can have a big impact on project plans. Community partners have lost staff, and the remaining staff are extremely busy. When it became clear that re-establishing the Bicycle Advisory Committee was not going to be possible, new alternatives quickly began to be explored and relationships continue to build.

"Shasta College was excited to get the bike racks," said Amy Pendergast, Shasta County Public Health's Community Education Specialist. "The college was really easy to work with, however budget cuts resulted in staff furlough days, and that impacted the installation schedule."

An important thing to remember in this work is that changing policies, processes, or the physical environment can take much longer than anticipated. Even when there is broad support, partner organizations have many competing priorities, so it's important to be flexible, build relationships, and keep at it.

California State University, Chico



Demographics

- ◆ Butte County is a rural, northern California county with a population of 220,577.
- ◆ The Census Bureau estimates that in 2009, 18.5% of Butte County's resident lived in poverty, compared to 14.2% statewide, with a median household income of \$41,196 (\$58,925 California).
- ◆ According to the 2009 Child Care Portfolio, 25% of children ages 0–5 in Butte County are living in poverty, well above California's statewide rate of 19.3%.
- ◆ **Ethnicity**
 - 75% White
 - 14% Hispanic/Latino
 - 4% Asian
 - 7% Other

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Increasing Physical Activity in Childcare Facilities

The California State University, Chico Research Foundation (CSUCRF) project goals were to assist childcare facilities serving low-income children in Butte County to:

- 1 develop, adopt, and implement policies that support physical activity and playing outdoors
- 2 promote caregivers'/teachers' encouragement of physical activity
- 3 implement practices that promote physical activity
- 4 limit screen time in childcare facilities

Background

A 2008 First 5 grant funded the creation of the Fit thru 5 Collaborative. The collaborative chose to focus on early childhood obesity in recognition of the fact that, according to 2008 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS) data, 33.2% of Butte County low-income children ages 0–5 are overweight. The rates for overweight vary by ethnicity, with 36.5% of Hispanic children and 34.7% of Asian children overweight compared to 26.8 percent for White (non-Hispanic). These rates are significantly above state averages.

The California Obesity Prevention Program's Community Grant provided funding to work directly on policy and environmental change to increase physical activity in childcare centers. The project focused on state-funded childcare centers since they serve low-income families.

"There is not a lot of focus on preschool physical activity anymore," said Michele Buran, Physical Activity Specialist for the Center for Nutrition and Activity Promotion at CSUCRF. "There is a real need to increase awareness and training among preschool teachers."

Steve Erwin, Assistant Director of Associated Student Child Development at CSU Chico, agrees. "What I've seen is that (early childhood programs) don't have that intentional engagement for movement activities. With what we know about child development and brain development, we need to understand that this isn't just play and fun, this is vital to a child's overall learning potential."

BUTTE COUNTY

Results

State-funded childcare providers were identified, and partnerships were created to address this need. Four of the eleven centers operated by the Butte County Office of Education (BCOE) were targeted, along with the Chico Community Children's Center, Helen Wilcox Preschool, and Mooretown Rancheria, which is located on tribal land. More than 350 preschoolers are served by these eight childcare centers.

A needs assessment was performed at each center, and staff received training and in-class support. Each center also received a customized package of physical activity equipment that best met the needs of that particular facility.

All four organizations created and adopted physical activity policies that support the recommended physical activity standards identified in *Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs* and address increased opportunities for active play through both structured and unstructured play, enhancement of indoor and outdoor play environments, teacher training, teacher encouragement and communication with parents.

Butte County Office of Education was the first partner to complete its policy and the other partners soon adopted very similar policies. The new policies were communicated to parents in a variety of ways, including adding language to parent handbooks to describe the commitment to physical activity and requirements for appropriate clothing to allow for physical activity, such as proper footwear, dressing in layers, and applying sunscreen.

One example of the success of the project showed up in the pre- and post-surveys done with teachers. Prior to the training, less than 30% of teachers reported children engaging in at least 90 minutes of physical activity per day, while nearly 86% of teachers reported this amount of physical activity after the trainings and passage of the policy. In addition, while less than 10% of teachers reported more than 61 minutes of supervised (teacher led) physical activity per week in the pre-survey, nearly 86% reported that amount of supervised physical activity in the post-survey.

As one teacher said, "We are providing more opportunity for physical activity inside as well as outside. We have purchased hoops, tunnels and other portable play equipment." Another reported, "The teachers are now getting more involved in instruction by way of interaction and modeling. Also they are allowing the children to be creative in creating their own games using similar concepts."

Facilitators and Challenges

Buran found that it is difficult for preschools to free up staff for trainings, and some preschools have little funding for training. To overcome this challenge, Buran scheduled various trainings with small groups of teachers, sometimes during the children's nap time, and did in-class role modeling with teachers.

Lessons Learned

While an initial project goal was to reduce television time in the preschools, Buran found rules at state-funded preschools allow for very little television time. Limiting television time may still be a valid strategy when working to improve the environment in home-based or private preschools, Buran noted.

Buran quickly realized that while teachers may have a concern about obesity prevention, they are more interested in the link with learning and brain development, so she tailored trainings to focus on how movement supports preschool learning standards.

She also found that the process of doing the needs assessment and creating the policy with staff is a teaching tool in itself, as it creates opportunities to discuss best practices, barriers, and opportunities for improvement.

Resources

Watch a video that outlines the project here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5vfvMCWuI4I&feature=plcp&context=C3f35119UDOEgsToPDskKVDgJovV-DIPeoiG5RGQIU>



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