Breaking Barriers: Strategies for Promoting Physical Activity & Health for All Hoosiers

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BACKGROUND & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ISSUE

- Regular physical activity (PA) is a great way to promote lifelong health and prevent/manage chronic illnesses (Bherer et al., 2013; Virani et al., 2020; Wahid et al., 2016; Warburton & Bredin, 2017).
- Despite the evidence, participation in PA across the United States continue to remain low (Abildso et al., 2023).
- Only 1-in-4 adults in the United States meet the PA guidelines (CDC, 2022).
- This is a big concern because being inactive has been shown to have serious negative impacts on your health (WHO, 2022).
- Physical inactivity is the 4th leading cause of all-cause mortality (WHO, 2022).
- This is very concerning and calls for action to be taken to help more people be active.

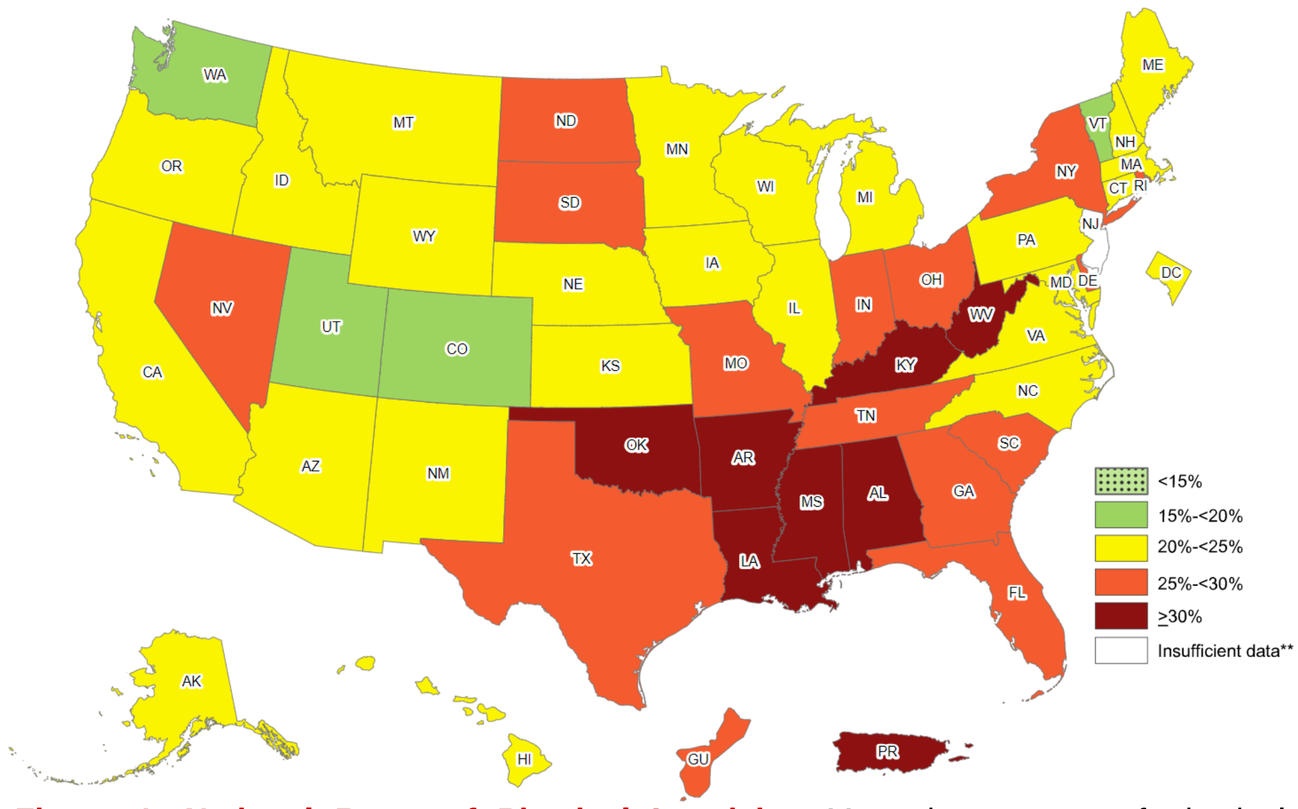

Figure 1. National Rates of Physical Inactivity: Map shows rates of physical inactivity for U.S. states and territories from 2017 – 2020. Data are shown as a percentage (%) of all respondents who completed the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) survey. **Image Source:** Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2022).

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS PHYSICAL INACTIVITY

Incentivize businesses to invest in PA promotion among their workforce.

- **PRO:** Reduced healthcare costs, increased employee health
- **CON:** Potential corporate resistance

Invest in new & existing community recreation, fitness, and park programs that provide healthy PA opportunities.

