

How Can Physical Activity Policy Make a Difference: The Big Picture

Leading the Way in Public Health Nutrition and Physical Activity: Blazing New Trails

Salt Lake City, Utah
June 12-14, 2011



Produced by the Alabama Department of Public Health Video Communications and Distance Learning Division

Faculty

Amy A. Eyler, PhD, CHES
Associate Research Professor
Prevention Research Center for
Physical Activity Policy
University of Washington in Saint Louis
Saint Louis, Missouri

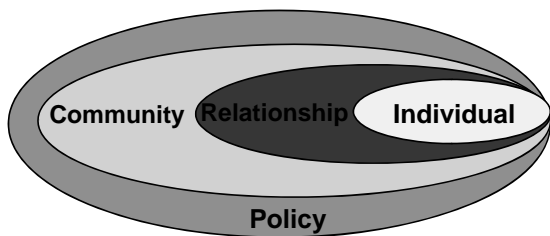


“It Seemed Like a Good Idea...”



Outline of Presentation

- Policy 101
- What do we mean by physical activity policy?
- Keys to successful physical activity policy
 - Examples of local, regional, state, and local policies
 - Capture the complexity and interaction



What Is a Policy?

- “A broad framework of ideas and values within which decisions are taken and action or innovation is pursued by governments or organizations in relation to some issue or problem.”

What Is a Policy?

- “A plan or course of action, as of a government, political party, business, or organization intended to influence and determine decisions, actions, or behavior.”

What Is Public Policy?

- Public = government
- Policy = action
- Public policy is:
 - A search for solutions
 - What governments do or do not do
 - Inaction as well as action

What Is Public Policy?

- Course of action selected from among alternatives
- A government action intended to deal with a social condition

Forms of Public Policy

- Legislation
 - At local levels includes zoning ordinances
- Regulations
 - At local level includes subdivision regulations
- Court decisions (case law)
- Executive orders

Types of Governments United States, 2007

Type of Government	Number
State	50
Local Governments	
County	3,033
Municipality	19,402
Town or township	16,519
School Districts	13,051
Special Districts	
- Park district	
- Forest preserve	
- Fire protection/watershed protection	
	37,381
Source: Census of Governments, 2007, US Census Bureau	
Total	89,526

Why Policy?

- Health problems are influenced by:
 - Societal policies and environments that sustain the behaviors and practices, contribute to the problems, or fail to foster healthier choices that could prevent the problems

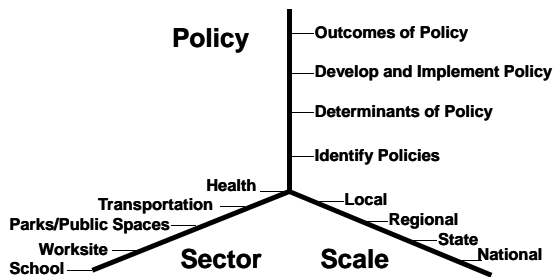
What Is Physical Activity Policy?

- Physical activity policy is a legislative action, organized guidance, or rule that may affect the physical activity environment or lifestyle behavior

What Is Physical Activity Policy?

- These policies can be in the form of formal written codes, written standards that guide choices, or common practices

Physical Activity Policy Framework



PA Policy in Healthcare Sector

- Physician counseling
 - Reimbursement
 - Exercise is medicine
- System of referral
- Provider training



PA Policy in Transportation

- SAFTEA-LU
- Safe routes to school
- Complete streets or “livable streets”
- Public transportation



PA Policy in Parks or Open Spaces

- Access and maintenance
- Open streets initiatives
- Trails
- Connectivity
- Joint use


