WalkWorks

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Steps to a Healthier You!

> *If there's one thing we've learned about catalyzing changes that prevent illness in the first place, it's that passage of a single policy can be like lighting a match — illuminating the way towards strategies with greater impact and igniting the energy of leaders.*
>
> – Larry Cohen and Juliet Sims (Prevention Institute, 2015)

What is Health in All Policies?

Health in All Policies (HiAP) is a response to a variety of complex and inextricably linked issues including, though not necessarily limited to: chronic diseases – many for which obesity is an indicator; increasing health inequities; health care costs; an aging population; and threats to natural resources. It engages diverse governmental partners and stakeholders to work together to improve health and simultaneously advance other goals, such as promoting economic stability, transportation access and mobility, a strong agricultural system, environmental sustainability and educational attainment.

What does HiAP aim to accomplish?

The goal of HiAP is to ensure that decision-makers are informed about the health, equity and sustainability of consequences during policy development processes. A wide range of policies can help to influence health – ranging from transportation and land use to the food we eat and how much we walk rather than drive.

What is the issue that requires attention?

A healthy population is a key requirement for the achievement of society's goals. Good health enhances quality of life, improves workforce productivity, increases the capacity for learning, strengthens families and communities, supports sustainable environments and contributes to security, poverty reduction and social inclusion. The increased prevalence of sedentary lifestyles, which contributes to rising obesity rates, is related to changes in patterns of land use and transportation, increased distances from homes to schools and work, parental fears about children's safety, shifts in the nature of work and cultural changes.

Framework for Health in All Policies

Adopt
a paradigm whereby individuals of multiple disciplines contribute their respective expertise.

Collaborate
across sectors - education, health, planning, transportation and others - in the development of land use and transportation plans and policies.

Outcome:
Improved population health through integration of health related priorities in policies and plans.

Educate
each other about creating healthier communities – planners and public health professionals alike.

Support
public policy to enhance the built environment and encourage active – "ped/bike" – transportation.

Physical Activity
Regular physical activity can help control weight, reduce risk of cardiovascular disease as well as type 2 diabetes and some cancers and improve mental health.

Diabetes
One hour of brisk walking, everyday, can cut a woman's risk of developing type 2 diabetes in half.

Dementia
A daily 20 minute walk can cut the risk of dementia by 40 percent.

Obesity
For each six-tenths of a mile that an individual walks per day, his/her risk of obesity is decreased by 5 percent.
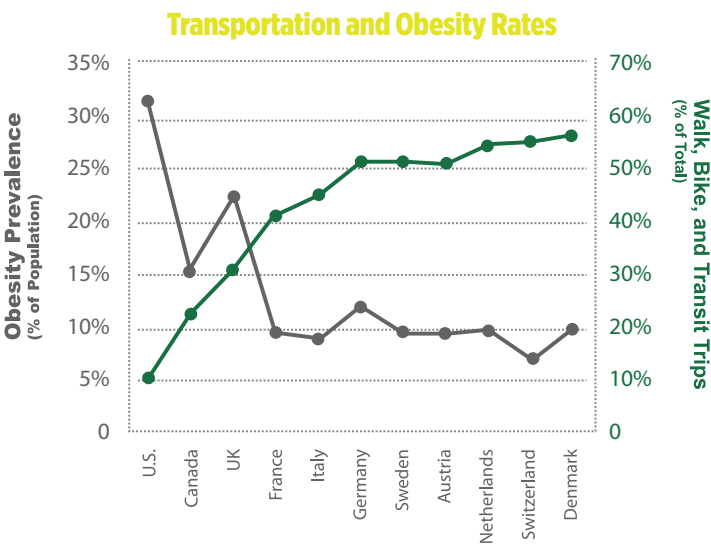
Guidelines
Less than one-half of all Americans meet the physical activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week of moderate physical activity for adults and 420 minutes per week for children and adolescents.

What is the evidence that makes this an issue?

According to the Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation, the social, cultural, physical and economic foundations of a community support a healthy lifestyle for its citizens. There is growing research and policy interest in active living, defined as "a way of life that integrates physical activity into daily routines." By establishing communities that support an active lifestyle, neighborhood design can promote physical activity patterns that are sustainable and important to health. Building new communities that are less car dependent and increasing the density of existing communities are strategies that can make it easier for people to walk to their destinations of daily life. Higher land-use mix encourages more utilitarian trips among residents and increases their ability to reach their destinations on foot rather than by automobile. Proximity of neighborhood shops to residences promotes trips on foot or by bicycle.

Transportation and Obesity Rates

Cross-Sector Collaboration

Sectors	Interrelationships with Health
Economy and employment	• Economic resilience and growth is stimulated by a healthy population. Healthier people can increase their household savings, are more productive at work, can adapt more easily to work changes and can remain working for longer. • Work and stable employment opportunities improve health for all people across different social groups.
Education	• Poor health of children or family members impedes educational attainment, reducing educational potential and abilities to solve life challenges and pursue opportunities in life. • Educational attainment for both women and men directly contributes to better health and the ability to participate fully in a productive society; it also creates engaged citizens.
Infrastructure, planning and transport	• Optimal planning for roads, transport and housing requires the consideration of health impacts, as this can reduce environmentally costly emissions and improve the capacity of transport networks and their efficiency with moving people, goods and services. • Better transport opportunities, including walking and cycling opportunities, build safer and more livable communities and reduce environmental degradation, enhancing health.

Summary of Recommendations

Decision makers are encouraged to:

• Adopt a "Health in All Policies philosophy" by incorporating health in plans and policies resulting in an increase in physical activity and reduction of chronic disease.

• Integrate health-related priorities, as identified in community health needs assessments – specific to your community, into your comprehensive and transportation plans. Include measurable objectives so that progress can be measured.

• Collaborate across sectors – education, health, municipal planning, transportation and others – in the development of land use and transportation plans and policies.

• Support active transportation, including ease of pedestrian and bicycle movement; require sidewalks and implement a walkable grid in all new communities.

For a more detailed version of the Policy Brief, please visit the Resources page at **pawalkworks.com.**