

June 2009 - Issue #18

Local News

[Long-dormant Greenhouses again Bloom Life into Cemetery](#) (5/30/09)

Three abandoned, century-old greenhouses that years ago produced flowers to beautify the graves and grounds of an historic cemetery are being brought back to life, this time with vegetables, the *Journal Sentinel Online* reports. Empty for nearly a decade because they became too expensive to heat through winter, the A-frame glass greenhouses will be used year-round by the organization [Growing Power](#) to grow thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables for Milwaukee, Wisconsin residents.

[New Obesity Program Focuses on Kids](#) (5/29/09)

According to the *Jamaica Plain Gazette*, Northeastern University, the Boston Red Sox and Children's Hospital Boston recently launched a pilot program to prevent childhood obesity. The community-based initiative will engage parents and child-care providers for pre-school-age children at two Jamaica Plain Head Start sites and in four other neighborhoods. On April 15, Mayor Thomas Menino joined Northeastern University President Joseph Aoun; Boston Red Sox President and CEO Larry Lucchino; and Dr. James Mandell, CEO of Children's Hospital Boston at a Head Start site in Lower Roxbury to announce the launch of Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures (HKHF).

[Farmers Markets Put Nutrition Within Reach](#) (5/20/09)

An X-ray and a bag of oranges, anyone? In the lobby of Kaiser Permanente's Oakland Medical Center, Dr. Preston Maring said he'd regularly pass vendors selling crafts. One day, he realized: "This has nothing to do with our mission as a healthcare facility." The *LA Times* reports that, six years later, Kaiser Permanente has [30 farmers markets](#) at medical facilities in four states where patients, staff and community members shop.

[New York City's New Health Commissioner](#) (5/18/09)

Mayor Bloomberg appointed Dr. Thomas Farley as the new health commissioner on Monday, reported *Newsday.com*. "I do think we need to take on obesity more seriously, and that's going to focus on dietary issues probably beyond calorie labeling," said Farley in an interview after his appointment was announced. Farley said the specifics will come after he officially starts the job next month. Mayor Bloomberg reportedly told Farley privately that he likes to be known as an innovator in public health, and urged him to continue that legacy.

[Forty Seven Hoosier Elementary Schools to Participate in Nutritional Food Program](#) (5/16/09)

The *Muncie Free Press* reports that 47 Indiana elementary schools were selected for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP). FFVP provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. This program, by teaching children healthy eating habits, is an important catalyst for change in the fight against childhood obesity.

National News

[Turning Research into Action to Reverse the Childhood Obesity Epidemic](#) (5/31/09)

A message from Risa Lavizzo-Mourey, M.D., M.B.A., president and CEO of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provided an update on the Foundation's \$500 million dollar commitment to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic.

[Obesity Pushing Schools to Take Fitness Seriously](#) (5/25/09)

Some things about middle school PE class never change. The uniforms, drab and ill-fitting mesh, remain about as stylish as a leisure suit. Students still scramble to plop down on their assigned number stenciled onto the blacktop before the bell. And afterward, just as in days of yore, no one ever even thinks of taking a shower. Those are the hoary physical education traditions, seemingly handed down from generation to generation. Yet, according to the *Deseret News*, much truly has changed — evolved is more like it — in the modern middle school and high school PE class.

[Senators Introduce Measure Ensuring Safe Routes to School.](#) (5/22/09)

Senators Tom Harkin (D-IA), Richard Burr (R-NC), Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Jeff Merkley (D-OR) introduced a measure that seeks to increase the safety of children going to school by foot or bike by constructing new sidewalks, bike lanes, pathways, and crossings, traffic signals and launching Safe Routes to School education, promotion and law enforcement campaigns, *IowaPolitics.com* reports. First created as part of the SAFETEA-LU transportation bill in 2005, the Safe Routes to School program is providing over \$600 million from 2005 through this year to State Departments of Transportation. With this funding, elementary and middle schools and communities throughout the country are constructing new sidewalks, bike lanes, pathways, and crossings, and launching Safe Routes to School education, promotion and law enforcement campaigns. The Safe Routes to School program is due for reauthorization as part of the next transportation bill.

[New Mexico Senator Reintroduces Federal Obesity Prevention and Treatment Bill](#) (5/18/09)

Sen. Jeff Bingaman (D) has reintroduced legislation aimed at reducing the nation's obesity epidemic, according to a press release from his office. The legislation would also allow for improved access to nutritional counseling, prevention services and physical education programs for beneficiaries of Medicare, Medicaid and other federal programs and would allot additional funding to the USDA's Fresh Fruits and Vegetables program. Meanwhile, the bill would create grant programs to support initiatives launched in schools, community health centers, medical societies, state health departments and communities that are designed to prevent and treat overweight and obesity.

