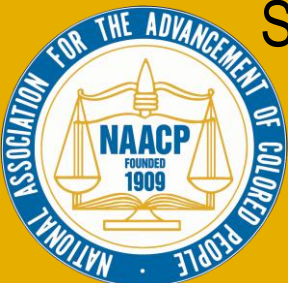




# UnEvEn Playing Field:

Effective strategies to address health inequity  
through *Active Living Research*



Shavon Arline-Bradley, MPH  
ALR Conf.

San Diego, CA – March 13, 2012

**A**dvocacy

**C**ommunity Mobilization & Educ

**T**raining

# Session Objectives



## During this Session, participants will:

- Identify systemic issues and contributing factors that increase the rates of obesity in communities of color (special emphasis on the Black community);
- Discuss a historical perspective of health inequity and the absence of culturally competent research opportunities for minorities.
- Review the integral role of researchers to develop relevant research opportunities for communities of color and the need to improve in the area of inclusion.

# Quote from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

- *Of all forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.*

— Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

# Quote from W.E.B. DuBois

- **“One thing of course we must expect to find, and that is a much higher death rate at present among Negroes than among Whites: this is one measure of the difference in their social advancement”**
  - In 1899, W. E. B. DuBois wrote in the Philadelphia Negro, A Social Study,.
  - A Founder of the NAACP



