



Adirondack Health Institute

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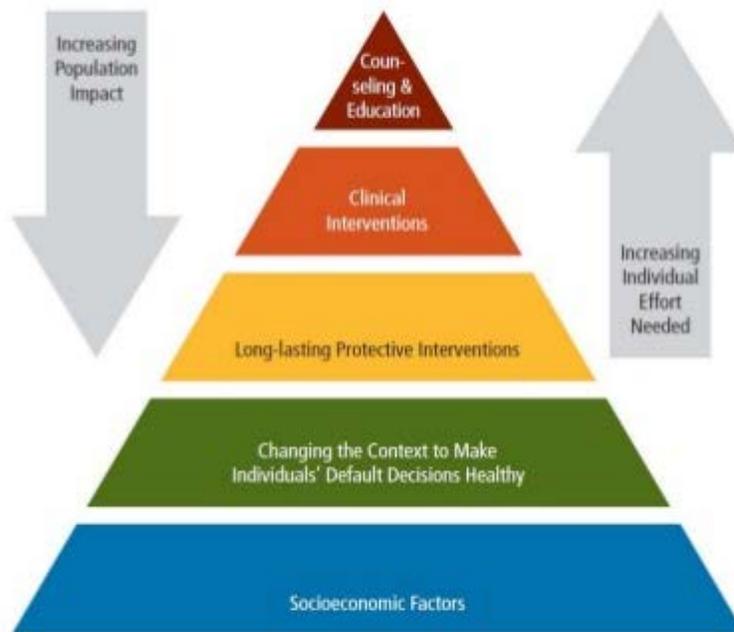
North Country Population Health Improvement Program Stakeholder Meeting November 10, 2016 Lake George, NY

Meeting Summary

Introduction

The November 10, 2016 stakeholder meeting of the North Country Population Health Improvement Program (NC PHIP) focused on the topic of “changing the context” to improve population health – or – what can the NC PHIP do to “make the healthy choice the easy choice” in the North Country.

“Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice”



Health Impact Pyramid

Source : Thomas R. Frieden, A Framework For Public Health Action: The Health Impact Pyramid, 100 Am. J. Pub. Health 590, 591 (2010).

## **Panel Discussion**

The following panel of experts discussed their experiences in promoting policy and environmental changes to increase access to healthy food; increase opportunities for physical activity; and reduce tobacco use:

- ❖ Ellie Wilson, Senior Nutritionist – Price Chopper
- ❖ Jessica Darney-Buehler, Senior Public Health Educator – Essex County Health Department
- ❖ Kelly Pilkey, Manager – Health Promotion Center, Glens Falls Hospital
- ❖ Chelsea Morse, Senior Program Coordinator – Living Tobacco-Free Initiative, Glens Falls Hospital
- ❖ Judy Rightmyer, Director – Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities

### **Increasing access to healthy food**

Ms. Wilson discussed Price Chopper’s promotion of the NuVal system. NuVal is one of several in-store systems designed to assist shoppers understand and assess the nutritional value of the food they are considering to purchase. More information about NuVal is available at: <http://www.nuval.com/>

The discussion focused on the need to educate the public and service providers about the availability and use of various food nutrition rating systems employed by markets in the region. Educating health care providers in the region about available food nutrition rating systems so they can discuss the systems’ use and benefits with patients was identified as a possible activity to be pursued by the NC PHIP.

### **Increasing access to opportunities for physical activity**

Ms. Darney-Buehler discussed how the Essex County Health Department supports efforts to increase County residents’ access to opportunities to engage in physical activity. Specifically, Ms. Darney-Buehler described her work with municipalities in Essex County on the adoption of Complete Streets policies. She explained the importance of working collaboratively with municipalities’ planning and public work departments to explain the health and safety benefits of adopting a Complete Streets policy.

The success of these efforts is demonstrated by the fact that Essex County and nine towns in Essex County have adopted Complete Streets policies and by numerous examples of roadway design features that have resulted in more accessible and safer usage by pedestrians and bicyclists.

