Using Active Living Principles To Promote Physical Activity in Rural Communities

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Agenda

• What is the issue?
• Five Active Living By Design communities
• 5P Strategies
• Assets
• Challenges
• Lessons Learned
Physical Activity in Rural Locations

- Physical inactivity is higher
- Rural populations are more likely to be obese
- Overweight and obese children are 25% more likely to live in rural settings
- Opportunities in the built environment are fewer
Barriers to Active Living in Rural Locations

- Reach
- Limited in resources
- Rural communities have lower population density
- Under studied
The Myth about Physical Activity in Rural Areas

Rural populations have more opportunities for physical activity because of the expansive amounts of green space and natural amenities.
most rural communities

= 5 most rural communities
5P Strategies

Active Living by Design Community Action Model

Strategies
- Preparation
- Promotions
- Programs
- Policy Influence
- Physical Projects

Short Term Changes
- Partnership capacity to promote active living
- Awareness of health benefits of routine activity
- Social support from family/peers
- Media coverage
- Policy changes
- Community Mobilization

Intermediate Changes
- Mainstreaming Opportunities for Active Living
- Community Environment

Health & Lifestyle Changes
- Physical Activity
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- High Blood Pressure
Assets of the 5 Rural Communities

- Natural beauty
- Connection to policy makers
- When change happens, often happens faster
- Culture/Sense of pride in “home”
Challenges They Faced

- Turnover
- Working across multi-jurisdictional settings
- Utilizing centralized meeting places
- Assessing and prioritizing community needs
- Large (geographic) projects take time
Lessons to Inform Future Work

• Partner with larger employers
• Incorporate programs that reach a majority of the population
• Connect trails to town centers - increases physical activity and economic opportunities
• Highlight and incorporate local culture and/or landmarks into active living work
• Identify and pursue urban strategies in town centers


