Policy Influences on Physical Activity: Challenges and Opportunities
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Objective

• To discuss state and local policy topics that have the potential to influence the rates of physical activity.

“The one who adapts his policy to the times prospers, and likewise that the one whose policy clashes with the demands of the times does not. “

--Niccolo Machiavelli
What is a policy?

• refers to a legislative or regulatory action, rule, or standard by federal, state, city, or local governments, governmental agencies, or nongovernmental agencies such as schools or corporations (Schmid, Pratt, and Witmer 2006).

Social ecological model
Physical Activity Policy Framework

How might policy affect physical activity?

• Policies can
  • Improve access
  • Regulate
  • Promote
  • Provide funding
  • Coordinate efforts
Categories for Physical Activity Policy

- Curriculum and course credit for health and physical education
- Physical Activity/Recess In Schools
- Safe Routes to School
- Zoning and Community Design
- Walking and Biking Trails
- Parks and Open Spaces
- Initiative, studies, and task forces
- Tax incentives
- Workplace policies

Health and Physical Education

- Establishes requirements for physical education or health classes, prohibits substitutions for PE classes, proposes changes to state curriculum requirements for nutrition, health, or PE
Health and PE

State policy
- H7280
- Rhode Island
- Year 2008
  Requires children in grades one through twelve (12) attending public schools shall receive instruction in health and physical education, which shall average at least twenty (20) minutes in each school day, in accordance with the Rhode Island Health Education Framework.

MO SB 291-passed 2008
- School districts shall ensure that students in elementary schools participate in moderate physical activity for the entire school year, including students in alternative education programs. Students in the elementary schools shall participate in moderate physical activity for an average of one hundred fifty minutes per five-day school week, or an average of thirty minutes per day.
Health and PE: local district policy
Rockwood School District MO

- Physical Education/Health Education is a part of the overall development of children. Grades K – 5 participate in 30 minutes of Physical/Health Education each day. Half-Day Kindergarten students receive Physical/Health Education twice a week for 30 minutes. Physical Education/Health curriculum ensures that students have a well rounded experience with a variety of activities.

Percentage of schools that required PE in each grade, SHPPS 2006

SHPPS – School Health Policies and Programs Study
The Delaware City Schools Board of Education has adopted a policy to **excuse from the high school physical education requirement** for each student who, during high school, has **participated in interscholastic athletics, marching band, or cheerleading for at least two full seasons**. The Delaware City School board shall not require the student to complete any physical education course as a condition to graduate. However, the student shall be required to complete one-half unit, consisting of at least sixty hours of instruction, in another course of study.
Physical Activity/Recess

- Promotes physical activity breaks or recess throughout the school day
- Recess is important for providing PA, social and psychological benefits to school children
- Recess is being eliminated to make more time for academics

Recess

- “We are intent on improving academic performance and you don’t do that by having kinds hanging on monkey bars.”
  - School administrator
recess

- HB2037 Arizona 2008 Dead
- State Requires public schools to provide 30 minutes of recess daily to each pupil in grades one through six, beginning in school year 2009-2010 Sponsor: Anderson

Percentage of States and Districts That Required Elementary Schools to Provide Students with Regularly Scheduled Recess, SHPPS 2000-2006
Recess
Michigan State Board of Education Policy

• It is the policy of the State Board of Education that public schools offer daily recess periods or periods of physical activity for all elementary and middle school students.
Safe Routes to School

- Walking to school can increase physical activity levels in children
- 1998 federal funding went to pilot SRTS programs in CA and MA via National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- In July 2005, Congress passed federal legislation that established a national Safe Routes to School program.
- Each state has a STRS coordinator

Safe Routes to School

- **SB441** Illinois 2007
  - Provides for a fine of $150 for failure to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk within a school zone. Subsequent violations fine is minimum $300.
- **AB231** Nevada 2005
  - Requires local and regional governmental entities to conduct studies of safe walking routes for pupils in a certain area near schools. Results of studies must be reported to legislature.
Safe Routes to School

school policy

• "Walk to School Wednesdays" Walking (biking, scootering) to School on Wednesdays. Remember if you live further away you can always drive a part of the way and walk the rest! It’s good for your health, the environment and traffic safety around school.

• Policy on Walking to school: Instruct children to walk on the sidewalk only and to cross only at the designated crosswalks. Upon arriving, students are to go directly to the playground.

• Students K-4 are not encouraged to walk to school by themselves. There is no crossing guard or stop light at Ridge Road making crossing dangerous for younger students. Fifth graders may walk home with signed permission by parents.

