



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Healthy Cities E-Newsletter



Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign

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Local News

[Head Start Students Learn Nutrition](#) (4/21/09)

Three- to five-year-old children in Franklin County, Ohio, are learning the importance of healthy, locally grown food. "Food is Elementary" is a food education curriculum the Child Development Council of Franklin County is using for its Head Start program. According to *NBC4i*, the program teaches more than 3,000 pre-school students the importance of eating nutritious food, how to grow food in gardens and healthy eating habits—all before they reach kindergarten.

[Massachusetts Town Takes Steps to Trim Fat \(really\), Health Care Costs](#) (4/21/09)

Kelle Shugrue's 7-year-old son eats fresh fruit and vegetables at his public school, rides his bike along neighborhood paths and walked to school last week as part of a community effort to get kids moving, *USA Today* reports. The Shugrue family lives in Somerville, Mass., a Boston suburb hailed by health advocates for its seven-year investment in programs fighting childhood obesity and encouraging healthful living. As chronic disease looms as a major impediment to controlling costs in the Obama administration and Congress' overhaul of the health care system, this model program is beginning to be replicated around the country as one way to prevent the onset of chronic diseases.

[District's Mileage Club Used as Initiative to Tackle Obesity among Students](#) (4/19/09)

Every morning, weather permitting, 324 of the 380 children who attend West Elementary in Lancaster, Ohio, begin the school day by walking or jogging around the building, according to the *Lancaster Eagle Gazette*. The program is a voluntarily exercise program called the Feelin' Good Mileage Club that has become widely popular for students at several elementary schools in the district.

[Nutrition Labels at Independent Los Angeles Restaurants](#) (4/17/09)

The *Los Angeles Times* reports that seven independent restaurants—including the popular Chichen Itza—are letting customers know the nutritional content of their standard menu items in a project aimed at curbing obesity in South Los Angeles. The menu labeling project was organized by [South Los Angeles Healthy Eating, Active Communities](#), part of a statewide initiative sponsored by the California Endowment to prevent obesity in young people.

[Obesity Rising as Shoppers Cut Corners on Food Costs](#) (4/09/09)

Health-care and nutrition specialists typically recommend that to combat obesity and

overweight issues, people need to get regular exercise, consume smaller portions and eat plenty of fruit and vegetables. Some people are finding it increasingly difficult to cultivate these habits during a time when they may need to work additional, part-time jobs or live on a much more limited income. *Petaluma360.com* highlights local groups in the Petaluma, CA area that are improving access to affordable, healthy foods.

National News

[U.S. Sens. Harkin, Murkowski Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Improve Children's Health](#) (4/30/09)

Sens. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, have introduced legislation requiring nutrition standards for food sold in school vending machines, according to *IowaPolitics.com*. Currently, more than \$11 billion in federal money is invested annually in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. However, the USDA has little authority over what schools can sell to students outside of these programs. The proposed legislation would allow the Secretary of Agriculture, through established notice and comment procedures, to establish common-sense nutrition standards for the foods and beverages that are sold in school vending machines and similar outlets.

[The Economics of Eating](#) (4/24/09)

Living off a dollar menu may save you money now, but you'll pay for it in the long run. "People are eating cheaper, more fattening foods; care is more difficult to find; and as a result we're going to have more and more people presenting at a later stage of the disease process," says Dr. Mitchell Roslin in *Newsweek Magazine*. "If you're concerned about paying your rent and making ends meet, it's very hard to think about the future implications of diabetes and other illnesses." According to the article, obesity rates in the United States are already at 35 percent and they are likely to climb even higher. The effects of poor eating and exercise habits, if left unchecked, are likely to outlast the current recession by years and even decades.

[Cities across the Country Hold Challenge Walk Off on May 16](#) (4/14/09) PDF

At the recent US Conference of Mayors Winter Meeting, Dr. Ian encouraged the mayors to use The 50 Million Pound Challenge and its free resources as a platform for addressing the health concerns of their citizens. "Time and time again, we hear from our Challengers that community support is the key ingredient in their success," says Dr. Ian Smith, founder and creator of The 50 Million Pound Challenge. "With The Challenge Walk Off on May 16 we can bring entire communities together as part of our commitment to helping the entire country be more focused on personal physical well-being. I applaud the mayors of these fourteen inaugural cities for their leadership."

