

Plan4Health: Centralina Health Solutions Coalition Mecklenburg, NC

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. The Centralina Health Solutions Coalition (CHSC) is working to decrease health disparities by addressing barriers and increasing opportunities for physical activity in at-risk neighborhoods in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Challenge

The Mecklenburg County Public Health Priority Area (PHPA) consists of more than 60,000 people in over 50 neighborhoods considered at risk for poor health outcomes. Comprised mostly of African American (74 percent) and Hispanic residents (14 percent), the medium income, employment rates, and educational attainment rates within the PHPA are much lower compared to the county as a whole. The crime rates and the number of residents receiving food and nutrition services are also much higher when compared to the county average. Countywide, African Americans are more likely to report being overweight or obese, participating in no physical activity and having less access to healthcare. Although the dense land use pattern found within these neighborhoods facilitates walking to community resources, such as parks, schools, and transit, safety is a major concern.

Solution

The Centralina Health Solutions Coalition is working with community members to address their needs and to overcome infrastructure, policy, and systems gaps to participating in physical activity. The coalition is: applying a health lens to neighborhood planning initiatives focused on increasing physical activity opportunities; conducting walking, biking, and park access audits; and identifying both existing and potential opportunities for shared use agreements. The coalition plans to develop materials, including a toolkit, case studies - and more - to facilitate replication in other areas.



Your Involvement is Key

To learn more about the Centralina Health Solutions Coalition and all coalitions participating in Plan4Health, check out the coalition's page of the project website (www.plan4health.us).

Join the national conversation at the intersection of planning and public health on social media by using and following #plan4health.

Results

The CHSC has a lot of exciting things in progress including: coordinating meetings with neighborhood coalition leaders to conduct community needs assessments; developing a training for planning and public health professionals to learn more about walkability and park access; sending monthly newsletters to over 700 recipients; and growing the coalition to include Charlotte Area Transit System. Upcoming activities include: hosting the 4th Annual Planning for Healthy Communities Conference in August featuring the results of the Plan4Health initiative; working with community members to identify barriers to walking and playing in their neighborhoods; and continuing to strengthen the coalition - including meetings with the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department and Charlotte Mecklenburg School System. Stay tuned for updates!

Contact

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"Plan4Health will allow us to realize the vision of the CONNECT Our Future planning process by using tools locally and regionally to identify and remove barriers to physical activity and improve our parks, greenways, and transportation options."

- Michelle E. Nance, AICP, Planning Director Centralina Council of Governments

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