

Plan4Health: Columbus Public Health - Chronic Disease Prevention Advisory Board Columbus, OH

SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) Chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) Affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. Increasing opportunities for physical activity in Columbus, Ohio is the goal of the Columbus Public Health's Chronic Disease Prevention Advisory Board. Efforts will include implementing school travel plans, promoting active transportation strategies and conducting a health impact assessment.



CHALLENGE

Columbus, Ohio, in Franklin County, has more than 820,000 residents, making it the 15th most populous city in the United States. According to the 2013 Franklin County community health needs assessment, 76 percent of the adult population consumes less than five servings of fruits and vegetables daily and only 21 percent meet physical activity guidelines for aerobic activity and muscle strengthening. As a result, overweight residents and obesity, in particular,

have emerged as critical local concerns. Only 16 percent of K-8 students walked to and from school, while 80 percent were either bussed or driven in a family vehicle. Among workers aged 16 and over, only 3 percent walked to work and 3 percent took public transit, while 80.7 percent drove alone. The Chronic Disease Prevention Advisory Board is committed to leveraging existing programs and launching new strategies to increase opportunities for physical activity for all residents in Columbus.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

If you live in Columbus, check out a coalition meeting! Or, try biking to the grocery store or walking to the park. If that's not possible, why is it not possible? What policy, systems, and environment changes need to happen in your community?

To learn more about the project in Columbus and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the project website (www.plan4health.us) and join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following [#plan4health](https://twitter.com/plan4health).

"Plan4Health has elevated conversations around planning and public health and leveraged momentum around several key initiatives to improve conditions for active transportation in Columbus."

*- Barb Seckler, Director
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SOLUTION

The Chronic Disease Prevention Advisory Board Plan4Health initiative engages more than 30 organizations, welcoming a range of perspectives. From universities and hospitals to food banks and bike shares, the coalition demonstrates a long-term view of change, knowing that relationships and connections established now will also serve to strengthen future plans. Responding to the low number of students walking or biking to school, the coalition is working to implement the Safe Routes to School Travel Plan recommendations through walking school bus programs as well as the continued education. The momentum of May 2015's Bike Month provided the perfect platform to connect with employers and discuss active commuting alternatives.

RESULTS

The coalition completed the walking school bus pilot project at Clinton Elementary School, receiving enthusiastic feedback from participants. The seven-week project brought together an average of 15 students each day and included three routes. The coalition plans to continue—and expand—the program in the fall, possibly organizing bicycle teams as well. The coalition is a key member in the health impact assessment of the Connect Columbus transportation plan, describing the connections between planning and health in terms of air pollution, physical activity, and equity. The coalition is also conducting extensive outreach into the community, surveying residents to understand how people are currently getting around the city, how they would like to get to their destinations, and what is stopping that from happening.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Implementation of existing policy recommendations is complemented by the coalition's work to support the Connect Columbus' transportation plan as well as strategic planning efforts for the Central Ohio Greenways project. The initiatives strengthened, as well as those launched, during the Plan4Health project period are integral to the community-wide efforts to make Columbus a healthy, vibrant community. And, all coalition activities will continue to be shared with residents and community members themselves—those already connected to the coalition, but also those who haven't had a chance to learn about the active living possibilities available in their own backyards.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.