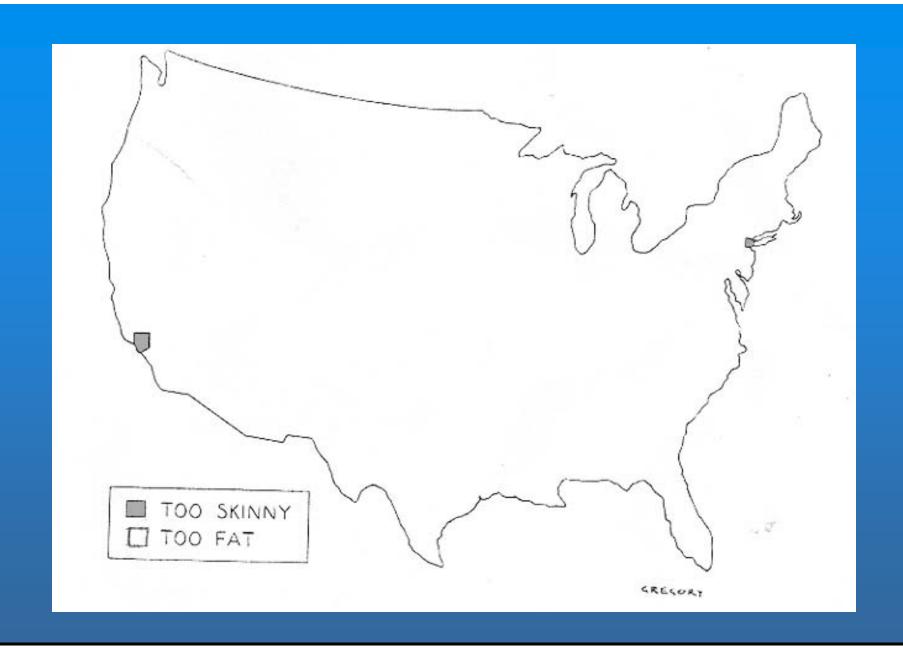
Why do States Differ in the Level of Childhood Obesity Legislation?

Ellen Jones, PhD (ABD)
San Diego, CA
February 10, 2010
Amy Eyler, Washington University, St. Louis
Leah Nguyen, Washington University, St. Louis
Ross Brownson, Washington University, St. Louis
Walter Young, National Assn. Chronic Disease Dir.
Kim Case, Research Assistant

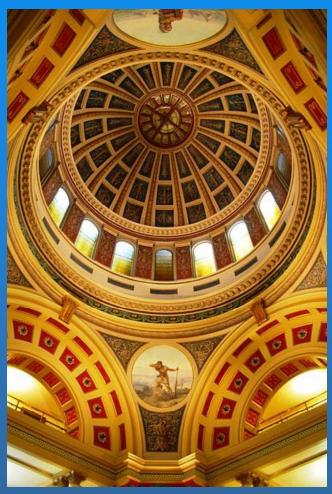




PREVENT

Objectives – to examine influence of

- Type of legislature
- Legislator factors
- Political context
- Bill content
- Public support



Montana Capitol Rotunda



Factors in State Obesity Policy

Législative Factors

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Legislator Factors



2 x 2 Table

Low Obesity

High Obesity

Low Legislation

High Legislation SOUTH DAKOTA MONTANA

WASHINGTON MAINE

ARIZONA KANSAS

LOUISIANA NEW YORK

Division of Legislation Tertiles:

Low Legislation=0-3 Adopted Bills—17 states Median=4-7—16 states High=8-30—17 states

Division of Childhood Obesity Tertiles:

Lower Childhood Obesity=lowest (9.6%) to 13.2%—14 states Median=13.3% to 16%—21 states High=16.1% to highest (21.9%)—15 states



Descriptive Analysis – Legislators

- 15 White, 3 Black, 2 Hispanic
- Children or grandchildren
- 9 Males, 11 Females
- 10 R, 10 D
- Senate Democrats
- 8 Chair, VC; 12 members



From left, New York's Senator Joseph L. Bruno, Senator Hugh T. Farley, Gov. David A. Paterson and Assemblyman Sheldon Silver.





Senators Being Led in Physical Exercises by Physultopathy Founder Bernarr Macfadden, 1924: Black and White Photograph from the Library of Congress features American Work Outs throughout history



Descriptive Analysis – Legislative Factors

- 3 R Gov, 5 D Gov
- Party in House 3 D and 3 R
- Party in Senate 4 D and 3 R
- Term limits gov 5 yes
- Term limits leg 5 yes
- 1 professional legislatures
- 3 hybrid legislatures
- 4 part time legislatures



Washington Capitol Building



Introduction Results

- Legislator role (in and out of session) influences intent
- Impetus for action not articulated
- Discomfort in state policy role
- Discomfort with evidence and results
- Philosophical support vs. policy action



Introduction Quotes

- "there's support for prevention, but not for legislation"
- "In 10 yrs debate, several (bills) introduced but none passed..."
- "can you legislate obesity?"
- "well aware there is a problem; but the question is how to address it"



Bill Content Results

- Unclear cost or new cost is barrier
- Need for immediate results
- No consensus around role of legislature
- Different definitions
- Different expectations of evidence/science



Bill Content Quote

- "not a whole lot of it is science....! think a lot of it is anecdotal..."
- "the science is hard because policies are so new"
- ...any proposed policies with start up money will be hard pressed"
- "cost is a make or break issue"



Political Context Results

- Legislators expect but don't act on public health message
- No compelling social movement
- Opposition viewed as well planned
- Loss outweighs gain
- It's the economy...



Maine's Speaker of the House, Hannah Pingree announcing policies to curb obesity



Political Context Quotes

- "several people introduced bills but no one is consistently pushing and prodding"....
- "no one comes to mind"
- "are you kidding me? Cost is a very critical issue a deciding factor"
- "overwhelming budget deficit makes funding obesity policy difficult"



Different Motivators

End User:	Researcher	Legislator	Staff
Time in Job	long	shortest	short
Accountability	university	voters	decision makers
Constituents	funders publishers	voters, party, supporters	Chair, VC, Members, party
External factors	funding, teaching, writing	media, money, public support	habit, relationships, culture
Time on issue	long	shortest	short
Data used	peer reviewed	Stories, real life, testimony, results	internal/ external support, data



Public Support Results

- Lack consensus on state role
- Unclear wishes of constituents
- Uncertain evidence will work
- Not tied to current priorities
- Media messages inconsistent
- No tie to policy actions
- Engagement not seen as a desire of constituents



Nonprofit Day in Montana Capitol Rotunda



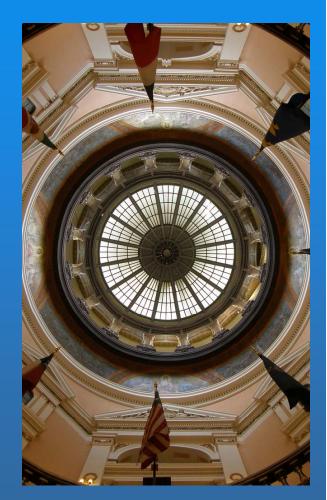
Public Support Quotes

- "...interest in home level, NOT the government..."
- "1) economy, 2) jobs, 3) housing market"
- "Messages would be important as long as they are giving me specific ideas what to do"
- "even if it saves money, it wouldn't be now, we have to balance a budget now..."



So What?

- Importance of non-modifiable factors
- Legislator discomfort with role and science
- Political context inhibits passage
- Philosophical support vs. policy action



Kansas Capitol Rotunda



Factors in State Obesity Policy

