

HEALTHY FOOD ACCESS DIALOGUE SEPTEMBER 29th - October 6th, 2008

This online dialogue connected local and school officials and staff from throughout California to share information and resources about how cities, counties, and schools can provide residents with healthy eating options and combat negative trends in childhood obesity.

Question:

What are strategies that local agencies and schools in urban areas can use to increase resident access to healthy foods?

Our panelists have suggested that schools and local agencies in urban areas encounter unique challenges and opportunities when making efforts to increase the healthy food options for residents and to combat negative trends in childhood obesity rates.

Please share stories in this discussion about your successes and the obstacles you have faced in trying to change the "foodscape" of urban communities.

I hope we will hear about and discuss some examples such as:

-an ordinance in Oakland to require liquor and convenience stores to carry and display fresh nutritious foods

-ordinances limiting the number of fast food restaurants, requiring nutritional information to be displayed, or requiring healthy food options

See the Powerpoint Presentation on Increasing Healthy Food Access in Bayview Hunter's Point in the Resources area posted by Susanna Henessey Lavery from the SF DPH for one example of local agency efforts to improve an unhealthy urban foodscape.

Answer:



Hannah Laurison,
Public Health Law Policy

The City of Los Angeles recently adopted a moratorium on new fast food restaurants in South Los Angeles. Here's a link to a recent op-ed on the moratorium by Councilwoman Jan Perry: "Fast-food freeze is a good choice for South Los Angeles: The moratorium on new restaurants will ultimately mean more options for residents"

<http://www.latimes.com/features/health/opinion/la-ow-perry4-2008aug04,0,6511243.story>

Answer:



Jennifer Gross, San Mateo County
Health Department

Partnership, the School Board President, principals of Daly City K-8 schools and other officials. They are considering their next steps and a possible moratorium on new fast food outlets. Their video will soon be posted to <http://www.yspacesmc.org/45-Videos.aspx>. This is a great example of students taking action to learn about and increase awareness of their food environment.

In San Mateo County, the California Endowment awarded funds to Daly City high and middle schools to improve students' eating and physical activity habits. Youth from Jefferson High School were involved with the group Project HEART and worked on a community mapping project. They mapped all food outlets within a half mile from Jefferson High and ranked them based on their nutritional content. The students then created a video and presented their work to the School Superintendent, the Daly City

Answer:



Priscilla Cox, Elk Grove
Unified School District

breakfast program to all of our schools and invite families to come too. We partner with community clubs, health organizations and local businesses and obtain grants to grow edible gardens at 14 of our elementary schools. Our food services brings innovative programs like Nutrition Olympics, Ag in the Classroom and Harvest of the Month to our schools and trains almost 500 teachers district-wide a year on nutrition education. Students receive vouchers in some schools to use at nearby farmers markets. We are fortunate in our district to have an excellent food services staff and the ability to access a variety of funding sources, but we are always interested in learning about best practices from other districts.

As a school board member, I have had the opportunity to work on policy development for School Wellness with California School Boards Association as well as the local level in Elk Grove Unified School District. Though the policies are sound and well-researched it really takes another major step for implementation. There are excellent examples around California of cities, counties, businesses, and other agencies working together with schools to provide access to healthy foods and improve physical activity opportunities. Our district is comprised of 62 schools and in the more urban and high poverty area of our district there have been several strategies to increase access to healthy foods. We have expanded our

Question:

What are strategies that local agencies and schools in Rural areas can use to increase resident access to healthy foods?

Our panelists have suggested that Rural school and local agencies face unique challenges and opportunities in their efforts to increase the accessibility of healthy foods and to

combat negative trends in childhood obesity.

Please share your experiences and ideas related to strategies for improving healthy food access in Rural and suburban areas in this discussion.

I hope we will hear and discuss some examples such as:

-How to improve diet options in areas where grocery stores can't seem to stay in business.

-How to work with "big box" stores to establish healthy check out lines and to make sure healthy options are visible and promoted well in the store.

Answer:

Priscilla Cox shares this website that includes the Elk Grove Unified School District wellness policy as well as strategies and news for teachers, parents and students.

www.egusd.net/nutrition

Question:

How can local agencies and schools promote foods that are local and sustainable as well as healthy?

