

MOVING COMMUNITIES TOWARD HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS AND POLICIES

Early success of NACDD/YMCA partnership demonstrates value of community change model

Public Health Problem

- Local policies and the community environment affect the health of a community's residents.
- Increasing opportunities for physical activity, improving access to healthy food, and assuring tobacco-free living are vital community strategies for preventing chronic disease.

Program

- The innovative Action Communities for Health, Innovation and Environmental Change initiative, or ACHIEVE, applies lessons learned from community initiatives demonstrating the value of a community model using health departments & YMCAs as trusted conveners.
- Implemented through a partnership between the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors and the YMCA of the USA, with support from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, ACHIEVE funded ten communities in 2008, selected using a competitive process, to promote community environment and policy change for the prevention of chronic disease.
- ACHIEVE helps communities form diverse, multi-sector Community Health Action Response Teams, send members to an Action Institute to learn effective community change strategies, and supports development of community action plans and local implementation efforts.

Impact

- *ACHIEVE teams are actively changing policies:*
 - New city ordinances are reducing youth tobacco exposure
 - A new school walking policy has students and adults walking for ten minutes every day
 - Policymakers are showing they support change generated by ACHIEVE's broad community teams more eagerly than change proposed by individuals or narrowly-focused groups
- *ACHIEVE teams are actively changing systems:*
 - A school system is implementing a more "fitness-oriented" physical education curriculum
 - A healthcare system is implementing a reminder system to help healthcare providers refer smokers to local tobacco cessation programs
- *ACHIEVE teams are actively changing environments:*
 - Healthy worksite environment change principles developed in an ACHIEVE community are being applied in offices around the nation, expanding ACHIEVE benefits
 - A new community trail developing in an ethnically diverse community will improve residents previously-limited access to safe physical activity opportunities
 - A community team is applying a geographic information system to map parks, open space, grocery stores and other health-related community features for better planning

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