MD Student Travel Policy Survey

• School administrators
• Policy regarding walk/bike to school
• Presented results at APHA Nov
• Barriers/facilitators by urban/rural and SES
• Factors encouraging/discouraging
Zoning and Land Development

12/13/2010
Zoning and Land Development

• Community design
• Smart Growth
  – Planning based on town-centered, transit/pedestrian oriented, greater mix of housing and commercial uses
• Complete Streets
  – the idea that streets are only complete when they address the needs of all modes of transportation, including walking and bicycling
• Policies include requirements or restrictions, incentives, funding
Zoning and Land Development

• Local Policy
  – Can promote mixed development
  – Limit number and quality of businesses
  – Promote bicycle/pedestrian travel

• Facility-Based Policies
  • Sidewalks and Crossings
  • School Zones
  • On-Street Bikeways
  • Greenways and Trails
  • Operations and Maintenance
  • Snow Removal
  • Bicycle Parking
  • Pedestrian / ADA Compliance

Zoning and Land Development

• State policy
  462.357, Minnesota Statutes 2007
  • Provides for municipal authority for zoning
    • Authority for zoning: For the purpose of promoting the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare, a municipality may by ordinance regulate on the earth’s surface, in the air space above the surface, and in subsurface areas, the location, height, width, bulk, type of foundation, number of stories, size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lot which may be occupied, the size of yards and other open spaces, the density and distribution of population, the uses of buildings and structures for trade, industry, residence, recreation, public activities, or other purposes, and the uses of land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, agriculture, forestry, soil conservation, water supply, conservation, conservation of shorelands, as defined in sections 103F.201 to 103F.221, access to direct sunlight for solar energy systems, as defined in section 216C.06, flood control or other purposes, and may establish standards and procedures regulating such uses.
Zoning and Land Development

In 2008, the Ellisville City Council, as part of a strategic plan, approved the goal of adding new sidewalks to all city street projects for the benefit of the health, safety and quality of life of the residents. According to the draft proposal, the city will provide sidewalks on all city streets. The objective of the project is to construct sidewalks on at least one side of any street that meets one or more of the following criteria:

* Has cul-de-sac streets with more than 10 homes.
* Connects to existing sidewalks or trail systems.
* Is located within 1,000 feet of school, parks, commercial areas, public facilities or other pedestrian destinations.

Zoning and Land Development

"I see no reason to put in a sidewalk," Rascher said. "We've not had problems with traffic (on his street). It's a dead-end street."

They don't want the look of a sidewalk," Brown said. "They don't want a cookie-cutter subdivision."
Walking and Biking Trails

• Policies that support the development or expansion of walking and biking paths, or promotes safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Walking and Biking Trails

• Community trails provide healthy recreation, transportation, and physical activity opportunities for people of all ages.
• They also connect people with social destinations or points of interest, and ensure sustained opportunity for physical activity.
Walking and Biking Trails

• **Federal Policy**
  - most often has to do with funding for trails
  - may also include regulatory issues

Examples: Federal policies such as Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st century and most recently in 2005, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, encourage support for non-motorized transportation.

Walking and Biking Trails

• **State policy**
  – State policy can access federal money for trails, appropriate additional funds, promote trails, and regulate trail use

Examples:
LA HB 2 (2007) allocates 400K for New Orleans bike and walking path construction
HI HB 1276 (2005) the state will indemnify land owners of liability for public use. Amends to say that heirs, executors etc are also indemnified.
Walking and Biking Trails

• Local Policy
  — Issues concern usage, right of way, taxes, connectivity

Examples:
  San Diego “Policy establishing criteria for the development and operation of a regional and community plan for non-motorized trails and pathways”
  Rapid City “Determining use of segways on parts of state trail system”

Parks and Open Spaces
Parks and Open Spaces

• # of people who participated in outdoor activities increased 4.4% from 1999-2008
• Increased demand for parks
• Community Guide recommends increasing access and outreach will increase physical activity
• Policies can improve or create parks, leverage funding, and facilitate sustainable access
Parks and Open Spaces

• **State Policy** MD 2008 SB1000
  – Sets forth intent to public policy to both restore existing park and green space systems and create new park and green space systems in the municipal corporations and Baltimore City. Establishes a Community Parks and Playgrounds Program.

Governor's Budget Shuts Down State Parks, Dumps Lifeguards
Parks and Open Spaces

• Local Policy
  – Joint agreement between city and school

Task Forces and Councils

• These policies establish initiatives, commissions/taskforces/councils or study to reduce the prevalence of obesity among population.
Task Forces and Councils

• **Federal Policy**
  – Define plan, outline players and roles, include evaluation and accountability

• **Examples:**
  – Federal Obesity Prevention Act of 2008

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Task Force and Councils

• **Local Policy**
  – Many municipalities and school districts have developed councils to study physical activity and obesity. Many are assessments or collaborations among local agencies.
  – Examples:
    • Healthy Memphis Common Table
    • Healthy Kids Healthy Communities
Task Forces and Councils

• **State Policy**
  – Usually involves many state agencies and partners
  – Sometimes focuses on obesity health outcomes such as diabetes
  – Many times worked into general wellness policies

• **Examples:**
  – VA HJ 637 (2007, resolution adopted) - Establishes a joint subcommittee to study childhood obesity in Virginia’s public schools. The joint subcommittee shall ascertain methods of combating childhood obesity in Virginia public schools and examine the relationship between the health and physical education curriculum; public health policies; social, economic, and cultural influences; and media messages; and the incidence of overweight and obese students in the public schools.