How can we encourage institutions to use or establish new contacts to provide more local, sustainable, healthy foods? Barriers include the fact that organic foods are more expensive, especially for schools. One strategy I'd like to hear more details about is ways to work with local farmers and establish salad bars with fresh local produce. Another is to have trainings to raise awareness among staff, for instance asking staff to avoid the obvious choice of pizza and cola for youth sponsored meetings.

Please share stories, strategies, and questions related to local sustainable food options for local agencies and schools in this area.

Answer:

This is from Susana Hennessey Lavery and Christina Goette at the San Francisco Department of Public Health:

In June 2006 the first comprehensive food policy in San Francisco was developed by the Department of Public Health and adopted by the Health Commission. The SFDPH Healthy and Sustainable Foods Policy provides guidance for the city's largest food service operations including two hospitals and contractors. It also encourages DPH staff to provide healthy and sustainable foods at events, meetings, conferences and trainings. This policy provides the framework and impetus for expanding this work into the rest of the city's food purchases. Since the DPH policy was passed, a number of city departments have come together to form an Interagency Healthy and Sustainable Food Working Group to work collaboratively across city agencies and organizations, share resources, and avoid duplication of work. See attached the [SFDPH policy and resolution](#).

Attachments: [SFDPHSustainFood.pdf](#) (194 KB) (4 Downloads)
[SF Health Commission adoption of healthy sustainable food policy.pdf](#)
(589 KB) (2 Downloads)

Answer:



Jennifer Gross, San Mateo County
Health Department

There are a few innovative ways that schools and other institutions can work with local farmers. Agriculture and Land-based Training Association (ALBA) Organics contracts with local farmers to sell their organic, fresh produce to institutions such as Stanford University Housing and Dining Services, UCSC Housing and Dining, some hospitals and a few schools. Check out their website

http://www.albafarmers.org/alba_organics.html for more information. There is another organization,

Revolution Foods, that supplies local, healthy foods to schools. They supply food for one of the charter schools in East Palo Alto as well as many other schools in southern and northern California. Information can be found at <http://www.revfoods.com/>. Lastly, one of my colleagues in San Mateo County developed a garden with youth at HATCH Elementary School in Half Moon Bay- <http://www.cabrillo.k12.ca.us/heal/home.html> . They donate their produce to the school's salad bar or a nearby senior center. More recently, they became certified to sell their produce at the Coastside farmers' market.

Answer:



Priscilla Cox, Elk Grove
Unified School District

Our district food services dietician who arranges partnerships with local farmers markets for our schools informed me that local farmers markets usually have an information booth. In the Greater Sacramento area, Rene and Dan Best oversee the Farmer's Markets. Dan is an attorney who works closely with farmers and Rene does the student tours. Here is a link to the web page: <http://www.cafarmersmarkets.com/>

Answer:

Lindsey Cox from California Project LEAN shares, "Kaiser Permanente has established 25 farmers markets at their hospitals, and would likely have resources for schools and local agencies about how to contact and work with local farmers in establishing farmers markets: <http://members.kaiserpermanente.org/redirects/farmersmarkets/>

Dr. Maring founded the farmers markets, and his website is available here:

<http://recipe.kaiser-permanente.org/kp/maring/>"

Question:

What are some strategies to get staff and employees engaged and participating as role models in efforts to improve the food choices that young people make?

Answer:

LiAnne Dillon from San Diego County responds, “A more lasting effect than improving the food choices young people make, is improving their environment (both school and community) to provide the opportunity for them to access healthy food. Adults can engage youth in advocating for school and/or community gardens to grow fresh fruits and vegetables and create a "farm to fork" model for the food service on their campus. Youth and adults alike can advocate for farmer's markets in their areas, held in the school parking lot after school or on weekends. Increasing the availability of fresh local produce at farmers markets that accept EBT is a promising strategy to improve the nutrition environment while increasing EBT utilization and health outcomes of at risk populations. Implement policies that require healthy food in vending machines, that regulate food used for fundraising and celebrations to be healthy, and that food in schools is never used as a reward or punishment.”

