



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Healthy Cities E-Newsletter



October 2008 - Issue #11

Local News

[Mayors Speak Out at Healthy Communities Summit](#) (9/30/08)

Speaking at a summit held at Tufts University, Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno cut to the heart of the obesity issue: "Health care cost is a budget buster," he told city, town and state leaders assembled at the meeting. Somerville Mayor Joseph Curtatone said Somerville has created 20 new parks, playgrounds and community gardens. Somerville has gained nationwide recognition for reducing childhood obesity in its schools reported the *Daily News Tribune*.

[New Campaign on Childhood Obesity, Weight Issues May Prove Model for Nation](#) (9/22/08)

An innovative new campaign designed to help millions of schoolchildren battle childhood obesity and other weight issues in Pennsylvania may become a model for other states reported *PNN Online*. The new program offers a multi-pronged campaign, which includes a weight awareness module, information packages for more than 1,000 schools statewide and free access to 24/7 counseling services by phone. The service is available to callers that want to discuss anything from bullying to depression, abuse, or family issues, which can eventually lead to eating and weight disorders or other problems.

[Paving Ways to Schools](#) (9/22/08)

The Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department awarded the city of Hamburg \$1.3 million in grants under the Safe Routes to School Program reported the *Arkansas Democrat*. Through the federally funded initiative, the award will help the city build new sidewalks. The program was started by a 2005 federal highway bill that expires next year.

[Buffalo-Niagara Schools, Health Insurers Join to Fight Obesity in Children](#) (9/20/08)

Independent Health will offer an eight-month physical activity and good nutrition competition program for hundreds of elementary and middle schools reported the *Buffalo News*. To compliment this effort, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Western New York will introduce a school-based fitness program in collaboration with the Buffalo Bills.

[Mayor Bloomberg and Shaquille O'Neal Announce New Food Standards for City Agencies](#) (9/19/08)

Mayor Michael Bloomberg and NBA superstar Shaquille O'Neal launched the city's first formal food standards, ensuring that the 225 million snacks and meals served annually by city agencies are healthier than ever, reported the *Associated Press*. New York City is the first major city in the country to set nutrition standards for all foods purchased or served. The new standards, pursuant to an executive order, apply to snacks and meals served in places such as schools, senior centers, homeless shelters, child-care centers, after-school programs, correctional facilities, public hospitals

and parks.

[Grand Prairie Shows Its "Playful" Side](#) (09/19/08)

In September, Grand Prairie was designated a Playful City USA community by KaBOOM!, a national non-profit dedicated to bringing play back into children's lives. In *Pegasus News*, Parks and Recreation Director Rick Herold said, the honor highlights the city's commitment to provide outlets for children that stimulate their imaginations and strengthen their bodies.

[Muskogee's Mayor Looks to Improve Residents' Health](#) (9/16/08)

Mayor John Tyler Hammons announced goals he hopes the city can achieve by addressing three critical health issues: nutrition, exercise and tobacco cessation reported the *Muskogee Phoenix*. Muskogee's objectives include decreasing the mortality rate, lowering health insurance premiums and improving residents' quality of life.

[Plan to Put Healthy Snacks in Vending Machines Requires Compromise](#) (9/11/08)

Some vendors have expressed concern about Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez's plan to put healthier snacks in vending machines located in public buildings. Vendors are worried that customers are less likely to purchase the healthier options and result in lower vending machine profits. As a compromise, city leaders discussed the possibility of filling the vending machines half with healthier snacks and half with traditional snacks.

[Charlestown Mayor Tells Residents to Move it, Lose it](#) (9/06/08)

Charlestown Mayor Bob Hall announced the start of Move It, Lose It Charlestown, a program designed to get Indiana residents healthy and in shape reported the *News and Tribune*.

National News

[More Americans on Food Stamps but Still Struggling](#) (9/28/08)

The number of people on food stamps has been increasing for months reported the *Star-Telegram*. In June, the figure was 28.6 million, according to the government. But food prices have spiked recently, and wages have been sagging for decades. Agriculture Department economist Ephraim Leibtag said food prices are up 6.1 percent this month over last September, the steepest increase in almost 20 years. Experts and recipients say food stamps are not enough to get by on.

[The Truth About Cars, the Potential of Cities](#) (9/26/08)

Editorial in *WorldChanging*, an on-line magazine, that discusses direct relationship between the kinds of places we live, the transportation choices we have, and how much we drive. The author asserts that the best car-related innovation we have is not to improve the car, but eliminate the need to drive it everywhere we go. The art of placemaking, learning to build dense communities with plenty of open space, welcoming public places, thriving neighborhood retail and a tangible sense of place is encouraged.

[Storm over Statins](#) (9/25/08)

Editorial in the *New England Journal Of Medicine* that suggests "Regardless of how many additional children may receive statin treatment under these new guidelines, the broader, more important question is whether we intend to treat pediatric obesity with an ever-increasing array of powerful adult drugs . . . Once this door has been opened, the pharmaceutical industry will happily walk through it. The intense media coverage of the new statin policy may have shined a light on the profound cultural disconnect between our willingness to treat disease with drugs and our reluctance to institute preventive public health measures."

