

# **Physical Activity and Health Partnerships among Park and Recreation Departments in North Carolina**

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# Overcoming Inactivity and Obesity: A State and National Challenge

- NC ranks 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> in adult and childhood obesity 2010, respectively.
- 32% of NC children (10-17) are overweight.
- 56% of NC adults do not meet physical activity guidelines (30/min daily).



Source: Trust for America's Health (2010); NC Dept. Health Statistics  
Be Active North Carolina.

# Parks and recreation agencies are valuable community assets.

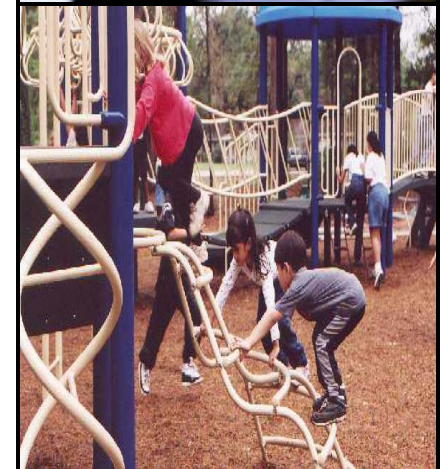
- 9,000+ park and recreation departments nationwide.
- 108,000 public parks and 65,000 indoor facilities managed.
- 10,000 playgrounds.
- Access to communities most at risk for physical inactivity.



Source: Godbey, G. & Mowen, A. (2010). The benefits of physical activity: The scientific evidence. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

# Partnerships are essential.

- **A key strategy in promoting physical activity**  
(Active Living by Design, 2010).
- **One of the most important challenges in health promotion**  
(Kumanyika & Brownson, 2007).
- **Contribute to immediate and sustainable interventions**  
(Simon, Gonzalez, Ginsburg, Abrams & Fielding (2009).





# Recent data on partnerships involving Parks & Recreation Departments:

- 88% participated in a health partnership.
- 78% focused on physical activity promotion.
- 61% involved schools; 59% involved public health departments; 52% with health non-profits.

Mowen, A.J., Payne, L.L., Orsega-Smith, E., & Godbey, G.C. (2009). Assessing the health partnership practices of park and recreation agencies: Findings and implications from a National survey. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 27(3), 116-131.



# Study Objectives

1. Describe the extent of physical activity partnership participation among North Carolina public parks and recreation departments.
2. Explore potential factors associated with physical activity partnership participation.

# Methods

- **Data:**
  - Online survey NC PARs (N=216).
  - 64% response rate.
  - Collected in 2007.
- **Dependent Variable:**
  - Formal partnership participation (yes or no):
    - *County health departments*
    - *Schools*
    - *Faith organizations*
    - *YMCA's*
- **Partnership Definition:** a group that shares resources and that can act as a formal agent.



# Agency Characteristics

Factors	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	SD
Operating Budget	\$785,020	\$23,894	\$12,342,165	\$1,640,240
Capital Budget	\$1,028,427	\$600	\$10,320,253	\$2,074,502
# Full Time Employees	28	1	429	66
Size of Population Served	48,032	941	768,574	101,214