Question:

What strategies have different communities, cities and counties used to create healthy mobile vending policies?

Answer:

Jenniffer Gross, Community Health Planner from San Mateo County's Health Department, writes, “Mobile food vending takes many forms, from trucks to push carts and roadside stands. These businesses are temporary, nonpermanent uses. Mobile vendors sell every kind of food, from ice cream and candy to fresh fruit and vegetables. In some communities, mobile vendors are licensed and subject to business regulations; other communities do not permit mobile vending.”

”The impact of mobile vending on the health and economic well-being of communities is subject to contentious debate. Some argue that mobile vendors have the potential to contribute to community health by providing nutritious choices in communities where fresh fruits and vegetables are difficult to find. Others contend that mobile vendors contribute to the saturation of unhealthy food choices in low-income communities and present food safety and traffic hazards if not properly managed. A number of municipalities across the country have adopted ordinances designed to maximize the positive impact of mobile vendors on communities.”

For more information about examples of mobile food vending policies contact PHLP staff at info@healthyplanning.org and mention you are interested in content from the October 14, 2008 technical assistance call.

Question:

How can local and school officials encourage fast food chains to offer healthier foods?

Here is an idea and a question from Priscilla Cox:

"Some fast food chains have made an effort to offer healthy food options, especially for children. How can schools and cities work with fast food chains to encourage more healthy foods and are the new products being offered nutritionally sound and economically feasible?"

Anyone doing something along these lines or have ideas as to how this could be accomplished?

Answer:

Hi Priscilla. I'm Kathryn with Leadership for Healthy Communities (www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org). I know that the mayor of Oklahoma City, Mike Cornett, has worked with Taco Bell and others to market healthier menu items. The Pinellas County Health Department, through a CDC Steps to a Healthier Florida program, introduced a "Healthy Choices Restaurant Program."

<http://www.naco.org/PrinterTemplate.cfm?Section=Publications&template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=27820>. Hope this helps.

RESOURCES:

1. Hannah Laurison from Public Health Law Policy gave a PowerPoint presentation via Webinar to kick off our online discussion. Here is her presentation, with slides and talking points, for those of you who missed the webinar or would like to review some of the resources and examples that Hannah presented. Thanks again to Hannah and PHLP for a great presentation!

(NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE- GET PDF FILE ‘Strategies for creating healthy food environments ILG’ FROM GREG KEIDAN JUMP DRIVE)

2. Here are two PolicyLink reports, "Designed for Disease: The Link Between Local Food Environments and Obesity and Diabetes" and, "Healthy Food, Healthy Communities: Improving Access and Opportunities through Food Retailing" that were recommended by Dr. Rajni Banthia, Health Program Associate at PolicyLink.

(NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE- SEE PDF FILES “Designed for Disease” and “Healthy Food Healthy Communities” on Greg Keidan Jump Drive for resource files.)

3. This PowerPoint presentation from Susana Hennessey-Lavery and Christina Goette Carpenter at the San Francisco Department of Public Health outlines the work they have done to promote healthy food access in the "food desert" of Bay View Hunters Point.

SEFA (the southeast food access working group) is a collaborative of residents,

community based organizations, city agencies and others that serves as the catalyst for communication, advocacy and accountability to ensure that healthy, fresh, local, sustainable and affordable produce is accessible to all residents of the BVHP. SEFA's work encompasses the three pillars of: Food Access (including retail, farmer's markets etc), Nutrition Awareness and Education, and Urban Agriculture.

The Good Neighbor Program is a CBO/LEJ and City partnership that works with corner stores merchants in the BHVP to promote healthy, fresh, sustainable and accessible foods and reduce tobacco and alcohol advertising bin stores in exchange for incentives.

(SEE PPT FILE IN GREG KEIDAN JUMP DRIVE, “SFDPH Bayview hunters point work”.)

4. The new publication from the Partnership for the Public’s Health, ["Roadmap to Improving Food and Physical Activity Environments: Tips and Tools from the Healthy Eating, Active Living \(HEAC\) Program"](#) draws on the experiences of people taking part in a 4 year project funded by The California Endowment to reduce the incidence of childhood obesity in six California communities. This detailed guide outlines strategies for making lasting positive change in community food and physical activity environments via the formation of coalitions and meaningful community engagement resulting in improved public policy.