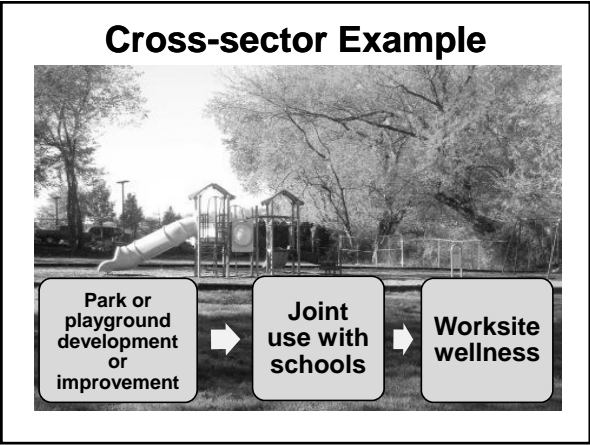
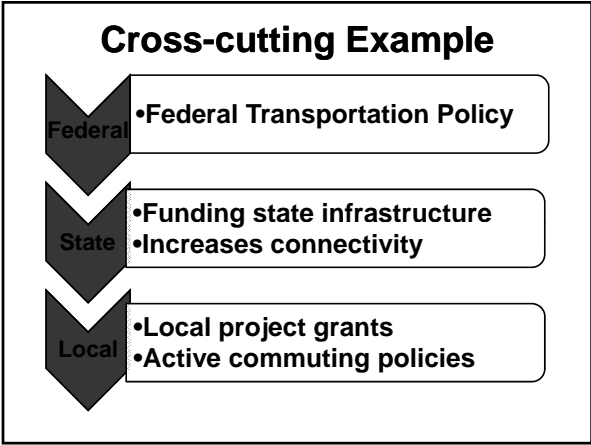


PA Policy in Worksites

- Flextime
- Facilities
- Active transportation incentives
- Other PA opportunities

PA Policies in Schools


- Physical education
- Recess
- Before/after school policies
- Sports programs
- Joint use

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

1. Support and involvement from multiple transdisciplinary groups
 - Example: Active transport to school policy



Why Active Transport?

- **Plus**
 - Increases PA
 - Increases neighborhood awareness
 - Can prepare kids to learn
 - Can benefit community

Why Active Transport?

- **Minus**
 - Infrastructure lacking
 - Safety concerns
 - No motivation by school or parents
 - Economic benefit not standard

Involvement

- **Level:**
 - State, district, school, classroom
- **People:**
 - State policy makers
 - Department of Education
 - District administrators
 - School administrators

Involvement

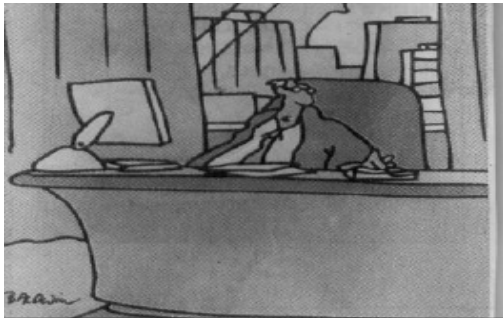
- Local government
- Public Safety
- City planners
- Community organizations
- Teachers
- Parents
- Students

Examples of Collaborative Involvement in ATS policy

- In PAPRN study, comprehensive involvement was key
- Safety was main concern
- Unexpected groups were involved
 - Senior groups
 - National Trust for Historic Preservation

Examples of Collaborative Involvement in ATS policy

- Sometimes, groups have different reasons for wanting to be involved
- Learning to work together and speak the same language is important



"I need an interpreter. Send in someone who speaks jargon."

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

2. Learning from others' successes (and failures)

- Example: Ciclovias or open spaces



Ciclovias/Open Spaces

- Plus
 - Increases PA in community
 - Cohesive initiative
 - Can be promoted in low income and urban areas
 - Community benefits

Ciclovias/Open Spaces

- Minus
 - May be difficult to coordinate
 - Only a limited time
 - Can have major opposition
 - Needs policy maker support

Ciclovias/Open Spaces

- How to connect with policy makers
- The specifics of event
- Making it sustainable
- Evaluation
- Dissemination



Where to Go for Ideas

- What are similar states, communities, or organizations doing?
- Excellent websites for policy templates and language
 - NPLAN, NCSL



Where to Go for Ideas

- Get connected with listserves and social media
- Political science calls it policy diffusion

