

Plan4Health: Building Wellness in Bensenville, IL

"The Bensenville Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Ordinance provide a forward-thinking approach to make real change in support of a healthy, livable community. Over 300 residents participated in the planning process by identifying barriers to walking and biking. These recommendations were incorporated into the plan and policy, and thereby will help the Village focus transportation investments on the places that matter most. As Bensenville implements its plan and policy, it will empower residents to lead a healthier lifestyle, and enable them to access local and regional destinations on foot or by bike."

*Heather Schady
Active Transportation Alliance*

In an effort to engage all community members, B-Well Bensenville develops all communications in both English and Spanish and was able to collect a number of survey responses from Spanish-speaking residents.



SUMMARY

Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by the American Planning Association (APA) and the American Public Health Association (APHA), Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. B-Well Bensenville is addressing physical inactivity, with a focus on the needs of low-income and Hispanic residents – Bensenville's most vulnerable populations. Efforts include short-term solutions like raising awareness about new physical activity opportunities within the community and longer-term policy and environmental changes to improve physical activity rates among residents.

CHALLENGE

The Village of Bensenville, a suburban community of 18,535 residents located in the northeast corner of DuPage County, Illinois, has a large percentage of residents at risk for negative health outcomes. As a whole, the community is not reaching the recommended levels of physical activity: only 22 percent of tenth graders report being active for 60 minutes a day; 19 percent of adults aged 20 or older self-report no leisure time activity – like running or gardening or walking for exercise – during the month preceding the survey. And, hospital discharge rates for Type 2 diabetes indicate rates that are 15 percent higher for residents of Bensenville than the county as a whole.

SOLUTION

Contact

Victoria Benham

Village of Bensenville
12 South Center Street
Bensenville, IL 60106
630-350-3422 phone
<http://www.bensenville.il.us>

B-Well Bensenville is leading the community in linking public health issues and planning and development efforts. Through the Plan4Health project, the coalition created an Active Transportation Plan and a Complete Streets Policy for the community to ensure that all residents can safely bike and walk to school and work. An initial step in this effort was a community-wide survey designed to determine specific policy recommendations and to prioritize community changes by assessing how residents travel to grocery stores, libraries, work, and trails, as well as how they would like to travel to these destinations. The coalition's early emphasis on community engagement was key for the successful development and implementation of the plans.

SUSTAINABLE SUCCESS

The Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy are strategies that will move the community toward making all streets safe and accessible for current and future residents. The continuing integration of planning and public health in Bensenville serves as an example for other communities of how to change environments to make healthy living easier where people live, learn, work and play.

Join B-Well Bensenville by biking and walking on the trails around the Village and engage in conversations about how bikability and walkability are key to building healthy, vibrant communities. Visit <http://www.bwellbensenville.com/> to learn more.

For more information about all of the coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out www.plan4health.us and join the conversation on social media with #BWellBensenville and #plan4health.

RESULTS

The Active Transportation Plan and Complete Streets Policy established through the Plan4Health work in Bensenville potentially impacts the entire Village of over 18,000 people. The coalition is currently focused on implementing these efforts and is already using the new policies: when the coalition found out about the Village's plans to re-surface streets, B-Well Bensenville was able to leverage their work to ensure that a new downtown shared bike lane was incorporated into the plans.

Another piece of B-Well Bensenville's efforts involved a regional perspective, including the potential to connect Bensenville with neighboring Elmhurst by the construction of a multi-use path. Although construction is not yet underway, this is one example of how the coalition took a long-term approach. By developing plans early, the coalition will be ready when an opportunity for new construction arises.

Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story 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 of Chronic Disease Prevention project at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.

Success Stories

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>