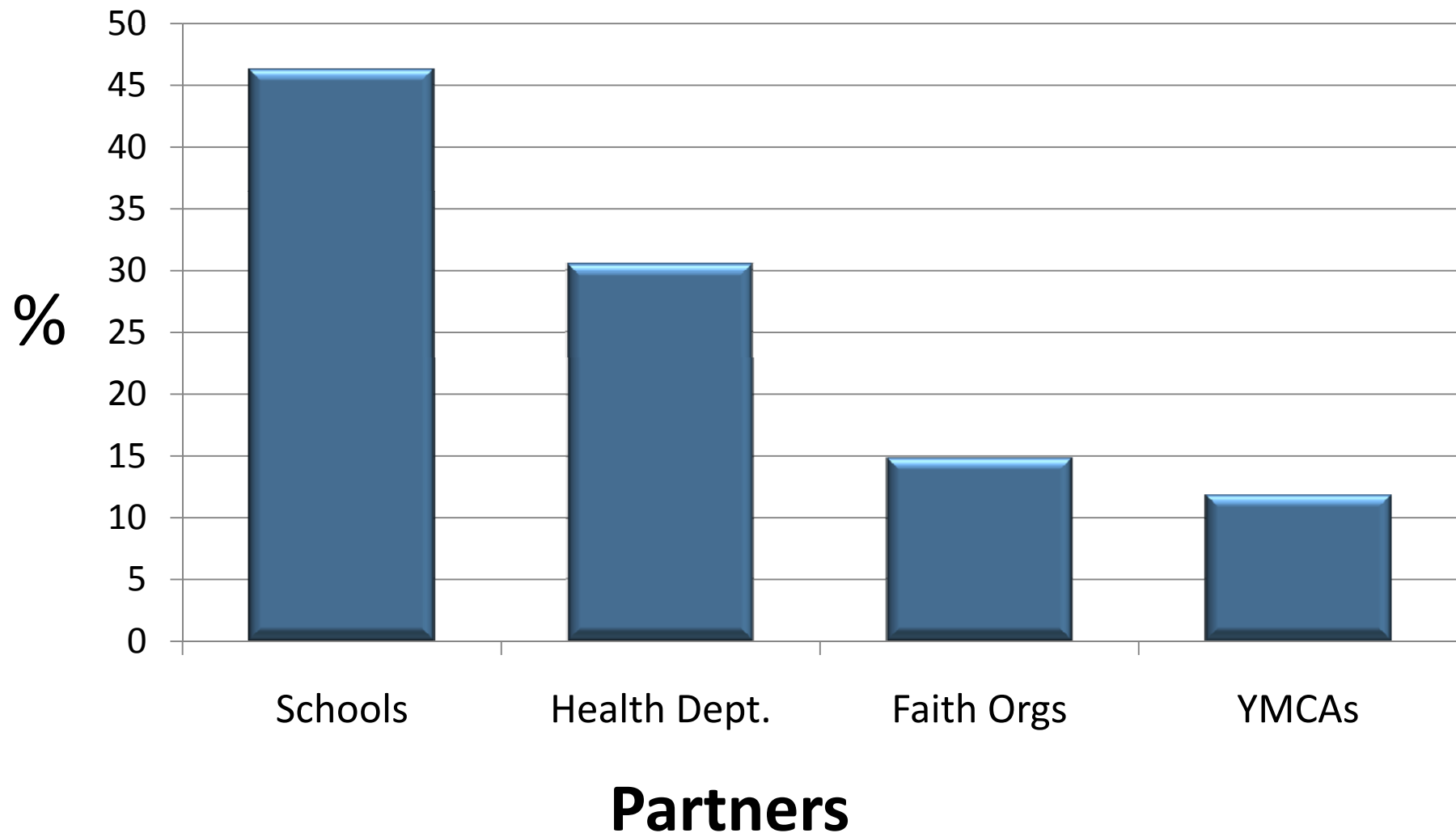
# Targeted Populations

	Level of Effort (%)		
	<i>Great Deal</i>	<i>Some</i>	<i>Little/None</i>
Obesity among boys	<b>28.6</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>17.0</b>
Obesity among teen boys	<b>12.7</b>	<b>53.9</b>	<b>33.3</b>
Obesity among girls	<b>27.7</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>17.9</b>
Obesity among teen girls	<b>12.5</b>	<b>55.8</b>	<b>31.7</b>
Minority Groups	<b>30.8</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>15.0</b>

# Profile of Director Characteristics

- 68% were men
- 20.14 average (mean) years of experience
- 8.07 average (mean) in current position
- 27% held professional certification (CPRP)