• **The Healthy Living Tax Incentive**
  
  The Healthy Living Tax Incentive is a tax credit of up to $500 per child. It is intended to help with the cost of registering children and youth in sport or recreation activities that offer health benefits.

  Young people aged 17 and under who are registered in an approved organized sport, physical recreation, or physical activity program qualify for the tax credit.
PHIT – Personal Health Investment Today Act

The PHIT Bill (HR 245)

• allows individuals to use money in pre-tax medical accounts to pay for physical activity expenses

• pending in the House of Representatives.

• Congressional Democrats have suggested broadening PHIT’s appeal by making physical activity expenses tax deductible

• Also suggest providing a refundable tax credit for physical activity expenses to increase participation from individuals with no access to pre-tax medical accounts.

WHIP - Workplace Health Improvement Program

Bills (S. 1038 & HR 1748) have been introduced in the Senate and House to exclude from an employee’s annual gross income up to $900 in employer contributions that encourage improved health through fitness and activity. WHIP would eliminate the tax on employer subsidies of off-site athletic or fitness facilities and the value of employer provided on-site athletic facilities. Employers providing on-site facilities would be allowed to take an annual deduction of up to $900 for each employee.
WHIP support

When employers encourage active and healthy lifestyles, employees work harder, miss less days due to sick leave and are more productive. Our nation is facing an obesity epidemic which can lead to serious health conditions like heart disease and diabetes. Offering a tax deduction to employers who provide wellness benefits, like gym memberships, and reward employees who engage in these activities, is one step forward we can take to promote healthier lifestyles.” Sen. Tom Harkin

Physical Activity Policy Research Network (PAPRN)
PAPRN

- The mission is to conduct transdisciplinary policy research by:
  - identifying physical activity policies
  - identifying the determinants of the policies
  - describing the process of implementing policies
  - determining the outcomes of physical activity policies

Sites involved with the Physical Activity Policy Research Network
PAPRN Projects
ATS study

• Policies influencing Active Transport to and from School
• Case study of 10 schools
• Main findings:
  – Collaborative effort
  – Safety is paramount
  – Learn of existing policies
  – Proactive action is best

Policy Influence On The Development of Community Trails

• ALR funded
• Studies 6 trails
• Findings:
  – Collaboration
  – Balance overall goal
  – Perseverance
  – Community involvement necessary
How common is evidence-based state physical education legislation? A content analysis

- Analyzed almost 800 bills based on evidence based components
  - PE minutes, Mod/Vig Activity, Certified teachers, Environment
- Number of PE bills introduced is promising
- Percent enacted is similar to other health topic legislation
- Few bills contain evidence based components
- There is little funding or evaluation
- Provides a basis for future policy surveillance work

Analysis of Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plans (AMP)

- Conducted a content analysis on over 100 plans in 9 states.
- Plans to publish content analysis guide
- Article on comparing demographics of places with plans to be out in March 2010.
- Article on the content analysis to be out next year.
Analysis of Trail Legislation

- 7 PAPRN sites involved
- Analyzed 516 (52.0%) of the total 991 trail bills, of which 167 (32.2%) were enacted.
- We analyzed 475 (48%) non-appropriation bills of which 139 (29.3%) were enacted.
- The percentage of enactment of appropriations bills decreased over time while enactment of non-appropriations trail bills increased.
- Over half of the non-appropriations trail bills included at least one evidence-informed element, most commonly funding.
- Few bills contained liability, connectivity, accessibility, or maintenance.

Journal of Physical Activity and Health Supplement: Physical Activity Policy

- 14 articles
- 5 editorials
- Contributions from 6 PAPRN members
Assessment of State Physical Activity and Obesity Practitioners

PAPRN Projects

- Evaluation of National and State Physical Activity Plans
- Analysis of Bike/Ped coalitions
- Analysis of workplace active-transportation policies
- “Policy into practice” look at PE legislation
- Evaluation of transformed spaces
Conclusions

• Many facets of federal, state, and local policy can influence physical activity.
• How can we use this information?
  – Look for model policies
  – Know barriers and challenges to planning and implementing policy
  – Learn how to work in transdisciplinary teams
  – Learn how to talk to policymakers
  – Work with the windows of opportunity

Resources

CDC: State Indicator Report on Physical Activity 2010

CDC: School Health Policy (resources and toolkit)

RWJF: Active Living Research: Research synthesis, summaries and briefs

National Center for Safe Routes to School: Tip sheets and toolkits for school level