[U.S. Experts Urge Health Reforms in Schools, Cities](#) (4/02/09)

The government should broaden its efforts to overhaul the U.S. healthcare system to include steps that provide better access to good food and recreation, a panel of experts said on Thursday. Rather than an intense focus on just how much it costs to treat the sick, more work

must be done in schools and cities to give people better access to nutritious food and places to exercise, the panelists concluded in a [report](#) commissioned by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. According to *Reuters*, panelists said greater attention should be paid to the impact of housing developments, public transportation, neighborhood safety and other planning issues that can help people have more active lifestyles. Additional resources can be found at : www.commissiononhealth.org

Reports and Studies

[Action Strategies Toolkit](#)

Leadership for Healthy Communities' comprehensive Action Strategies Toolkit represent a collection of current best approaches that childhood obesity policy experts, policy-makers and representatives from policy-maker organizations have evaluated and selected as levers to improve children's health and reduce childhood obesity. Each section includes targeted strategies, stakeholders, policy and program options, directions on how to start programs, resources that can help inform the process, and examples of how other states and localities have achieved progress. The U.S. Conference of Mayors and 10 other major policy-maker organizations that represent state, local and school district decision makers signed on to a leadership compact urging members to adopt policies designed to reduce childhood obesity rates, and to focus efforts on our most vulnerable children.

[Healthy Eating, Active Communities: Phase 1 Evaluation Findings, 2005-2008](#) (PDF)

The Healthy Eating Active Communities (HEAC) program, established in 2005 by The California Endowment, was one of the first programs of its kind to utilize policy and environmental change strategies as the primary approach to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic. The HEAC program has helped to frame and inform a national movement that has engaged multiple entities, including federal, state, and local government agencies; foundations; schools and health care institutions to address the underlying factors that have contributed to rising obesity rates.

[Safe Routes to School 2009 Policy Report: Moving to the Future: Building on Early Achievements](#) (PDF)

Published by the *Safe Routes to School National Partnership*, this report highlights outcomes of the federal program begun in 2005 to improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists; encourage healthy, active lifestyles for children; and improve built environments near schools. It also outlines policy issues that are currently slowing further implementation of SRTS programs.

Tools You Can Use

[Supporting Healthy Communities Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009](#)

To highlight funds in the economic recovery act that can be used to increase opportunities for physical activity and access to healthy foods, Leadership for Healthy Communities, a national

program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, created a policy brief entitled *Supporting Healthy Communities Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009*. All of the recommendations in the policy brief are supported by research and accompanied by examples of how similar funds have been used to achieve healthy eating and active living objectives. Also on the organization's Web site is a chart highlighting available funds and their recommendations, a sample op-ed that can be customized and submitted to local newspapers, a sample PowerPoint presentation, and a short video public service announcement describing why supporting healthy communities is important.

[Legal Tools to Create Joint Use Agreements](#)

Many communities lack safe, adequate places for children and their families to exercise and play. Schools might have a variety of recreational facilities—gymnasiums, playgrounds, fields, courts, tracks—but many districts close their property to the public after school hours because of concerns about costs, vandalism, security, maintenance and liability in the event of injury. The good news is that city, county and town governments can partner with school districts through joint use agreements to address these concerns. A joint use agreement is a formal agreement between two separate government entities—often a school district and a city or county—setting forth the terms and conditions for the shared use of public property. The National Policy and Legal Analysis Network (NPLAN) has prepared legal tools to assist communities in forming joint use agreements.

[Walkability Checklist](#)

The Partnership for a Walkable America (PWA) is a national coalition working to improve the conditions for walking in America and to increase the number of Americans who walk regularly. This checklist can be used to assess how walkable a neighborhood is.

[Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps mayors and other local government leaders can take to address the childhood obesity epidemic in their communities in three areas: the community food environment; the physical environment; and the school and out-of-school environment.

