Intersectoral Mechanisms for the Promotion of Physical Activity

Presenter: Dr. Robert Geneau

WHO 9th Global Conference on Health Promotion
Shanghai, China, November 21-24, 2016
Presentation Overview

- Physical activity (PA), natural and built environments & Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Maximizing opportunities for PA
- Whole-of-government mechanisms
- Working with Urban Planners
- Workplace PA initiatives
- Way forward
PA and the Sustainable Development Goals

3: Good Health and Well-Being
- PA as a protective factor against main chronic diseases
- Natural and built environment can impact mental health

4: Quality Education
- PA linked to better academic performance

8 & 12: Decent work and economic growth, and responsible production and consumption
- Land use, efficient waste management and use of natural resources
- Access to work opportunities, financing and banking

11 & 13: Sustainable cities and communities, and climate action
- Active transportation to reduce air pollution
Environments that support Physical Activity

Healthy Cities

- Leisure-time: Green and blue spaces, recreational infrastructure, and neighborhood characteristics
- Active transportation: Walking to and from transit- public transportation, walking and cycling to school/work/shop/play areas- land use and neighborhood characteristics

Workplaces

- Leisure-time: Pleasant places to walk, fitness program
- Active transportation: Showers, bike rack, pleasant stairwells
Whole-of-Government Approach

(Supra)National

Governance & Leadership

Influence

Common Accountability

Mechanisms & Tools

Incentives

Health Impact Assessments

Horizontal Service Plans

Intersectoral Committees

Targets

Making the Case

Co-Benefits

Culture

Co-Benefits

Making the Case

Culture

Shared Accountability

Social Change & Public Opinion: Pressures for Government Action
Whole-of-Government Approach – A Canadian Example

2010 Winter Olympics, held in Vancouver, British Columbia (BC), inspired whole-of-government momentum for health promotion & chronic disease prevention through the ActNowBC initiative.
Aspirational targets, including leisure-time PA

- Goal: A 20% proportion increase of the BC population (12+ years) that is physically active or moderately active during leisure time from 2003-2010

Supported the economic case for health promotion – with evidence showing the Ministry of Health using increasing amounts of the total BC budget

Population health 101 tour across government departments to develop a common understanding of intersectoral action and shared dialogue

Launched an Incentive Fund – Ministry of Health matched spending by other government departments for strategies to increase PA
Whole-of-Government Approach – A Canadian Example

- Shared leadership of a senior-level intersectoral committee
- Horizontal service plans - clear incentives attached to the intersectoral initiative
- A dedicated Minister of State for the intersectoral initiative to promote intersectoral action
- Strong links with civil society organizations & municipalities
- Sustainability of such initiatives remains a challenge…
Bringing Public Health and Urban Planning Together

- Public Health and Planning 101 Project:
  - Creation of an education module to assist planners and public health professionals to learn about each other’s mandates and roles and identify opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration in land use planning (Mahendra and al. 2016)
    - Collaborative work by Public Health Agency of Canada, Ontario Public Health Association and Ontario Professional Planners Institute

- Learning from case studies and natural experiments
  - Bringing health to the planning table: A profile of promising practices in Canada and abroad
Workplace PA Initiatives


City of Hamilton Public Health Services

- How-to guide that promotes organizational PA policies that co-benefit employers, employees’ health, environment and economy
- Sustainability, cost effectiveness, accountability
- Creating supportive environments:
  - Subsidies from private sector (gym memberships, bus passes)
  - Local child-care
  - Policies to reduce prolonged sitting
  - Infrastructure to support active transportation (bike storage, showers)
Way Forward: Seize Learning Opportunities

- Much of what gets done does not get evaluated

Imminent changes in policies or environments (i.e., “natural experiments”) can provide researchers with a unique opportunity to evaluate the before and after impacts of the change on a variety of health outcomes, including physical activity even if the policy or environmental changes were not primarily geared toward health behavior change. (Saelens and al. 2015)

- Always use a health equity lens in looking at the differential impacts of interventions/natural experiments
Way Forward: Seek Co-Benefits

- Highlighting the interrelationships between climate change, the built environment and chronic diseases…

- …recognizing the potential for some policy actions to achieve health, environmental and economic benefits simultaneously
Thank you

Dr. Robert Geneau

Director, Science Integration Division
Social Determinants and Science Integration Directorate
Health Promotion & Chronic Disease Prevention Branch
Public Health Agency of Canada
robert.geneau@phac-aspc.gc.ca