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Inclusion of evidence-based healthy eating policies in Community Health Improvement Plans: Findings from a national probability survey of US local health departments

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Support provided by the UMass PRC Grant #U48DP005031 & UMCCTS Grant #UL1TR001453

Background
- Evidence-based healthy eating (HE) policies can improve diet.
- Limited research suggests low policy adoption at the local level.
- Community Health Improvement Plans (CHIPS) represent a strategic approach to select and implement evidence-based strategies.
- Local health departments (LHDs) often participate in CHIP development, a requirement for accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board.
- CHIPS and the relationship between LHDs and CHIPS are understudied.

Objectives
- Examine the current status of evidence-based healthy eating policies in CHIPS.
- Assess the association between LHD characteristics and inclusion of any evidence-based healthy eating policy in a CHIP.

Methods
- A web-based, national probability, cross-sectional survey of US LHDs representing <500,000 residents was conducted in 2017 (30.2% response rate).
- 176 eligible LHDs with complete CHIP status, exposure, and outcome data.

Exposures
- LHD characteristics including population size served (primary exposure), structure, and public health accreditation board accreditation status.

Outcomes
- Thirteen evidence-based HE policies included in a CHIP in three areas:
  - Increasing availability and identification of healthy foods
  - Reducing access to unhealthy foods
  - Improving school food environment
- Any evidence-based healthy eating policy

Analysis
- Proportions of each and any evidence-based HE policy included in a CHIP.
- Adjusted multivariate logistic regression.
- Sampling weights applied to account for sampling design & non-response bias.

Results
Table 1. US LHDs characteristics and association with any evidence-based HE policy included in a CHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>US LHDs</th>
<th>Adjusted Odds Ratio (95% CI)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unweighted, n</td>
<td>176</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighted, n</td>
<td>2043</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of population served</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 – 499,999</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>3.72 (1.13-12.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 – 99,999</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
<td>2.52 (0.71-8.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,000-49,999</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>5.00 (1.71-14.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;25,000</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
<td>ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of LHD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County health and city-county department</td>
<td>69.7%</td>
<td>1.30 (0.43-3.95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (including state-run and regional)</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>2.18 (0.44-10.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal (city or town) health department</td>
<td>21.0%</td>
<td>ref</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Health Accreditation Board accreditation status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieved accreditation</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>3.14 (1.05-9.38)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In progress</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>4.17 (1.70-10.26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not accredited</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>ref</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1. Proportion of US LHDs reporting evidence-based healthy eating policies included in a CHIP

Policies to increase availability and identification of healthy foods
- Community gardens zoning or other ordinance/by-law
- Farmers’ markets zoning or other ordinance/by-law
- Doubling SNAP benefits on fresh produce
- Menu labeling at unhealthy food outlets
- Healthy food retail zoning or other ordinance/by-law
- Urban agriculture zoning or other ordinance/by-law

Policies to reduce access to unhealthy foods
- Regulation of promotion/advertising of unhealthy food/beverages
- Regulation of sale/advertising of unhealthy food/beverages
- Sodium reduction at retail food outlets
- Trans fat ban at retail food outlets
- Fast food outlets zoning or other ordinance/by-law
- Sugar-sweetened beverage tax

Policies to improve school food environment
- School district nutrition, procurement, or vending policies
- Any evidence-based healthy eating policy

Any evidence-based healthy eating policy

Public Health Implications
One third of US LHDs report participating in a CHIP with at least one evidence-based healthy eating policy. Increased adoption of HE policies have the potential to impact healthy eating. Healthy eating policies may address health equity by improving structural and environmental factors that influence diet.