[Former Ark. Gov. Huckabee calls for health changes](#) (9/16/08)

In South Carolina, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee told a crowd of health insurers and care providers that politicians tend not to focus on preventable chronic health problems because they often require a generation - not a term in office - to bring about widely accepted change reported the *Associated Press*. Huckabee indicated that the nation's health care system can't be overhauled without first addressing preventable health problems.

Reports and Studies

[The Green Visions Plan for Southern California](#) (PDF)

Los Angeles is part of a far-flung, park-starved tri-county region where less than 15percent of residents live within easy walking distance of a sliver of public green, according to a [Green Visions study](#) by the Center for Sustainable Cities at University of Southern California. L.A. County's top public health official has linked the lack of neighborhood parks to an obesity rate among children approaching 25 percent, creating what he calls [our "biggest epidemic."](#)

[Bullying Worries Parents of Overweight and Obese Children](#) (PDF)

C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health shows that parents with overweight or obese children are much more concerned about bullying at schools than parents with children at healthy weights. The poll questioned parents with children ages 6 to13, bringing the bullying focus down to elementary and middle school.

[Beverage Companies Are Offering Healthier Drinks in Schools](#) (PDF)

A new independent evaluation shows that the beverage industry has significantly reduced the number of high-calorie beverages available in schools in accordance with the national School Beverage Guidelines. The guidelines were developed two years ago by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the American Beverage Association, Coca-Cola, Dr Pepper Snapple Group and PepsiCo. The guidelines aim to limit beverage portion sizes and reduce the number of calories available to students during the school day.

[Active Transportation to School—Trends in Walking and Biking to School](#) (PDF)

Report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that summarizes key findings from an analysis of 1969-2001 data on elementary, junior high, and high school students walking or biking to school and the key factors contributing to the declining trend.

Tools You Can Use

[Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity](#)

The *Mayors' Guide to Fighting Childhood Obesity* provides suggested action steps that 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.

Funding Resources

[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.

[2009 Youth Garden Grants Program](#)

Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs.

Deadline: November 1, 2008

[USDA - Classroom Challenge Grants Program](#)

Funding aims to promote and strengthen agriscience and agribusiness education at the college level, as well as and agriculture education in K to12 classrooms. The ultimate long-term goal of this program is to encourage more young Americans to pursue and complete a baccalaureate or higher degree in the food and agricultural sciences. Last year, over 50 percent of applications received funding.

Deadline: December 15, 2008

[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

Useful Web sites

[Healthy Kids Challenge](#)

This website offers robust, relevant and health-focused programs for children in schools, extracurricular programs and community-based settings.

[Surgeon General Web site](#)

This initiative promotes the importance of healthy eating and physical activity at a young age to help prevent overweight and obesity in this country. [Take the Surgeon General's Pledge](#) to help prevent childhood overweight and obesity.

[Healthier US.GOV](#)

This Web site is part of a broad presidential agenda designed to help Americans, especially children, live longer, better and healthier lives. The site provides credible, accurate information to help Americans choose healthier habits.

[We Can!](#)

We Can![™] or "Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition" is a national program designed for families and communities to help children maintain a healthy weight. The program focuses on *three* important behaviors: *improved* food choices, *increased* physical activity and *reduced* screen time. Four of the National Institutes of Health have come together to bring you **We Can!** The [National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute](#) in collaboration with the [National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases](#), the [Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development](#), and the [National Cancer Institute](#) have combined their unique resources and activities as part of **We Can!**

[Healthy Weight: It's Not a Diet it's a Lifestyle](#)

New CDC Web site that urges that achieving and maintaining a healthy weight isn't just about a "diet" or "program." Instead, the emphasis should be on developing a long-term lifestyle that you can adopt now and stay with for years to come.

[Declaration for Healthy Food and Agriculture](#)

This Web site presents twelve principles that should frame food and agriculture policy to ensure that it will contribute to the health and wealth of the nation and the world.

The Get Healthy San Mateo County Task Force launched two Web sites aimed at targeting childhood obesity in the county. One site -- www.gethealthysmc.org -- is targeted at adults and includes information intended to help parents and educators guide children on how to stay healthy. The other site -- www.yspacemc.org -- is targeted at children with diet and other kinds of information

Upcoming Conferences

[The Mayors' Healthy City Summit](#)

In their role as community leaders, mayors can support and implement local initiatives and programs that help create vibrant and healthy communities. This conference will provide mayors with important public health information and a menu of local initiatives that support the creation of healthy cities.

Registration is open

Mayors may register for this meeting at:

<http://usmayors.org/healthycities08>

Upcoming Health Observation Dates

[International Walk to School Month](#)

October 2008

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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