# Participated in Formal Physical Activity Partnership (% yes)



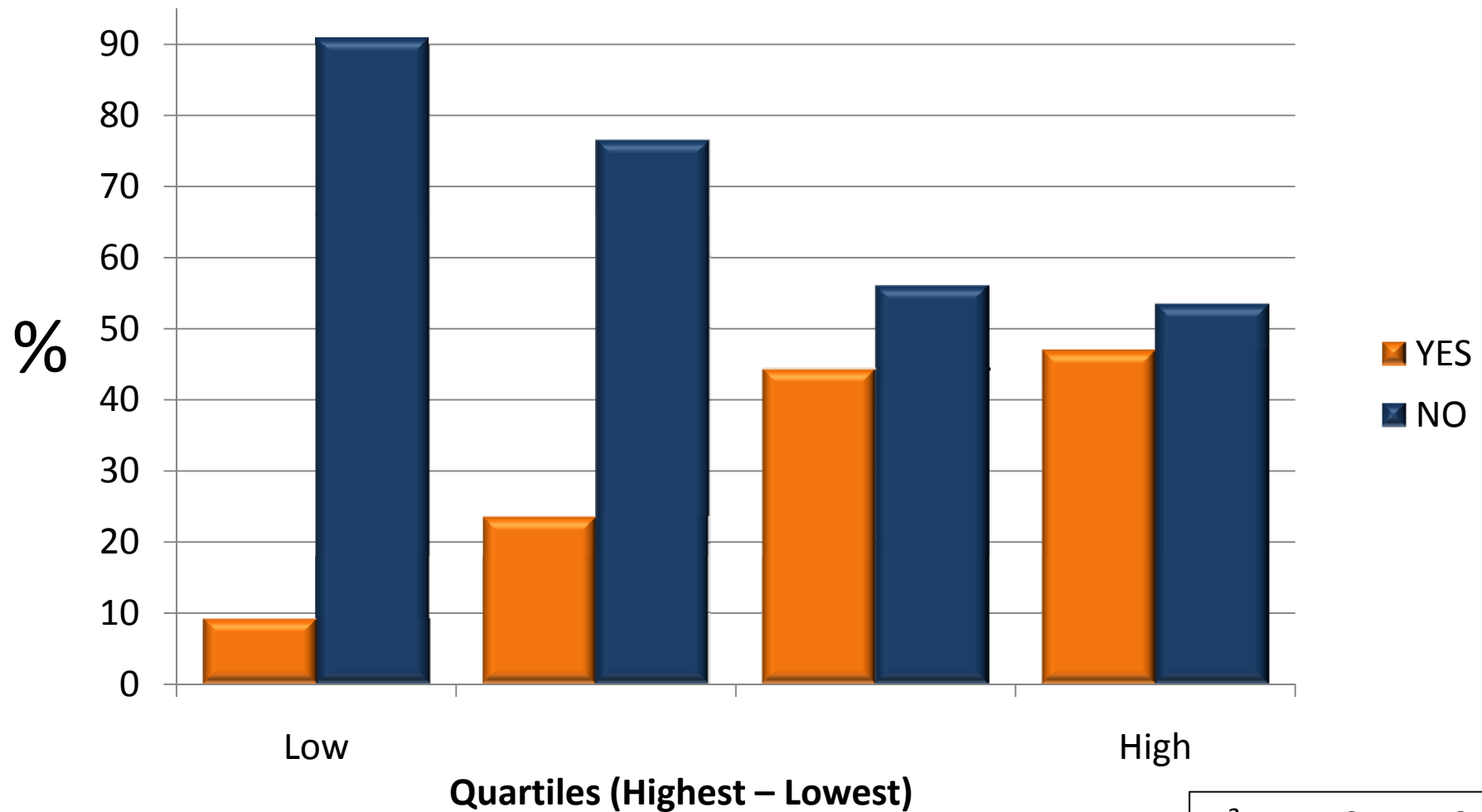
# Associations for Physical Activity Partnership Participation

Organizational Characteristics		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	Cramer's V
<b>Health Depts:</b>	Operating Budget	12.96	.005	.327
	Size of Population	14.58	.002	.334
<b>Faith Orgs:</b>	Operating Budget	11.86	.008	.311
<b>YMCAs:</b>	Operating Budget	14.71	.002	.346

Director Characteristics		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	Cramer's V
<b>YMCAs:</b>	CPRP	4.84	.028	.191
	Gender	5.58	.018	.206