[Promising District Practices](#)

The National School Board Association's School Health Programs department is pleased to announce a new Web-based resource, Promising District Practices. This new Web site shares success stories related to district-level school health policies and practices.

[Obesity GPS: A Guide for Policy and Program Solutions](#)

The Obesity GPS, developed by the STOP Obesity Alliance at The George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, is a set of multi-layered questions that decision makers can apply in the development or evaluation of the most common types of

obesity-prevention proposals: specific health interventions, policies aimed at health care professionals or research initiatives. The Obesity GPS is divided into four main sections that highlight the important questions that decision makers should consider related to overweight and obesity in our nation.

[Planning for Healthy Places with Health Impact Assessments](#)

A 'how to' guide for conducting health impact assessments (HIAs), developed by the American Planning Association and the National Association of County & City Health Officials, sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This online course explains the value of conducting an HIA and the steps involved in doing so. Throughout the course, examples of health impact assessments are highlighted and discussed.

Funding Resources

[Active Living Research and Healthy Eating Research Rapid Response Grants Round 2](#)

Active Living Research and *Healthy Eating Research* are national programs of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that support research to identify promising policy and environmental strategies for increasing physical activity, promoting healthy eating and preventing obesity. This call for proposals (CFP) supports time-sensitive, opportunistic studies to evaluate changes in policies or environments with the potential to reach children who are at highest risk for obesity, including African-American, Latino, Native American, Asian-American and Pacific Islander children (ages 3 to 18) who live in low-income communities or communities with limited access to affordable, healthy foods and/or safe opportunities for physical activity. Research studies may focus on one or both sides of the energy balance equation—on physical activity (including sedentary behavior), healthy eating or both. Studies funded under this CFP are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

Deadline: July 17, 2009

[Convergence Innovation Fund: Land Use/Built Environment and Food Access](#)

The Healthy Eating, Active Living Convergence Partnership invites local and regional grantmaking foundations to submit proposals that will support new projects or new grantmaking initiatives aimed at enhancing the built environment and land use or expanding food access efforts. The Fund provides 50% matching dollars, up to \$100,000 per year, for a two-year period. The goal is to engage foundations in creating robust and sustainable support for multi-field community partnerships prioritizing policy and environmental change efforts to improve health and promote equity.

Deadline: June 22, 2009.

[Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#)

This Web site is a clearinghouse for funding opportunities related to developing food retail outlets. Funding sources, which are categorized by eligibility, source and type of assistance for easy searching, include several available to local governments.

[Jenny's Heroes Community Grant Program](#)

Talk show host and philanthropist Jenny Jones has announced that she will donate an additional \$1 million to continue her community grant program. Jenny's Heroes provides grants of up to \$25,000 each to fund projects that promise long-term community benefits.

Deadline: Open

[Bikes Belong Offers Funding for Bicycle Advocacy and Facilities](#)

U.S. nonprofits and public agencies working to put "more people on bicycles more often" will be awarded grants of up to \$10,000 for facilities and advocacy projects.

Deadline: Quarterly

[ING Announces Grants Program for School-Based Running Programs](#)

Fifty grants of \$2,000 each will be awarded to U.S. public elementary and middle schools working to establish programs to help young people fight obesity and discover the benefits of running.

Deadline: June 1, 2009

[Regional Community Health Grants Program Targeting Obesity and Health Literacy](#)

Through its Regional Community Health Grants Program, the [Aetna Foundation](#) will award grants in support of philanthropic initiatives focused on fighting obesity and increasing health literacy in selected communities across the United States. The obesity proposal category seeks to fund community-based health education, prevention, and early detection efforts aimed at fighting obesity.

Deadline: Varies by Location

Upcoming Conferences

[Weight of the Nation](#)

On **July 27-29, 2009**, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity will host its inaugural conference on obesity prevention and control, *Weight of the Nation*, at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C. *Weight of the Nation* is designed to provide a forum to highlight progress in the prevention and control of obesity through policy and environmental strategies and is framed around four intervention settings: community, medical care, school and workplace. Plenary and concurrent sessions will focus on strategies implemented in these settings that have led to policy and

environmental changes which may improve population-level health.

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