**When you think of the NAACP, what comes to mind?**

20<sup>th</sup> Century Civil Rights Advocacy

# Disparate Death Rates



# Social Action & Social Movement



# New Face of Civil Rights Advocacy



# Will these Black boys have RECESS today?



# Latina Girl – What will her next meal be?

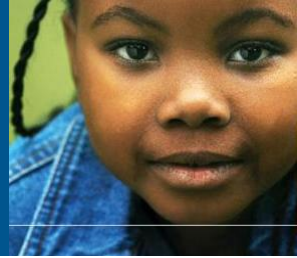


# Rural White Children – Is it Safe to Walk?





# Social Action & Social Movement

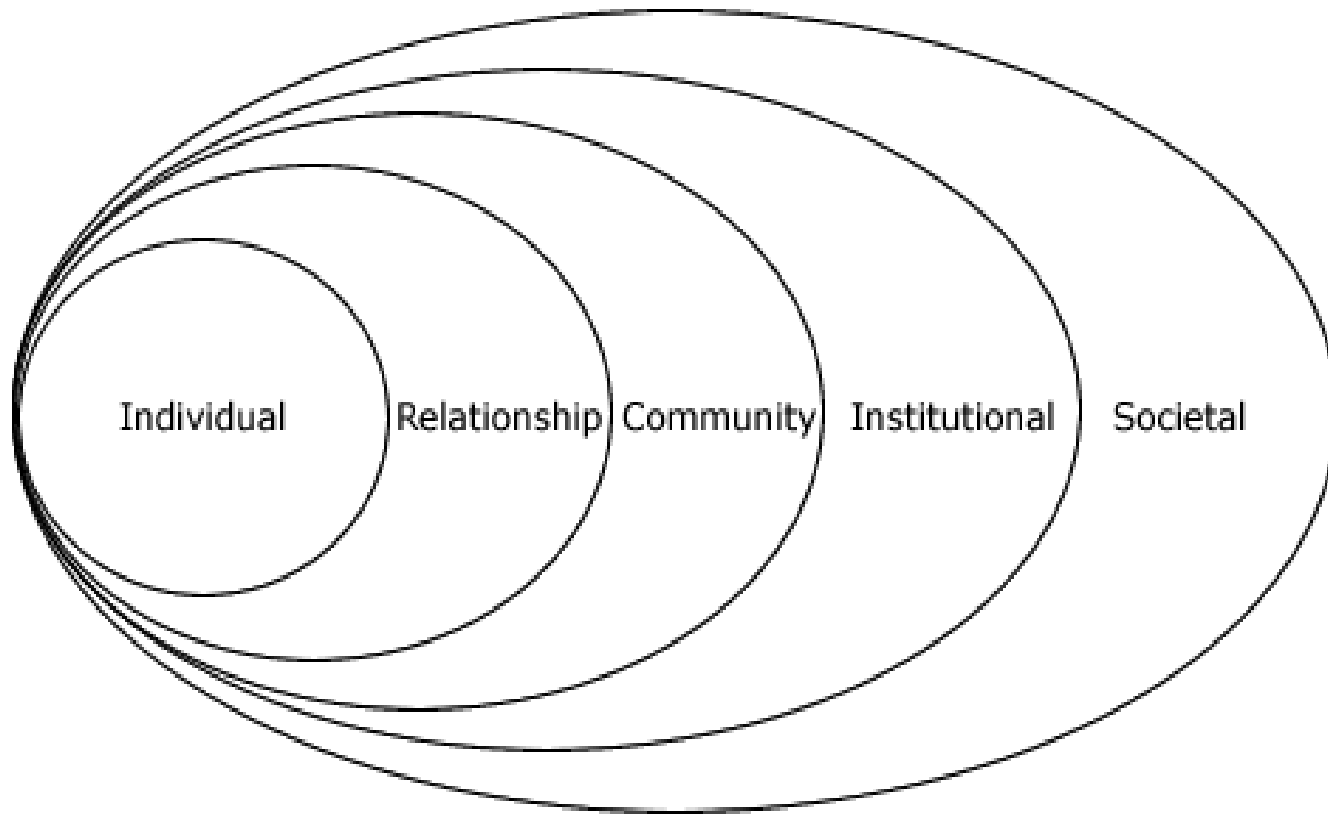


# NAACP, Health Equity & YOU

# **Social Determinants of Health**

- **Improve Living Conditions**
- **Tackle Inequitable Distribution of Power Money and Resources**
  - Applies to academic institutions
- **Measure and Understand Problem and Assess the Impact of Action**

# Socio-Ecological Framework





# Socio-Ecological Framework

- The Socio socio-ecological model recognizes the interwoven relationship that exists between the individual and their environment.
- The NAACP supports the “top-down-up effect” of the socio ecological framework (McLeroy et al., 1988; Stokols, 1996) establishing that environmental effects and shapes behavior.
- While individuals are responsible for instituting and maintaining the lifestyle changes necessary to reduce risk and improve health, individual behavior is determined to a large extent by social environment,
  - Community Norms and Values,
  - Regulations – Who is in **Power?**
  - Policies – What is the **law?**

# Dual Forms of Bias



## Individual Bias

Acts of Discrimination

Racial Profiling

Denying an Individual Coverage



## Institutional Racism

Health Inequities

Equitable Healthcare Delivery

Cultural competency in healthcare



# NAACP Tackles Childhood Obesity

# Childhood Obesity 101



- Non-Hispanic blacks (35.7%) had 51% greater prevalence of obesity, when compared with non-Hispanic whites (23.7%). This pattern was consistent across most U.S. states.
- Greater prevalence of obesity for blacks and whites were found in the **South and Midwest** than in the West and Northeast.

## Obesity Map

# Childhood Obesity 101



- Black children ages 6 to 11 are more likely to be obese or overweight than white children;
- Among **young** Black children, 11.4% of those ages 2 to 5 already are obese;
- By 2008-09, 29.2% of Black adolescent girls ages 12-19 were obese; **the highest prevalence of any age group by gender, race or ethnicity.**



# Childhood Obesity: A Social Justice Issue

**Childhood Obesity** - One of the most significant social justice issues of our time ...**WHY?**

- The disparate number of children of color affected by this epidemic;
- Neighborhoods that discourage physical activity;
- School systems that promote inactivity in children;
- Limited access to affordable, healthy foods in many of our communities.

# NAACP - Childhood Obesity Equation



# Force Field Analysis



## Driving Forces

**RESEARCH**

**Education**

**Advocacy**

**Personal  
Conviction,  
Direct Action**

**Childhood  
Obesity**

## Restraining Forces

**Food Desserts**

**Built  
Environment**

**Limited  
School Polices**

**Racism**



# NAACP's Charge to its Membership



*“Many people believe that dealing with overweight and obesity is personal responsibility.. To some degree they are right, but it is also community responsibility.”*