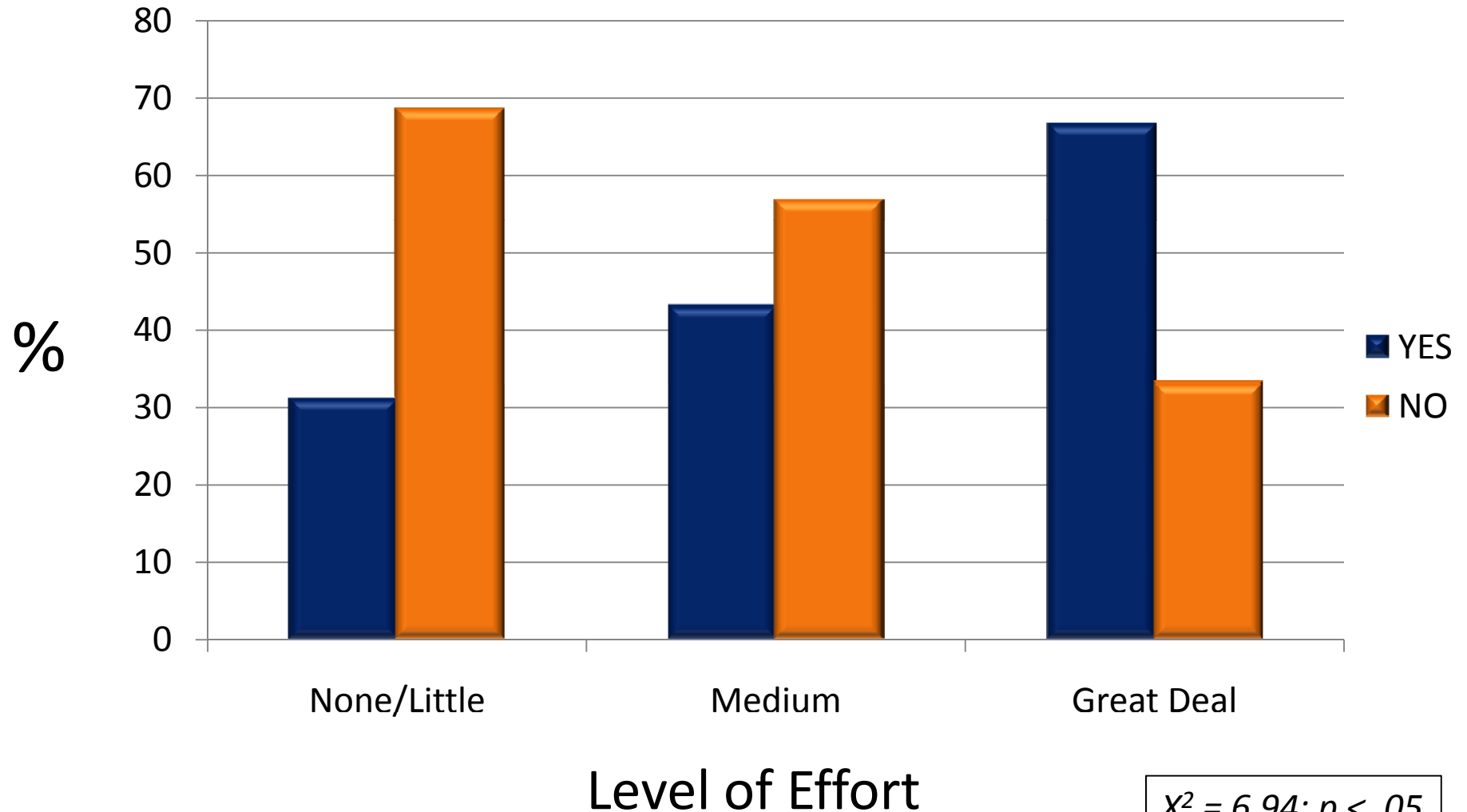
Targeted Effort		$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>	Cramer's V
<b>Schools:</b>	Obese Teen Boys	9.23	.010	.301
	Obese Teen Girls	8.24	.016	.282
	Minority Groups	6.94	.031	.255
<b>YMCA:</b>	Adults w/Disabilities	11.10	.004	.338
	Youth w/Disabilities	8.28	.016	.279

# Partnership with County Health Department by Size of Population Served (n= 131)



$\chi^2 = 14.58; p < .01$

# Partnership with Schools by Effort Targeting Minority Groups (n= 107)



$\chi^2 = 6.94; p < .05$



# Key Findings & Implications

- NC parks and recreation departments are actively engaged in physical activity partnerships.
- Low participation indicates need for understanding facilitators and barriers to participation.
- Greater resources may lead to stronger partnership participation.
- Schools and YMCAs are important but under utilized partners for populations most at risk for physical inactivity.

# Study Limitations

- Findings limited to North Carolina.
- Secondary data source.
  - ***Informal*** partnership participation not measured.
  - Limited measures of characteristics and extent of partnership opportunities available.
  - Lack measures of shared resources
- No data on partnership effectiveness for increasing physical activity.

## Conclusions: Physical activity partnerships matter for NC.

- North Carolina is confronted with health and economic burden related to physical inactivity.
- Parks and recreation departments can play key roles in physical activity partnerships.
- As public fiscal resources continue to shrink, partnerships are necessary to solve complex problems.

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