Understanding Collaboration in City Government: Chicago’s Inter-Departmental Task Force on Childhood Obesity

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IDTF Evaluation Team

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The Challenge

- Childhood obesity has emerged as a significant public health crisis (Surgeon General’s Call to Action, 2001).

- Health disparities exist, especially for children in lower-income, urban, African American and Latino/a families (TFAH, 2012 report).

- Young children in Chicago have higher obesity rates than children of similar demo. in the U.S. and Illinois (CLOCC, 2012 website).
Chicago children are overweight at more than twice the national rate.

Source: CLOCC at: http://www.clocc.net/coc/prevalence.html
Percent of Children (2-12 yrs) Who Are Overweight and Obese

* Comparison data is for children ages 2-11 years, National Health and Examination Survey, 1999-2000

Source: Improving Community Health Survey
Bending the Curve

Bending the Curve: Childhood Obesity, 1972 to 2030

Percent of children aged 2-19 who are obese

- 2007-08: 19.6%
- 2015: 17.1%
- 2020: 14.6%
- 2030: 5.0%

Source: CDC, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys.
Note: Obesity is defined as BMI ≥ gender- and weight-specific 95th percentile from the 2000 CDC Growth Charts.
Cause for Optimism

- Obesity among 3-7 year olds in Chicago declined between 2004 and 2009 (CLOCC 2012).

- Chicago’s multisectoral approach to childhood obesity prevention engaged in a wide variety of interventions during this period (CLOCC, Progress in Ped. Cardiology).
Obstacles to forming a city-wide, multi-agency task force

- Prioritizing childhood obesity prevention at the City level amidst other pressing issues
- Complexity of childhood obesity – no easy solution
- Adapting to re-structuring of agencies
- Funding
- Staffing (hiring freezes, staffing shortages, travel restrictions)
IDTF History

- Initial Leadership Meeting
- IDTF formed (4 agencies) - staffing established
- Strategic priorities identified
- City Council Hearing on Obesity
- Agencies establish shared processes
- Chicago Park District pilots first Wellness Center
- 4 new agencies join
- CLOCC’s 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message adopted as IDTF public education message
IDTF History

- Linking services and resources in original Wellness Campus. Establishing a second wellness campus
- Revising IDTF Plan to incorporate new agencies’ initiatives
- Formed partnership with RWJF Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities: Chicago Initiative
- Modifying existing child care regulations
- Creating business plan for Wellness Campus development and funding
IDTF Operations and Structure

- **Leadership:** CDPH is the lead city department; CLOCC provides technical assistance

- **Membership:** Each IDTF agency commissioner selects a senior staff member to represent the agency on the IDTF

- **Activities:** Working groups established to develop the Wellness Campus concept

- **Funding:** CLOCC raises philanthropic funds to support facilitation and technical assistance, each city department provides in-kind support
Mission: “Chicago’s city government will play a leading role in confronting childhood obesity through an unprecedented level of coordination, the strategic provision of services, and the advancement of evidence-based practices and policies to improve nutrition and physical activity in a wellness-enhancing environment.”
Overarching goals:

1. reduce prevalence of childhood obesity at school entry
2. promote physical activity and healthy eating
3. maximize efficient use of scarce resources to improve the health, well-being, and academic performance
- **IDTF Agencies**
  - Department of Public Health
  - Department of Transportation
  - Housing Authority
  - Public Library
  - Police Department
  - Public Schools
  - Transit Authority
  - Housing and Econ. Develop.
  - Family and Support Services
  - Mayor’s Office - Disabilities
  - Park District
CLOCC

- Childhood obesity advocates met leading to CLOCC.

- CLOCC part of Lurie Children’s Hospital, to help children and their families engage in healthier eating and more physical activity.

- Partners cut across medicine, government, corporate, academic, advocacy, and other sectors. Over 3,000 individuals/1,300 organizations who participate in the consortium.

- CLOCC identified as leading community model by the Institute of Medicine, AMA and CDC.
Major Elements of Three-tiered Plan

- **Tier 1 – Primary Prevention Activities**
  - All Chicago children (approximately 750,000)
  - Public education
  - Coordinated policy-making
  - Data surveillance and environmental assessments
  - Cross-agency professional development

- **Tier 2 – Early Childhood Focused Activities**
  - Chicago children ages 3-5 (approximately 100,000)
  - Physical activity and nutrition education for child care providers
  - Conduct environmental assessment in child care institutions
  - Modify child care regulations
Three-Tiered Plan

- **Tier 3 – Wellness Campus Concept**
  - Chicago children in high obesity communities (approximately 10,000)
  - Establish 6 wellness campuses throughout the City
  - Coordinate agency preventive services for families
Evaluation Purpose and Data Sources

- The visual logic model highlights agency efforts
- Successes of City Departments connected to the Chicago Inter-Departmental Task Force (IDTF) to lower childhood obesity.
- The goal of the model is to objectively assess member agency efforts
- Task force interactions
- Contribute to future planning.
Data Sources

