

Outcome Survey Report

LOCAL HEALTHY MAINE PARTNERSHIP POLICY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES: RESULTS FROM THE OUTCOME SURVEY

This report is a distillation of the results from the Outcome Surveys used to assess the community-level work carried out by 31 local Healthy Maine Partnerships (HMPs), with the addition of some qualitative data collected from the local Partnerships.

The Outcome Survey was administered through Market Decisions of South Portland Maine. A 50-page survey booklet was mailed to each HMP (one for FY 2003–FY 2004 and one for FY 2005 and the first half of FY 2006). For this report, only complete years are reported (FY 2003–FY 2005).

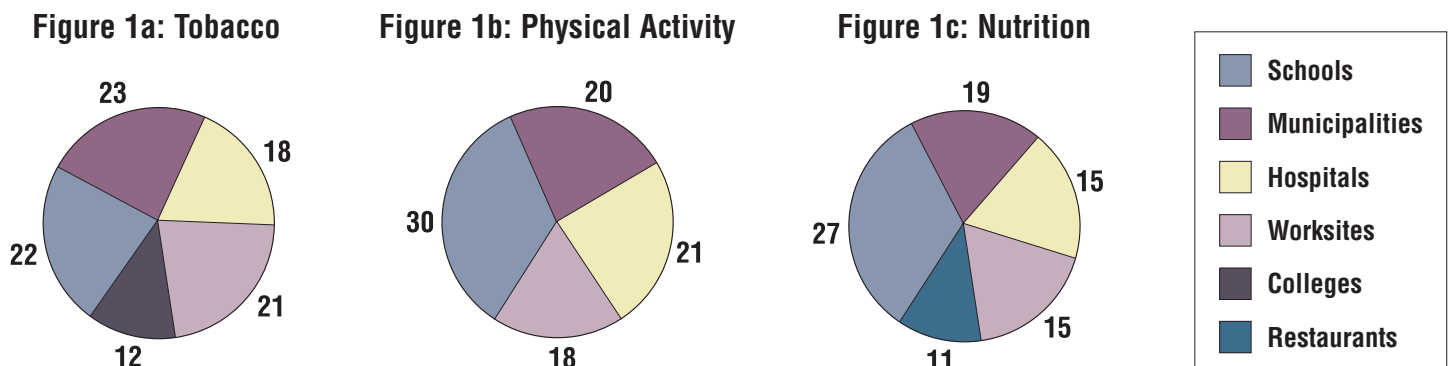
Description of the Local HMPs

The HMPs were established by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MCDC) in January 2001 as sites for local intervention implementation for Maine’s state tobacco use reduction and tobacco-related chronic disease prevention and control programs. Each of the 31 local Partnerships was funded to reach a specific service area, which together cover most of the towns and organized territories in the State of Maine.

The local HMPs collaborated with key institutions and organizations in their communities to institute policy and environmental changes to reduce tobacco use, increase opportunities for physical activity, and improve nutrition.

Results

Figures 1a–c display the average number of HMPs reporting policy or environmental change within each applicable setting, by focus area.



Youth Advocacy Program

Youth are an important part of improving the health of Maine. The Youth Advocacy Program (YAP) trains youth to learn how to advocate for healthy living environments. Most HMPs (26–29 per year) had active YAPs resulting in 133 policy or environmental changes being advocated for by youth (54 tobacco, 36 physical activity, and 43 nutrition).

Cumulative Changes

Figure 2 describes the total number of policy changes accomplished, by setting and focus area, as reported in the Outcome Survey. Cumulatively, over 4,600 policy and/or environmental changes were accomplished (2,418 for tobacco, 1,683 for physical activity, and 591 for nutrition). Schools were the most popular settings for HMP work, followed by worksites.

Students at Hichborn Middle School, assisted by their local HMP “Sprint for Life,” wrote to the Howland Town Manager and to each member of the Board of Selectmen requesting that Memorial Park, used by local youth for baseball and softball, be declared a smoke-free park with appropriate signage. The Selectmen were so impressed by the youth and their commitment that they agreed to their request through a unanimous vote.

Figure 2: Cumulative Policy and/or Environmental Changes Accomplished by Setting and Focus Area

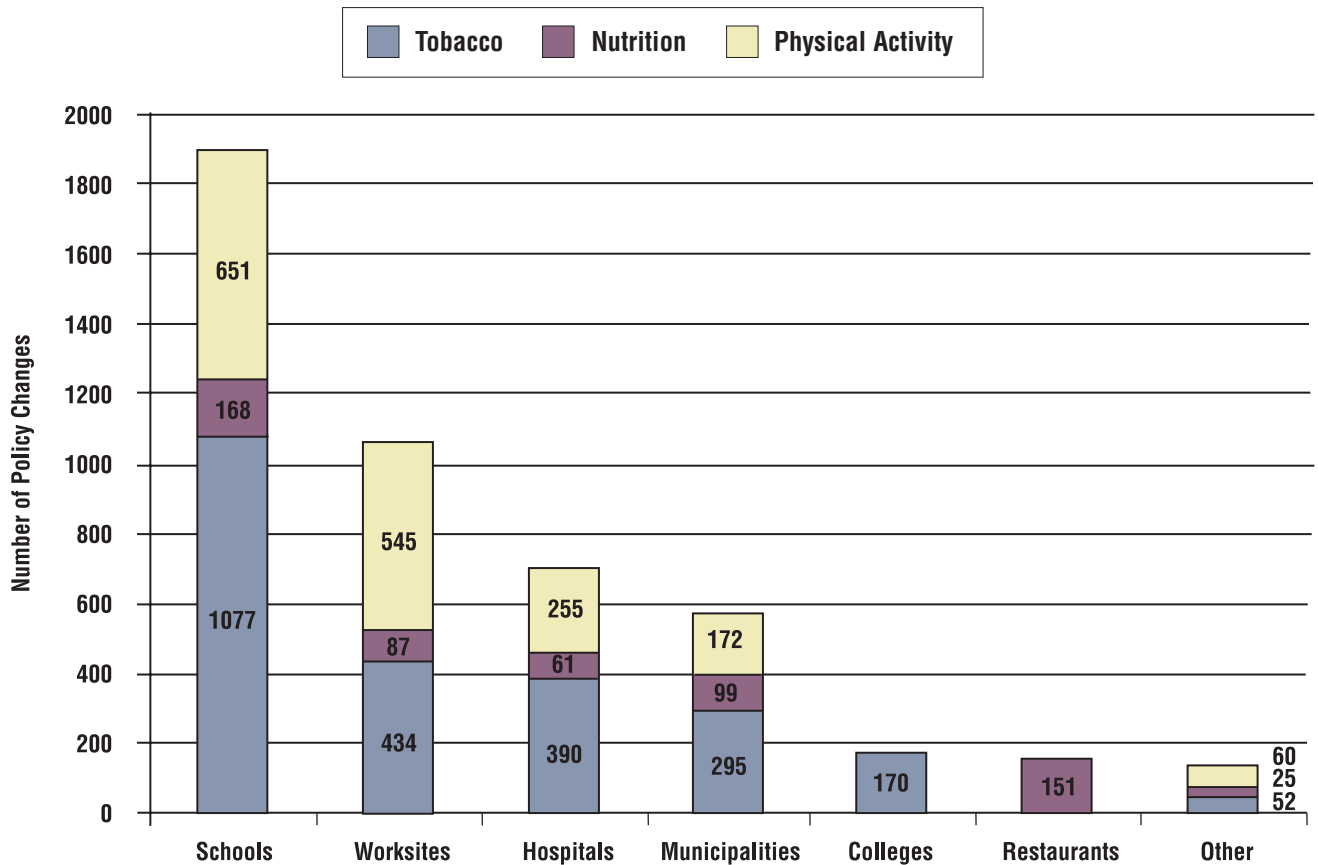


Table 1: Most Frequently Reported Policy and/or Environmental Changes Adopted by Setting

SETTING	TOBACCO	PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	NUTRITION
Schools	Enforce the “no tobacco use” policy to staff	Allow public to use outdoor walking trails on school property	Improve school menu to include healthier options
Municipalities	Prohibit all tobacco use in all municipal buildings where the public comes to conduct municipal business	Create a new municipal walking or biking path or trail	Promote an existing farmers market
Hospitals	Prohibit tobacco use in hospital-owned buildings	Establish/support an employee Wellness Committee	Create a policy or environmental change to include healthy options in cafeteria or snack bar
Worksites	Prohibit tobacco use in worksite buildings (including staff lounges)	Increase awareness of opportunities for physical activity	Create a policy or environmental change to include healthy options at meetings
Colleges	Communicate tobacco policy to employees, students, and the public	NA	NA
Restaurants	NA	NA	Work with restaurant to add heart-healthy options to their menu

The Greater Lewiston-Auburn area pioneered an effort to clear the air in multi-unit rental housing. “Healthy Androscoggin,” responding to several citizens who complained about secondhand smoke exposure, began research, and initiated a survey to assess tenant and landlord views on this issue. On the basis of the survey results, the Auburn Housing Authority established the first smoke-free housing policy for all of its units. By doing so, it was the first in Maine, and the third in the entire nation.

