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Overview

Active transportation, such as walking or biking to get to school and work, can help people be more physically active. Local policy decisions guiding how local roads, walkways and parks are designed can greatly influence community physical activity opportunities. National recommendations urge public health department officials and public health stakeholders to actively contribute to these decisions.

Main Question

What actions can public health agencies and other stakeholders take to actively contribute to decisions around land use and transportation?

Study

The study convened a panel of experts to develop a set of core capabilities, or standards, and associated tasks that can be used to guide strategic planning by public health agencies in this area. The study is part of the Physical Activity Policy Research Network Plus (PAPRN+), a national network of researchers and practitioners funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to advance physical activity policy research. During three rounds of a modified Delphi process, the multidisciplinary panel shared their opinions and reacted to the opinions of others to come to consensus. After each round, results were incorporated and included in the subsequent round to allow participants to reassess their opinions in response to the synthesized findings. The final product consists of 10 capabilities grouped into three categories reflecting ease of implementation based on time and other resources. The study was approved by University of Massachusetts Medical School Institutional Review Board.

The Bottom Line

There are actions that health agencies of varying sizes can take to improve community physical activity opportunity.

Source

Lemon SC, Goins KV, Sreedhara M, Arcaya M, Aytur SA, Heinrich K, Kerner B, Lyn R, Maddock JE, Riessman R, Schmid TL. Developing Core Capabilities for Local Health Departments to Engage in Land Use and Transportation Decision Making for Active Transportation. *J Public Health Manag Pract.* 2019 Jan 8. doi: 10.1097/PHH.0000000000000948. PMID: 30633121

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Capabilities for Public Health Agency Involvement in Land Use and Transportation Decision Making to Increase Active Transportation Opportunity

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Spotlight on Results

Ten capabilities were identified as important for public health stakeholders to engage in local land use and transportation decision making to improve active transportation opportunities.

Agencies with the fewest resources can:

(1) collaborate with public officials; (2) serve on land use or transportation boards; and (3) review plans, policies, and projects.

Agencies with moderate resources can:

(4) outreach to the community; (5) educate policy makers; (6) participate in plan and policy development; and (7) participate in project development and design review.

Agencies with the most resources can:

(8) participate in data and assessment activities; (9) fund dedicated staffing; and (10) provide funding support

Call for Action

The 10 capabilities and tasks identified can help guide planning by public health agencies with varying resource levels.

The guide is available at:
<https://www.umassmed.edu/prc>