1. Monthly meeting minutes (2008-2011)

2. Systematic meeting observations (5 meetings in 2011)

3. Eleven structured, narrative-based interviews with agency representatives

4. Two interviews with CLOCC staff/leadership

5. Additional IDTF documents and other discussions
Integrated Visual Logic Model

Challenges/Opportunities

IDTF

Internal Communication

Synergy
Integrated Visual Logic Model

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Internal Communication

Community Engagement

Synergy

IDTF

Dissemination

City

State

Federal
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- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating

Education
- Physical Activity
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Programs
- Physical Activity
- Healthy Eating

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- City
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Community Health Changes
Synergy includes:

- Sharing information about intra-agency policies
- Helping each other connect to city residents
- Coming together quickly for grant opportunities
- Distribution of messaging campaigns
- Collaboration on presentations & recognition of task force
- Professional development/training/planning across agencies
- Collaboration on joint data collection
New and/or Improved Connections (beyond obesity prevention) of Several Member Agencies

- CDPH ← → CTA  
  CDPH ← → CDOT  
  CDPH ← → DHED

- DHED ← → DFSS  
  DHED ← → CDOT  
  CDOT ← → Parks

- CDOT ← → DFSS  
  CDOT ← → CPS  
  CTA ← → CHA

- CTA ← → Library  
  CTA ← → CDOT  
  CPS ← → Parks

- CPS ← → CHA  
  CPS ← → DHED  
  CHA ← → Parks

- CHA ← → CDPH
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Community Health Changes
Policy-Physical Activity

- IDTF has impacted member agency & city policies.

Physical Activity

- Complete Streets Policy
- CDOT Pedestrian Plan
- Safe Routes to Parks
Policy-Healthy Eating

Healthy Eating
- Healthy Vending
- CPS Competitive Food Policy
- CDPH, DHED, DFSS, CLOCC providing leadership to the Chicago Food Plan, “Healthy Food Chicago”
- Childcare Standards Resolution & recent amendment
- DFSS went to zero sugar with juice restrictions and 1% milk. Connection through IDTF with CPS.

Comprehensive Obesity Prevention
- CDPH agenda, “Healthy Chicago.”
- Healthy Places Policies
- Park District Wellness policy.
- IDTF creating Three-year Policy Plan
**Education - Physical Activity**

- Cross agency professional development trainings
- Info about active transportation communicated at Park events
- Safe routes to school/Ambassadors
- Bike Ambassadors
- Sunday Parkways - Open streets
- Healthy Kids/Healthy Communities - Safe routes
- Wellness Centers Strengthened through IDTF
- Park District sets up Fitness Related Training.
- Youth Activities Centers, interactive gaming

**5-4-3-2-1 Go!®** I Am Moving, I Am Learning.
**Education – Healthy Eating**

- Healthy Eating
  - Messaging Campaigns (e.g., 5-4-3-2-1 Go!® messaging through bus depots & summer food program).
  - Information sharing about Park’s Harvest Gardens, Farmer’s markets
  - Greater Chicago Food Depository partner to get food to families
Education – Healthy Eating

- Parks - Family dinners
- CHA – Information distribution.
- Corner Stores Initiative -- Future Food Access
- Educating Humboldt Park -- Food Trailer vendors on healthy options
Programs: Wellness Centers/ Campuses

- Identify diverse health-related resources around wellness centers
- Urge appropriate adaptation and development of existing resources
- Maximize utilization (e.g., safe passage efforts; coordinated schedules).
An ideal wellness campus involves all agencies.

A Chicago community.
Programs: Wellness Centers & Campuses

- Have primarily involved CDPH & Park District
- CDOT: Maps, Signage
- CTA: Maps, Public transit to campuses
- Parks: Running programming, housing Wellness Centers & Family Dinners
- CDPH: Health Screenings, Diabetes & Smoking Cessation
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Community Health Changes
For those hoping to create a similar task force...

- Identify one department to lead and coordinate.
- Recruit city agencies with related missions or elements, consistent with the vision and work of your task force, but think broadly.
- Provide budgetary support for work across agencies.
- Create inter-agency agreements.
- Develop joint communications to educate and inform executive and legislative branches of city government.
Further recommendations…

- Develop understanding of local childhood obesity problem and its many contributing factors (zoning, food access, safety concerns)
- Advocate for and encourage development of local policies that increase opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity
- Explore legal underpinnings of policies of interest
- Monitor federal legislative agenda and potential impacts at the local level – connect to local agenda as appropriate
Conclusions

- IDTF has used and is committed to continuing to use the evaluation for their work in lowering obesity in Chicago Children.

- The evaluation is also a primary mechanism utilized to continue the CDC-funded Healthy Places initiative.

- IDTF will work to ensure Complete Streets guidelines and a Food Plan for the City are actualized.

- IDTF demonstrates that for a public health problem, such as childhood obesity, that requires a social ecological approach for prevention, collaboration among diverse government partners is both instrumental and feasible.
THANK YOU!!