More information about Complete Streets in New York State, including policies and resolutions adopted by municipalities in the state, can be found at: <https://www.dot.ny.gov/programs/completestreets>

### **Reducing tobacco use**

Ms. Pilkey and Ms. Morse described the multi-faceted approach Glens Falls Hospital, in collaboration with the North Country Healthy Heart Network, employs in addressing tobacco use in the North Country. They emphasized the importance of building on existing relationships with community partners (e.g. school

districts, businesses, hospitals, health care providers, other community-based organizations) to advance policies and environmental changes to promote tobacco-free living in the region.

Ms. Pilkey and Ms. Morse noted the benefits of supporting the expansion of partners' existing activities to address smoking prevention and cessation goals. For example, working with housing authorities and owners of multiple-dwelling housing to develop surveys about residents' attitudes toward smoke-free environments, provide sample leases that contain smoke-free requirements and assist with the placement of tobacco-free signage.

More information about the Health Promotion Center at Glens Falls Hospital can be found at:  
<http://www.glensfallshospital.org/services/community-service/health-promotion-center>

Information about the North Country Healthy Heart Network can be found at:  
<http://heartnetwork.org/>

Ms. Rightmyer discussed the efforts involved in promoting the passage of laws in Albany and Schenectady Counties to increase the minimum sale age of tobacco products to 21 years. She described the essential elements required to advance a policy including:

- conducting research to confirm the effectiveness and impact of the proposed policy;
- understanding the "science" that informs and supports the policy;
- knowing who in the community is/would be interested in promoting the policy;
- learning about the experience of other communities that have adopted the policy;
- educating the community about the policy;
- building a coalition of community members who can advocate for the policy; and
- being prepared to respond to arguments against the policy.

More information about Capital District Tobacco-Free Communities can be found at:  
<http://smokefreecapital.org/>

### **Discussion and Decisions**

Meeting attendees discussed and confirmed that tobacco use and obesity are the priority health issues in the North Country. There was also acknowledgment that behavioral health conditions among residents in the region contribute to the prevalence of smoking, poor diet, and lack of exercise. Based on the discussion, there was agreement that the NC PHIP should take the lead role in organizing regional and local efforts to promote policy and environmental changes to address tobacco use and obesity.

Specifically, it was decided that the NC PHIP will:

- organize efforts to increase the tobacco sale age to 21 years in counties in the region;
- organize activities to educate consumers, health care providers and staff of community-based organizations about in-store nutrition rating systems and other opportunities for healthy eating;
- seek opportunities in the region to promote other policy and environmental changes concerning tobacco-use, access to physical activities and access to healthy food.

## Next Steps

### To reduce tobacco use

To organize efforts to increase the tobacco sale age to 21 years, the NC PHIP will:

- assess each county's readiness to pursue a law to increase the sale age to 21 years;
- identify key stakeholders in each county to participate in efforts to promote adoption of the law;
- establish a committee in each county comprised of organizations and individuals who have a stake in seeing the efforts succeed;
- convene and support committee meetings (e.g. meeting space, registration, meeting materials and summaries, etc.)
- support committees' efforts by developing and disseminating reports on relevant data, preparing data presentations/visualizations, developing and distributing public education materials, and organizing and supporting public awareness campaigns, etc.;
- use *HealthyADK* to post materials and updates on the progress of efforts;
- provide updates on progress at NC PHIP stakeholder meetings; and
- explore opportunities to organize other efforts designed to reduce smoking in the region.

### To increase access to healthy food options

To educate consumers, health care providers and staff of community-based organizations about in-store nutrition rating systems and other opportunities to promote access to healthy food options, the NC PHIP will:

- identify expert presenters from a variety of community sectors (businesses, public health, health care, food programs, etc.);
- organize and convene educational events in the region including identifying locations, securing event space, advertising the event, managing registration, etc.
- prepare and disseminate supporting documents – e.g. relevant data reports, data presentations/infographics, public education materials, public awareness campaigns;
- use *HealthyADK* to post materials and information about the educational events;
- provide updates at NC PHIP stakeholder meetings; and
- explore opportunities to organize other efforts designed to increase access to healthy food and physical activity in the region.

**Please distribute this summary to your colleagues.**

**If you have comments about the Next Steps  
or are interested in participating in the efforts outlined in this summary  
please send an email to:**

**[phip@ahihealth.org](mailto:phip@ahihealth.org)**