5. National Association of State Boards of Education, [“Policies to Encourage Healthy Eating”](#) report.

6. The United States Conference of Mayors developed this online [“Mayors’ Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity,”](#) to educate mayors about specific policies they can adopt in their communities to address childhood obesity in underserved populations. The Guide offers action steps mayors can take to address childhood obesity and promote healthy eating/active living in their communities and provides local examples of such policies. It also contains a large resource section with information on funding opportunities, online resources, and other pertinent items of interest to mayors and their staff.

7. The [National Association of Counties' \(NACo\) Healthy Counties Database](#) is a tool you can use to search for model policies, programs and initiatives that counties nationwide have enacted to promote wellness and help prevent childhood obesity. No need to reinvent the wheel. Find out what peer local government leaders have done to enable and encourage nutritious diets, physical activity, and healthy built and social environments.

8. This [ICMA Report on Community Health and Food Access](#) provides an overview of strategies and approaches that cities and counties can use to improve access to healthy foods, as well as case studies that examine success stories of community gardens, farmers’ markets, food policy councils, and programs for children.

- 9.** Developing new grocery stores and cooperatives, creating farmers' markets, and improving the quality of foods sold at convenience stores are all ways to increase a community's access to healthy foods. This [Guide to Funding Sources for Healthy Food Retail](#) from PHLP provides an overview of the range of federal and California funding programs available to support these strategies.
- 10.** This [Toolkit on Land Use and Health](#) from PHLP is designed for nutrition and other public health advocates who need additional resources, beyond zoning and general plan revisions, to improve the food access in low-income neighborhoods and are seeking a fundamental, introductory understanding of the economic development and redevelopment tools available, their use, and how to effectively participate in decisions about their use.
- 11.** NACo has a [monthly online newsletter](#) focused on local government efforts to combat childhood obesity. Their September 2008 newsletter has information about federal funding sources for this work, examples of work being done in California's Central Valley and in Washington schools, and a lot more.
- 12.** This [guide to community partnerships for healthier eating](#) from the Center for Civic Partnerships highlights the impact that community-based programs can have on food stamp eligible and similar low-income residents — adults and youth alike — to encourage healthy eating and increased physical activity and provide a broad representation of current strategies and efforts that have been effective in reaching low-income communities. The guide begins with an overview of the issue, followed by case studies of successful strategies, a reference list for further reading, and resource ideas.
- 13.** The [California School Board Association Student Wellness Website](#) is a comprehensive resource for school board members that includes policies and wellness information.
- 14.** The Southeast Food Access working group conducted a survey of 562 residents who reflect the diversity of the neighborhood in San Francisco's Bay View Hunter's Point, a food desert. Significant [survey findings](#) were instrumental in improving existing and creating new full service markets and include: Ninety-four percent of those surveyed say they would actively support new food options in Bayview-Hunters Point. Most residents buy their food outside of the neighborhood. Over half (58%) say they frequently buy their groceries at Safeway in other neighborhoods. Four out of five respondents say “freshness” is the most important factor when choosing a place to shop for food; far more than those who prioritize affordability and other factors. Survey respondents care about values associated with workers’ rights and organic foods. A majority(58%) want a co-op market; and over half (53%) say it is “most important” that foods be free of pesticides and chemicals, and be grown by local farmers who treat farm workers fairly.
- 15.** The City and County of San Francisco recognizes that a sustainable food system is essential to achieving San Francisco's health, environmental, and social justice priorities. San Francisco Food (WWW.SFFOOD.ORG) is the City's new food system website.

Explore this site to locate healthy and sustainable food, to learn more about applying for Food Stamps or where to get emergency food, or find a farmers market. You can also research food related policies and food system reports, and find maps of gardens and food retail in San Francisco.

16. [Shape Up SF](#) is focusing on creating environments that promote physical activity and healthy eating.

17. The Get Healthy San Mateo County Task Force seeks to reduce and prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy, fresh food and opportunities for physical activity. This [website](#) offers resources for various audiences: parents, health professionals, community members, preschool and childcare providers, after school coordinators, and educators.