Built for Walking: How Our Communities Shape Our Behavior

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We are a nonprofit corporation that improves community health outcomes by building the capacity of public health leaders to use legal and policy tools in their everyday practice.
Time for a poll!

What chronic disease/health issues do you currently work on?

a. arthritis
b. obesity
c. asthma
d. other
e. not currently working on chronic disease prevention
Defining a “healthy community”

Not just the health of individuals
Defining a “healthy community”

Shapes behavior & health outcomes
What is the “built environment?”

The human-made surroundings that provide the setting for human activity. This includes transportation infrastructure (like roads, sidewalks, and trails), housing, parks, schools etc.
Social Norm Change
A prevention focus includes multiple levels to creating healthy communities

### Example:

- **Influencing Policy / Legislation**
  - General Plan requires that streets be designed for all users ("complete streets")

- **Changing Organizational Practices**
  - Workplace has "walking lunch breaks"

- **Educating Providers**
  - Teaching nurses and dieticians about how to help their clients’ be physically active

- **Promoting Community Education**
  - Providing info on the benefits of physical activity to groups

- **Building Individual Knowledge/Skills**
  - Teaching someone how to use gym equipment

Source: The Prevention Institute (www.preventioninstitute.org)
The evidence
Based on data from the Nationwide Personal Transportation Survey and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
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Percent of adults getting recommended levels of physical activity

% Adults meeting activity guidelines*

- 51.8% - 60%
- 60.1% - 65%
- 65.1% - 70%
- 70.1% - 73.3%
Why are people less physically active?

Traffic hazards and poor intersections are associated with less physical activity.
Why are people less physically active?

The number of miles traveled by motorized transportation is associated with obesity rates.
Policy can reverse these statistics.

Sidewalks & nearby destinations are associated with more physical activity.

Healthy Eating Research Brief 2008; Davis & Carpenter 2009; Active Living Research Brief 2007
Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice