

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

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## SOPHE Plays Important Role in CDC's Healthy Communities Program

The Society for Public Health Education (SOPHE) is one of five national public health organizations funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to assist in developing, implementing and supporting a framework of policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that can help prevent or manage health risk factors associated with chronic diseases. Other organizations partnering in this effort include the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), and YMCA of the USA.

This initiative, called **Action Communities for Health, Innovation, and EnVironmental Change (ACHIEVE)**, is one strategic approach the CDC has initiated as part of its Healthy Communities Program; other efforts include Strategic Alliance for Health, Pioneering Healthier Communities, and the former Steps Program.

Launched in 2008, the purpose of **ACHIEVE** is to bring together local leaders and stakeholders to build healthier communities by promoting policy and environmental change strategies that focus on increasing physical activity, improving nutrition, preventing tobacco use, asthma, and controlling cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Currently, there are 53 communities funded to facilitate this work, with 40 new communities planned to be added each year for the next four years for a total of over 200 **ACHIEVE** communities.

SOPHE's role in this initiative is to provide translation and dissemination support to the 4 partnering organizations and their 53 **ACHIEVE** communities by developing health promotion tools and resources and providing effective policy, systems, and environmental change strategies to communities.

Some of SOPHE's technical assistance activities include:

- Building leadership
- Disseminating effective tools, resources, and community-based models in response to community needs
- Promoting electronic communications
- Developing policy-related products
- Creating training opportunities for leaders and communities
- Educating policy makers about the efforts of **ACHIEVE** and the Healthy Communities Program

*The **ACHIEVE** approach aims to promote improvements such as increasing access to and use of attractive and safe locations for engaging in physical activity; revising school food contracts that include more fruits and vegetables and whole grain foods; and requirements for sidewalks and crossing signals in neighborhoods to make them more pedestrian-friendly, among others.*



*"I see this partnership as an opportunity for SOPHE to assist in strengthening collaborative community efforts across the country by facilitating linkages among SOPHE chapters, SOPHE's membership, and local **ACHIEVE** coalitions. This introduction will serve as a catalyst for communication and partnerships among the **ACHIEVE** coalitions, the practice community, academia, and other public health experts. Promoting these collaborations will enhance capacity and build local support to accomplish the policy, systems, and environmental change goals identified by **ACHIEVE** and other communities."*

*-Michael Dickey  
SOPHE Assistant Chief Executive Officer  
SOPHE Staff Lead, Healthy Communities*



# ACHIEVE COMMUNITIES



## 2009

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|------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 11 Alexandria, VA      | 20 Eastern Highlands, CT        | 29 Lake County, OH        | 38 New London, CT         | 47 Uniontown, PA          |
| 12 Anaheim, CA         | 21 Forrest and Jones County, MS | 30 Longview, WA           | 39 North Miami, FL        | 48 Venice, FL             |
| 13 Bloomington, IN     | 22 Gastonia, NC                 | 31 Lynnwood, WA           | 40 Northeast District, CT | 49 West Palm Beach, FL    |
| 14 Chicago, IL         | 23 Butler County, OH            | 32 Mecklenburg County, NC | 41 O'Fallon, MO           | 50 Whatcom County, WA     |
| 15 Clinton County, NY  | 24 Island County, WA            | 33 Montgomery, AL         | 42 Pierre, SD             | 51 Wilkes-Barre, PA       |
| 16 Columbia, SC        | 25 Jefferson County, OR         | 34 Multnomah County, OR   | 43 Rockland County, NY    | 52 Williamson County, TX  |
| 17 Columbia County, OR | 26 Kershaw County, SC           | 35 Muskegon County, MI    | 44 Sacramento, CA         | 53 Yellowstone County, MT |
| 18 Cook County, IL     | 27 Klickitat County, WA         | 36 Nacogdoches, TX        | 45 Saginaw, MI            |                           |
| 19 Davenport, IA       | 28 La Mirada, CA                | 37 New Bedford, MA        | 46 Taylors, SC            |                           |

## 2008

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|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Albuquerque, NM      | 6 Harris/Aldine, TX        |
| 2 Allentown, PA        | 7 Salamanca, NY            |
| 3 Black Hawk, IA       | 8 Stark, OH                |
| 4 Cleveland County, NC | 9 Tacoma-Pierce County, WA |
| 5 Hancock County, ME   | 10 Wichita, KS             |

## SOPHE Sponsors Congressional Briefing on Healthy Communities, REACH

SOPHE, in collaboration with Trust for America's Health and the YMCA of the USA, organized a Congressional Hill briefing to educate the U.S. lawmakers about the lessons learned from CDC's Healthy Communities program and other community-based initiatives that help prevent chronic disease, childhood obesity and improve health equity. With nearly 100 attendees, the briefing took place on June 5 at the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

Presenters shared success stories of projects supporting investment in community-based disease prevention and health promotion programs. The success stories and best practices focused on programs that promote physical activity, good nutrition and policy change to affect improved health outcomes to reduce health care costs.

Dr. Janet Collins, Director of the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion and Dr. Jeff Levi, Executive Director of Trust for America's Health, were among the invited distinguished speakers who articulated the need for continued support of these and similar programs.



*Janet Collins, Director of the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, discussed the ramifications of chronic disease on medical expenditures each year.*

*Congressional Quarterly Health Beat News* later highlighted the details from the briefing. The article, "Groups Push for Wellness Funding," described the briefing's message to lawmakers to keep in mind local initiatives to combat chronic diseases as they draft health reform legislation.

Congressional co-sponsors of the briefing included: The Honorable Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA), The Honorable Senator Mike Crapo (R-ID), The Honorable Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-IL), and The Honorable Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA). Organizational supporters included **ACHIEVE** partners: National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, National Association of County and City Health Officials, and National Recreation and Park Association.



*Charmaine Ruddock, project director of Bronx Health Reach in New York City, speaks at the June 5 Congressional briefing. In her address, Ruddock emphasized the effectiveness of community based prevention programs in reducing health disparities.*

## Health Promotion Practice Supplement Features Accomplishments, Lessons Learned from CDC-Funded Programs

The *Health Promotion Practice* (Volume 10, Issue 2) supplement issue "Fostering Healthy Communities: Lessons Learned from CDC's Premier Community-Based Interventions" is a collection of eight peer-reviewed articles from three national programs funded by the CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion: Healthy Communities Program, Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH), and the YMCA of the USA's Pioneering Healthier Communities (PHC).

The supplement, co-edited by SOPHE Past President Frances Butterfoss, PhD, MEd, President of Coalitions Work, and Larry Cohen, MSW, Executive Director of the California-based Prevention Institute, features local communities that successfully reshaped their environments by changing policies, norms and conditions to reduce the risks of costly chronic conditions such as obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, cardiovascular disease and asthma.

"Collectively, these innovative programs emphasize that prevention saves lives, improves the health of the population, improves health equity, and saves money for government, business, healthcare, families and individuals," explains Butterfoss.

In a commentary in the special issue, James S. Marks, MD, MPH, Senior Vice President and Director of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Health Group, writes, "Equally fundamental as the biological causes of good or ill health is how our society is organized, designed, and built." He points to three lessons as communities take charge of their health: 1) that real innovations begin at the local level and later become more widely applied; 2) the future of community health action requires an ability to work across sectors to include non-traditional partners such as education, business and city planning; and 3) the role of the official public health agency is changing to be a vital convener of community residents who ultimately determine changes that can improve where they live, work, learn and play.

All articles of the *Health Promotion Practice* supplement "Fostering Healthy Communities" are available open access, online at [http://hpp.sagepub.com/content/vol10/2\\_suppl/](http://hpp.sagepub.com/content/vol10/2_suppl/).



During the 2009 SOPHE Midyear Scientific Conference, the successful strategies of three Healthy Communities initiatives (formerly known as Steps) were featured at the concurrent session, "Preventing Chronic Disease by Activating Grassroots Change."

Wayne Giles, MD, MS, Director of the CDC's Division of Adult and Community Health, provided the initial address at this special session. He noted the exciting outcomes and impact that the Healthy Communities program is having across the country. Among this discussion, Dr. Giles highlighted:

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## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTED AT SOPHE 2009 MIDYEAR MEETING

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- In Broome County, NY, A Strategic Alliances for Health initiative, worked with 15 school districts and created a consolidated bid to purchase healthy foods for a centralized school lunch menu at a reduced cost. Fruit and vegetable consumption increased 14%.



*SOPHE Past President Fran Butterfoss introduces Wayne Giles at the SOPHE 2009 Midyear Scientific Meeting.*

- Pinellas County, FL, now requires all day-cares to provide physical education as part of the licensing requirement, thanks to the local Healthy Communities initiative (formerly Steps Program).
- In Austin, TX, a worksite wellness program for transit authority workers to support chronic disease control reduced employee absences by 44%. Rising health care costs were rolled back from a 27% per year increase to 9% per year.
- In Salamanca, NY, **ACHIEVE** participants were able to successfully influence adoption of city ordinances, including banning smoking in all city parks and playgrounds.
- In Pittsburgh, PA, healthy foods are now incorporated in after school care programs thanks to a "Pioneering Healthier Communities" initiative.

Through the Healthy Communities Program, there are many other community initiatives facilitating policy, systems and environmental changes that are making a great impact on improving the population's health. Three specific initiatives were featured during the session:

Krista Hanni explained how "Steps to a Healthier Salinas, California" developed a taqueria intervention addressing obesity and diabetes among Mexican Americans. Taqueria owners now promote available healthy menu items and modify other menu offerings to reduce fats and increase fruit and vegetable availability. This, in turn, has led to a transition of the owners' perceptions of themselves as gatekeepers to a healthier community.

Yvonne Johnston discussed "Rock on Café," a "Steps to a Healthier New York" initiative that works with the school system to create and provide healthier, fun versions of kids favorite foods. The initiative also developed a marketing strategy to promote the "new" school lunches and get kids excited about eating at school. The strategy included an age-specific interactive website to engage the students and creative merchandising of food containers, such as a repackaged low-fat milk carton that is visually appealing to kids.

Rebecca Drummond demonstrated the success of an obesity prevention intervention targeting the child care environment through "Steps to a Healthier Arizona." Partners in Yuma County worked with child care providers to implement organizational best practices, which promote positive nutrition and physical activity behaviors in young children. As a result of this project, there has been a significant increase in the number of child care centers providing large accessible play areas, providing healthier foods, and teaching parents how to prepare healthy meals for their kids. Additionally, a ripple effect has reached beyond the individual child care setting, into broader local and state early childhood development systems.

### RESOURCES

For more information on the Healthy Communities program and the organizations partnering in this effort, please visit:

Healthy Communities Program: [www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram](http://www.cdc.gov/healthycommunitiesprogram)  
ACHIEVE: [www.achievecommunities.org](http://www.achievecommunities.org)  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors: [www.chronicdisease.org](http://www.chronicdisease.org)  
National Association of County and City Health Officials: [www.naccho.org](http://www.naccho.org)  
National Recreation & Park Association: [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)  
YMCA of the U.S.A: [www.ymca.net/activateamerica](http://www.ymca.net/activateamerica)

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