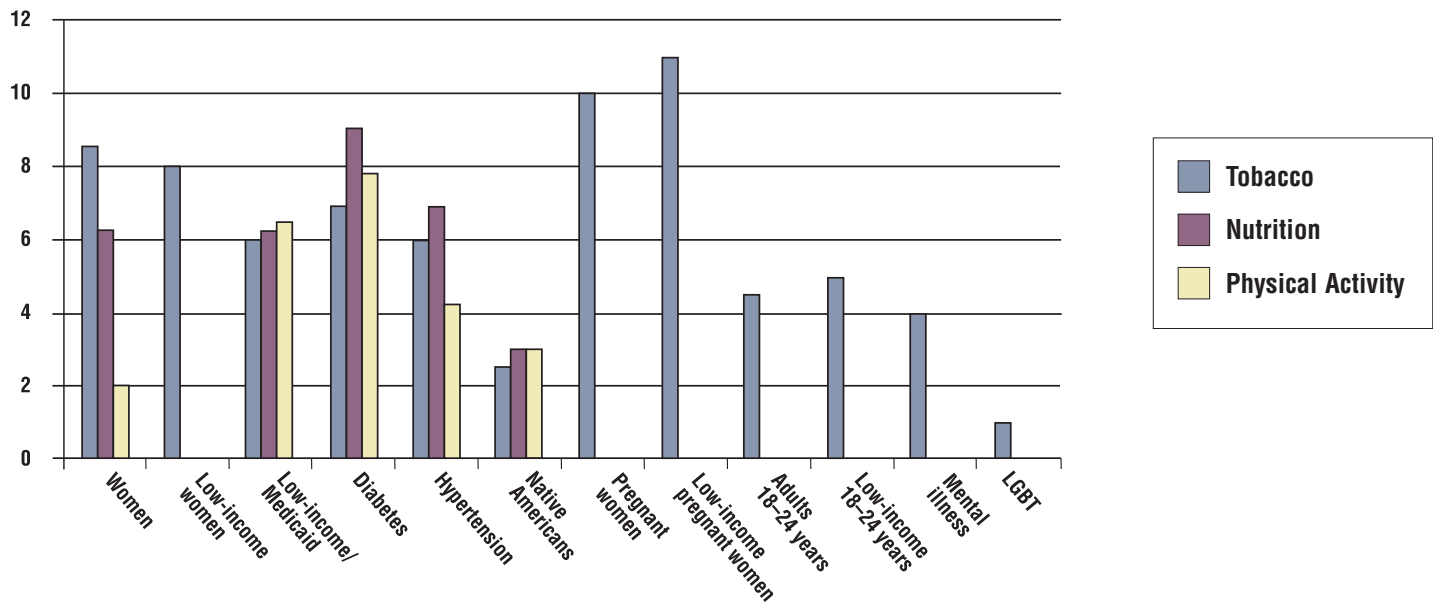
In the Calais area, School Union 106 developed a “lifelong physical activity program” by acquiring and storing kayaks, snowshoes, and cross-county skis donated through the work of volunteers and community groups. The sports equipment can be signed out free of charge by students, staff, and community members on weeknights and on weekends. In addition, an after-school program to promote physical activity and nutrition has been created. Over 60% of the students participate.

DISPARATE POPULATIONS WITH HEALTH DISPARITIES

In FY 05, the Outcome Survey was expanded to assess local HMP's efforts focused on reducing disparities for people who are disproportionately impacted by cardiovascular disease. The disparate groups included: women; low-income/Medicaid recipients; and Native Americans. People diagnosed with diabetes and/or high blood pressure were also targeted. Based on state and national data, additional groups are identified for concentrated tobacco efforts: young adults 18–24 years old; pregnant women; people with mental illness; and homosexual, bisexual, and transgender populations.

In 2004, two Healthy Maine Partnerships, “Healthy Peninsula” and “Healthy Acadia,” working with the Cooperative Extension Service and county food pantry directors, identified that food stamp clients wanted access to affordable fruits and vegetables. Working together to overcome barriers, the effort to include local food options in food security efforts succeeded. The 2006 growing season resulted in over 650 pounds of fresh produce donated to the local food pantries for distribution.

Figure 3: Average Number of HMPs Establishing or Operating Services for Disparate Populations



CONCLUSION

All local HMPs worked in all three focus areas (tobacco, physical activity, and nutrition) during the period covered by the Outcome Survey FY 03–FY 05. Overall, schools were the most popular settings for HMP work, followed by worksites.

Physical activity was the focus area targeted by the most HMPs.

Cumulatively, over 4,600 policy and/or environmental changes were reported. Tobacco policies represent the majority of policy changes accomplished.

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