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

3. Have a plan or framework

- Examples:
 - Bicycle/Pedestrian master plans
 - National PA plan

Planning is Key for Physical Activity Policy

- In the physical activity/built environment arena, urban planning is critical and often takes the form of comprehensive/master plans
 - Depending on the community, the plans may be more “strategic” documents rather than carrying the force of law

Planning is Key for Physical Activity Policy

- Typically plans are implemented through a community’s zoning code

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plans

- Master plans to promote biking and/or pedestrians (BPMPs) are a potential method for environmental change
- AMP study
 - Almost 300 plans in 10 states

Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plans

- In comparison to national rates, communities with the plans had slightly higher rates for people who reported walking to work
- Plans involve community and set the stage for improvements

National Physical Activity Plan

- Launched in 2010
 - “A comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives that aim to increase physical activity in all segments of the American population.”

National Physical Activity Plan

- Includes strategies for eight sectors:
 1. Public health
 2. Land use and community design
 3. Healthcare
 4. Parks, recreation, fitness, sport

National Physical Activity Plan

5. Education
6. Voluntary and non-profit
7. Transportation
8. Mass media

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

4. Look for competing or complementary policies
- Example: Physical education requirement exemptions



Physical Education Exemptions

- 30% of high schools allowed exemptions (SHPPS, 2006)
- Can be outlined in state legislation
 - Types of exemptions are often left up to district

Physical Education Exemptions

- Illinois example:
 - Interscholastic sports (12,774)
 - College admission coursework (5,709)
 - Classes required for graduation (3,324)

Physical Education Exemptions

- Marching Band (8,134)
- ROTC (3,390)
- Total 33,331 exemptions approved

P.E. Exemptions

- Need to consider this when promoting PE policy
- Can work to change existing exemptions or maintain status quo

P.E. Exemptions

- Other competing policy examples:
 - Biking to school
 - No worksite bike storage
- There are complementary policy examples, too!

Example of Complementary Policy

- Workplace and obesity
- What policies can combat increased sedentary work?



“The only problem with having a laptop is you need a lap!”

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

5. Proactively address barriers and opposition

- Example: Sidewalk policy



Sidewalk Policy

- **Plus**
 - **Increases safety**
 - **Increases connectivity**
 - **Can be part of Complete Streets plan**
 - **May increase neighborhood desirability**

Sidewalk Policy

- **Minus**
 - **May be costly**
 - **Existing streets may be difficult to retrofit**
 - **We are an automobile society**





Opposition to Sidewalks

- “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.”



Dealing with Barriers

- Find out specific issues
- Work collaboratively to solve problems
- Find “middle ground”

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

- 6. Be patient
 - Example:
 - Physical education legislation
 - Establishes requirements for physical education or health classes

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

- Prohibits substitutions for physical education classes
- Proposes changes to state curriculum requirements for nutrition, health, or PE

Physical Education Legislation

- Plus
 - Provides opportunity for activity
 - New data showing connection between fitness and achievement
 - Can contribute to obesity prevention

Physical Education Legislation

- Minus
 - School priorities
 - Budget shortfalls
 - Reluctance to change

Legislative Process Takes Time

- Bill assigned a number
 - Bill is read for the first time by the Senate or House reading Clerk
- Goes on calendar for a second reading by the Speaker of the House or the Senate President Pro Tem
- Second reading and committee assignment

Legislative Process Takes Time

- Public hearing
 - Third reading
 - If passed, goes to other house for similar process

Patience...

- Be prepared for the long haul
- Minor setbacks are to be expected
- Pursue and persevere

Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

7. Celebrate small successes

- Example:
 - Complete Streets Resolution



Complete Streets

- A Complete Streets policy ensures that transportation planners and engineers consistently design and operate the entire roadway with all users in mind
 - Including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities

**Complete Streets:
MO HCR 24 2011**

- **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the members of the House of Representatives of the Ninety-sixth General Assembly, First Regular Session, the Senate concurring therein, hereby declare our support for Complete Streets policies and urge their adoption at the local, metropolitan, regional, state, and national levels; and...

**Complete Streets:
MO HCR 24 2011**

- ... **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the General Assembly encourages and urges the United States Department of Transportation, the Missouri Department of Transportation, the governing bodies of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and Regional Planning Commissions, municipalities, ...

