

Policy, Systems and Environmental Change

Policy, systems and environmental change is a way of modifying the environment to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members. By changing laws and shaping physical landscapes, a big impact can be made with little time and resources. By changing policies, systems and/or environments, communities can help tackle health issues like injuries, obesity, and diabetes.

About Policy Change

- Policy change includes the passing of laws, rules, protocols, and procedures designed to guide or influence behavior. Policies can be either legislative or organizational.
- Government bodies (federal, state, local level) school districts and schools, park districts, healthcare organizations (hospitals, health systems) worksites and other community institutions (jails, daycare centers, senior living centers, faith institutions) all make policy change.
- Examples: Adding a tax on tobacco products, passing a law allowing residents to plant community gardens in vacant lots, and clean indoor air laws. S

About Systems Change

- Systems change impacts all elements of an organization, including social norms or an organization, institution, or system.. Often systems change focuses on changing infrastructure within a school, park, worksite or health setting.
- Examples: Ensuring a hospital system goes tobacco free.

About Environmental Change

- Environmental change includes physical, social or economic factors designed to influence people's practices and behaviors.
- Environmental change can be as simple as installing bike signage on already established bike routes or as complex as sidewalk installation and pedestrian friendly intersections to promote walking and biking.
- Examples: Municipality undertakes a planning process to ensure better pedestrian and bicycle access to main roads and parks; and charging higher prices for tobacco products to decrease their use.