Shape Up Somerville: Creating Social Change at the Community Level

December 4, 2013
Building Health Communities in New Jersey

Joseph A. Curtatone, Mayor
Somerville, Massachusetts
Portrayal of a “Healthy City”

Population: 78,000

Race/Ethnicity:
- African American: 7%
- Hispanic: 9%
- Asian: 6%

Density: 18,780 residents/mi²

Open Space: 5.37%

Per Capita Income: $23,628

Poverty Rate: 12%

Speak language other than English: 36%

Main languages: English, Spanish, Haitian-Creole, Portuguese
The Beginning of Shape Up Somerville

A city-wide campaign to increase daily physical activity and healthy eating through programming, physical infrastructure improvements, and policy work, aimed at:

- schools
- city government
- civic organizations
- community groups
- businesses

THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY.
Engaged 90 teachers in 100% of 1-3 grade classrooms
Participated in or conducted 100 community events
Trained 50 medical professionals (MDs, RNs)
Recruited 21 restaurants
Educated 811 families through 9 parent newsletters
Reached 353 community partners through 6 community newsletters
Reached over 20,000 community members through a monthly media piece (11 months)
Recruited every community-based after-school program (14)
Developed community-wide policies to promote and sustain change
Measuring Our Success

Two Year Results:

- In 2003, 46% of Somerville’s 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> grade students were overweight, or at risk of becoming overweight.
- On average, SUS reduced BMI z-scores by .06 in Somerville children after two full school years of the intervention, compared to two similar control communities.

### Prevalence, Incidence and Remission of Overweight and Obesity Over Two-Year Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sample</td>
<td>Baseline (n, %)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>326</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incidence</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remission</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Prevalence (percentage of subjects with BMIz greater or equal than 85<sup>th</sup> percentile)
- Incidence (percentage of subjects not initially overweight/obese at baseline but who became overweight/obese)
- Remission (percentage of subjects overweight/obese at baseline but not at follow-up)
Why Shape Up Somerville?

Making the healthy choice
the easy choice.
“There is a growing consensus that what we need to do in order to do a better job of preventing obesity is to coordinate activity across different sectors and different levels of scale, or to take what is called a “systems approach.”” —Ross Hammond.
Systems Affecting Obesity

- Active Transportation
- Access to Fresh Foods
- Innovative Curriculum
- Recreational Opportunities
- Open Space
- Zoning

(Systems are interlinked as part of the discussion on obesity.)
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
- Safe Routes to School
- Walk-Ride Day
- CYCLE Kids
- BOKS Program
- Phys. Ed. Curriculum

HEALTHY EATING
- School Wellness Policy
- Lean meats
- Whole grains
- Fresh produce
- Low-fat dairy
- No trans fats
Active Transportation

- Upgraded intersections
- Bike lanes, bike parking, bike corrals
- Hubway Bike Share program
- Back-in angled parking
- Light rail and community path extension

Zoning upgrades to promote:
- Mixed-use development
- Walking & biking
- Complete streets policy
- Take-over of state facilities
- Intensive Park renovation program
- Open Streets Initiative
- Fitness Challenge & Employee Wellness Program
Healthy Food Retailer Program:

- 50+ local restaurants currently enrolled; 55% increase over 6 months
- Staff include FT Coordinator, PT Nutritionist
- Staff work with chefs, owners to educate about healthy food preparation, highlighting healthy menu options at point-of-purchase
Farmers Markets:
- 2 summer markets
- 1 indoor winter market
- Subsidized year-round mobile market
- All accept EBT/SNAP, WIC

Urban Agriculture Initiative

School & Community Gardens

9 CSAs
Shaping Environments, Informing Behavior

Well Being of Somerville Report (CHA)

Meeting Vigorous or Moderate Physical Activity Guidelines, by Age Group (2002-2010)

*Somerville MS and HS Health Surveys are conducted alternating years

SOURCE: SOMERVILLE MS HEALTH SURVEY; SOMERVILLE HS HEALTH SURVEY; SOMERVILLE BRFSS 2002; SOMERVILLE 5-CITY BRFSS 2008
Shaping Environments, Informing Behavior

Snacks and Sweets Consumption in Middle and High School Students (2003-2010)

Sugar Sweetened Beverage Consumption in Middle and High School Students (2003-2010)

*Includes soda, punch, Kool-aid, and sports drinks
Somerville MS and HS Health Surveys are conducted alternating years

SOURCE: SOMERVILLE MS HEALTH SURVEY; SOMERVILLE HS HEALTH SURVEY
Shape Up Somerville:  
Shaping the National Agenda
LET’S MOVE!

SHAPE UP SOMERVILLE

LET’S MOVE!
From Shape Up to Let’s Move

- Engaging community members
- Using data to inform policy
- Transforming environments
- Active living policies
- Increased access to fresh foods
- Let’s Move! Cities & Towns
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