**Complete Streets:
MO HCR 24 2011**

- ...and other organizations and agencies that build, control, maintain, or fund roads, highways, and bridges in Missouri to adopt Complete Streets policies and to plan, design, build, and maintain their road and street system to provide complete, safe access to all road users; and...

**Complete Streets:
MO HCR 24 2011**

- ... **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Chief Clerk of the Missouri House of Representatives be instructed to prepare properly inscribed copies of this resolution for Ray LaHood, Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation; members of the Missouri Highway and Transportation Commission;...

**Complete Streets:
MO HCR 24 2011**

- ...the director of each Metropolitan Planning Agency and Regional Planning Commission in the State of Missouri; and the Missouri Municipal League.

**Factors in Physical Activity
Policy Success**

8. Grasp low-hanging fruit

– Example:

- Workplace wellness policies
- Walking initiatives



Worksite Walking Policies

- Employers are encouraging workers to walk as a form of exercise by setting up walking programs
 - An inexpensive and strategic way to improve health and productivity

Worksite Walking Policies

- With the interest of top-level policy makers, walking programs can be a “step” in the right direction toward other physical activity policies

Other Worksite PA Policies

- Flextime
- Gym subsidies
- Facilities
- Treadmill desks



Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

9. Be sensitive to funding issues
 - Three questions policy makers ask:
 - Is there a problem?
 - How can we fix it?
 - How much is it going to cost?

Example: Joint Use Agreements

- “Joint use is a way to increase opportunities for children and adults to be more physically active. It refers to two or more entities - usually a school and a city or private organization - sharing indoor and outdoor spaces like gymnasiums, athletic fields and playgrounds”

– Prevention Institute and Berkeley Media Studies Group

Example: Joint Use Agreements

- Plus
 - Youth development
 - Community development
 - Use of existing facilities

Example: Joint Use Agreements


- Minus
 - Liability issues
 - Maintenance
 - Need policies in place

Joint Use Agreement

- Encouraging these policies can promote community use of existing, publicly funded facilities
- The policies lay the foundation for such use
- Can be state, district, or local level policy

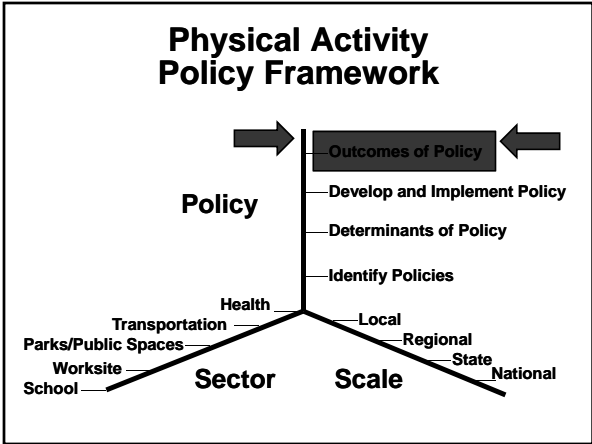
Factors in Physical Activity Policy Success

- Evaluate outcome



Evaluating Outcome

- Lacking data identifying the outcome of PA policy
- Have some data
 - ATS within select groups
- Need to focus on long-term outcomes
- Need to evaluate economic outcomes



Can Physical Activity Policy Make a Difference?

- YES!

Key Factors

- 1. Multiple groups**
- 2. Learn from others**
- 3. Other policies**
- 4. Have a plan**
- 5. Be proactive**
- 6. Be patient**
- 7. Celebrate small successes**

Key Factors

- 8. Grasp low fruit**
- 9. Funding sensitivity**
- 10. Evaluate outcome**

Final Thoughts

- “Culture change” comes with time**
- Things you CAN do to facilitate physical activity policy**
- Convergence of “top down” and “bottom up” policies**

Thank You!

Amy Eyer, PhD, CHES
aeyley@wustl.edu
314-362-9642

<http://paprn.wustl.edu/Pages/Homepage.aspx>

Funding for this conference was made possible, in part, by the cooperative agreement award number 1U58DP002846 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services, nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.