- **PRO:** Increase community buy-in, engagement
- **CON:** Overcoming existing resource disparities

State-wide implementation of the K-12 Comprehensive School PA Program model.

- **PRO:** Improved child health outcomes
- **CON:** Overcoming existing resources disparities

Launching a state-wide PA campaign to educate individuals about ways to be more active.

- **PRO:** Cost effective communication w/ wide outreach
- **CON:** Budgetary constraints, challenges adapting messaging to local communities

Increasing active transportation options through greater investment in bus, rail, bicycle, & pedestrian infrastructure.

- **PRO:** Long-term economic viability, increase small business viability
- **CON:** Upfront financial investment

Changing zoning laws to favor mixed-use developments that place common destinations within walking and bicycling distance of most residents.

- **PRO:** Optimized land use, reduced traffic, long term economic benefits
- **CON:** Upfront infrastructure costs, disproportionate increases in property values

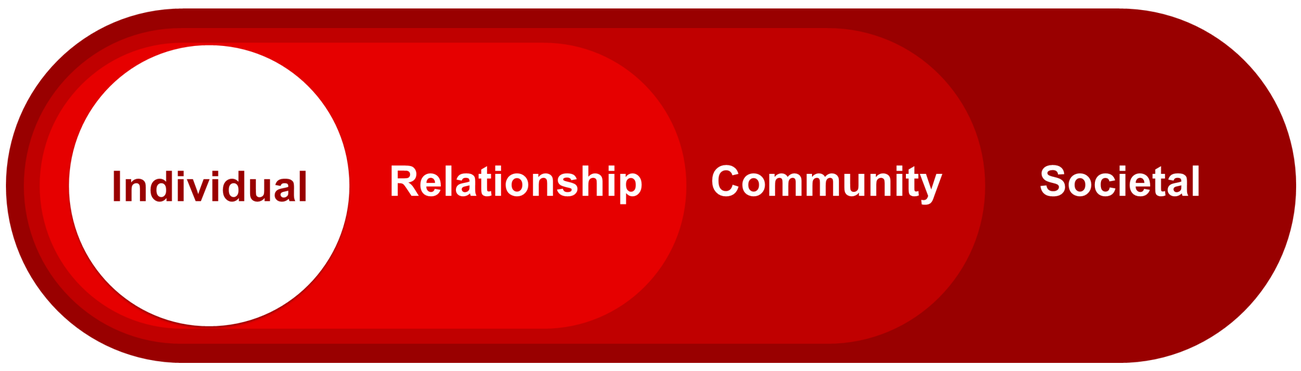

Figure 2. The Social-Ecological Model (SEM): The SEM suggests that to promote health for individuals and communities, it is necessary to act across the various domains of the model at the same time. **Image Source:** Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2023).

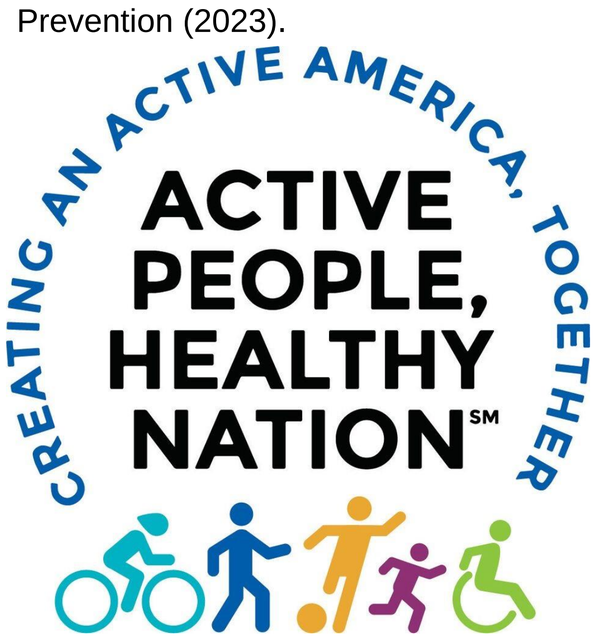

Figure 3. Active People, Health Nation℠: This is a national initiative to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027. This initiative promotes effective strategies to improve PA for all. CDC, in collaboration with their partners, promote these proven strategies to ensure that all Americans have access to safe and accessible places for PA (CDC, 2022). An extensive repository of marketing materials has been made available as part of the initiative for public use. **Image Source:** Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (2022).

Figure 4. Complete Streets: Complete Streets are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. This includes people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders (USDOT, 2015). **Image Source:** Santa Fe, NM City Government (2022).

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- Several strategies to promote and sustain community-level PA currently exist. There is considerable evidence to support the long-term benefits of these strategies on overall health & a state's economy.
- That said, upfront investment and community/cultural buy-in on these strategies remain a significant barrier.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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More information about the policy strategies mentioned can be found in the Physical Activity Alliance's National PA Plan.