New CDC Recommendations for Preventing Obesity in Youth

The Washoe County Childhood Obesity Forum
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Theoretical basis

“Local policies and the physical environment [they create] influence daily choices that affect our health – and our weight.”

*(Implementation & Measurement Guide, 1)*
“[T]o identify and recommend a set of obesity prevention strategies and corresponding suggested measurements that local governments and communities can use to plan, implement, and monitor initiatives to prevent obesity.”

(MMWR, July 24, 2009 / 58(RR07);1-26, 2)
Methods

- Analysis of 270 published articles from 2005 – 2007, plus 7 “seminal documents”
- Expert opinion using six panels (e.g., funders, researchers, local governments, etc.)
- Outcomes of piloting by 20 local governmental entities
Criteria for selection

Strategy selection criteria
• Population-wide reach
• Within community’s control (mutability)
• Transferability to different communities
• Will have a meaningful health effect size
• Sustainability over time

Measurement selection criteria
• Serves information needs (utility)
• Accurately assesses change (construct validity)
• Data can be collected (feasibility)
“[T]he first set of comprehensive recommendations published by CDC to promote healthy eating and active living and reduce the prevalence of obesity in the United States.”

(MMWR, July 24, 2009 / 58(RR07);1-26, 2)
Categories of recommendations

1. Strategies to Promote the Availability of Affordable Healthy Food and Beverages
2. Strategies to Support Healthy Food and Beverage Choices
3. Strategy to Encourage Breastfeeding
4. Strategies to Encourage Physical Activity or Limit Sedentary Activity Among Children and Youth
5. Strategies to Create Safe Communities that Support Physical Activity
6. Strategy to Encourage Communities to Organize for Change
Recommended strategies

• 24 recommended strategies, with at least 1 strategy for each category

• Each strategy is paired with a suggested measurement

• As applicable, each measurement has proposed GIS functions, data collection questions, and data sources

• Examples of how the strategy has been implemented

• Compiled in the Implementation & Measurement Guide
Brief overview of the strategy and why it is relevant to obesity

**Strategy 20: Improve Access to Public Transportation**

Walking to and from public transportation can help individuals achieve recommended levels of daily physical activity (Bessesen & Brenberg, 2001). Public transportation includes mode transit systems such as bus, light rail, streetcar, commuter rail, and subway, and the infrastructure supporting these systems (e.g., transit stops and shelters). Increased walking access to public transportation may help promote more active lifestyles.

**Community Examples**

- Local bus route in the community of Tucson, Arizona, provides funding from local governments and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to improve access to public transportation in the city. As a result of the efforts to improve public transit infrastructure, South Park had increased ridership and reduced traffic congestion.

**Resources**


**Questions to guide data collection for the measure**

For measures that require Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, necessary GIS functions and layers are provided.

**Examples of how the strategy has been implemented by local communities**

- Local bus route in the community of Tucson, Arizona, provides funding from local governments and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to improve access to public transportation in the city. As a result of the efforts to improve public transit infrastructure, South Park had increased ridership and reduced traffic congestion.

**Suggested measurement for the strategy**

- The percentage of residential and commercial buildings within a 1/2-mile radius of at least one bus stop or within a 3-mile radius of at least one train stop (including commuter and passenger trains, light rail, subway, and streetcar).

**Data Collection Questions**

1. How many transit stops are within your jurisdiction? (1/2 mile)
2. How many commercial centers are within your jurisdiction? (1/2 mile)
3. Add the answer to item 1 and the answer to item 2 to calculate the combined total of residential and commercial centers.
4. How many transit stops are within your jurisdiction? (3 miles)
5. How many commercial centers are within your jurisdiction? (3 miles)
6. Add the answer to item 4 and the answer to item 5 to calculate the combined total of residential and commercial centers.

**Data Sources**

- GIS office/coordinate
- Transit Service lead or staff
- Leaders in the local transit authority

**Necessary GIS Functions or Layers**

- GIS layer showing all transit stops within the jurisdiction, with transparency as a label.
- GIS layer showing all commercial centers within the jurisdiction, with transparency as a label.
- GIS layer showing the street network.
- Ability to plot data point to street, in proximity to a network distance.
How to use the document

For baseline assessment

• What do our current policies do/not do?
• How do we compare to other places?

To identify priorities for action

• What aspects of our environment are in greatest need of change?
• Which strategies should we choose?

To measure change over time

• Are we making progress in changing environmental conditions?
Limitations

- Measurements have not been validated in practice for outcomes yet
- They are single indicators of a complex process of change
- Strategies limited to public settings
- Strategies may have greater relevance to urban and suburban areas
- Measures require a system of quantification
- Policies may cross jurisdictions (local, state, multiple locals, etc.)
- There remains a gap between policy and implementation
Secondary benefits

- Literature review of current meta-analyses
- Summary of national recommendations related to each strategy
- Exhaustive yet concise glossary of commonly-used terms
Where to find it

CDC Overweight & Obesity Topics Page: http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/

Get Healthy Washoe www.getthehealthywashoe.com