[MEAL vs. LEAN Congressional Battle Underway](#) (5/18/09)

The *Chicago Tribune* reports that the battle over mandatory calorie disclosures on chain restaurant menus is heating up, as public health advocates and the restaurant industry prepare to duke it out in Congress. Momentum for mandatory calorie counts kicked into high gear last summer when New York City, over much industry opposition, forced fast-food operators to add calorie counts to menu boards. Since then, similar requirements have been implemented in the Seattle and [Portland](#), Ore., areas and Westchester County in New York.

Reports and Studies

[Policy Recommendations for Improving PE in California Schools](#) PDF

This document outlines the benefits, evidence, research, policy steps, costs, and barriers to enhancing physical education and other physical activities, with a focus on California schools in disadvantaged communities.

[How Does Your Garden Grow? Brownfields Redevelopment and Local Agriculture](#) PDF

Brownfields are properties that are vacant or abandoned due to concerns about real or perceived contamination on the property. Using funds from Environmental Protection Agency, states, tribes and other sources, communities can assess sites and clean brownfields, creating safe spaces where people can grow their own food, or buy locally-grown food. This EPA document vides links to resources for brownfields cleanup and reuse as a garden or market.

[Race and Socioeconomic Factors Affect Opportunities for Better Health](#) PDF

Produced by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Commission to Build a Healthier America,

this brief examines racial/ethnic disparities in mortality and diabetes rates and the links between income and health within and across groups.

[Walking and Biking to School, Physical Activity and Health Outcomes](#) PDF

This brief produced by Active Living Research, summarizes research on active transport to school, physical activity levels and health outcomes. It also explores the factors that influence walking and biking to school, including the impact of Safe Routes to Schools programs.

[Year Five Evaluation: Arkansas Act 1220 of 2003 to Combat Childhood Obesity](#) PDF

Prepared by **University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health**, this brief summarizes findings on the impact of a comprehensive school-based intervention to prevent childhood obesity. The report examines changes in school nutrition policy and in parents' and students' behaviors and awareness.

[Preventing Childhood Obesity: A School Health Policy Guide](#) PDF

Produced by the National Association of State Boards of Education, this guide offers the latest policy updates and recommendations about how to promote physical education and activity and healthy eating policies in schools.

[Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America](#) PDF

Produced by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build A Healthier America, this document outlines recommendations for governments, schools, healthcare providers, philanthropies, and others to collaborate on implementing feasible, evidence-based interventions that create healthier communities and address the needs of those at greatest risk of poor health outcomes.

Tools You Can Use [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, guidance 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 a leadership compact urging members to adopt policies designed to reduce childhood obesity rates, and to focus efforts on our most vulnerable children.

[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](#)

This is 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 and 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

[Active Living Research: Investigating Policies and Environments to Support Active Communities](#) PDF

Active Living Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that supports research to identify promising policy and environmental strategies for increasing physical activity, decreasing sedentary behaviors and preventing obesity among children and adolescents. We place special emphasis on strategies with the potential to reach racial/ethnic populations and children living in lower-income communities who are at highest risk for obesity. Grants funded under this call for proposals (CFP) are expected to advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. This funding opportunity from RWJF for *New Connections* research or publication grants through the Active Living Research program is for new investigators from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities.

Deadline: July 29, 2009

[National Gardening Association Invites Applications for 2009 Hooked on Hydroponics Education Grants](#)

The program will provide 36 schools with equipment and learning materials for hydroponics projects that involve at least fifteen children between the ages of 6 and 18 during the 2010 school year. Applicants must verify that their facility can accommodate the equipment in the award packages available for their age group.

Deadline: September 18, 2009

[Youth Garden Grants](#)

The National Gardening Association has announced that Home Depot is returning as the Youth Garden Grants sponsor for 2010. NGA annually awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs across the United States. Schools, youth groups, community centers, camps, clubs, treatment facilities, and intergenerational groups throughout the United States are eligible. Applicants must plan to garden with at least 15 children between the ages of three and 18 years.

Deadline: November 2, 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

[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.

This E-Newsletter is distributed monthly via email to members of USCM's Mayors' Healthy Cities Campaign and others by request. Funding for the newsletter has been provided by Leadership for Healthy Communities--a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. To submit a question, comment, or local best practice or to subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact pcarter@usmayors.org.

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