**Dr. David Satcher  
Former Surgeon General**



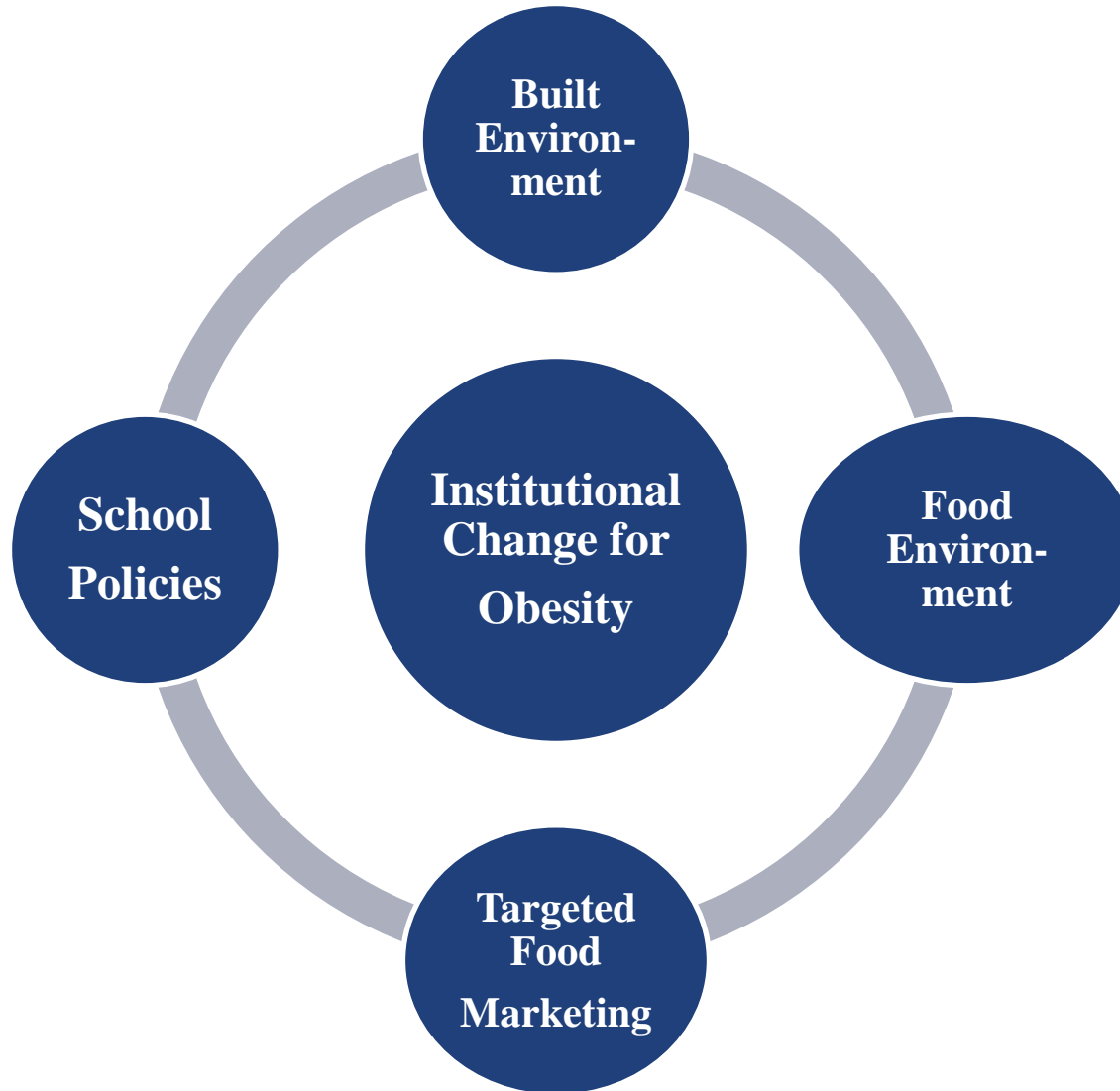
**NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual**  
**Released: September 2011**

# About the Partners



- Common Health Action (CHA)
  - A national non-profit based in Washington, DC, CHA collaborates with national organizations and community based partners to create conditions on which all people have access to equal opportunities to achieve optimal health.
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
  - RWJF's goal is to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015 by improving access to affordable healthy foods and increasing opportunities for physical activity in schools and communities across the nation.

# Role of Institutional Policy Change



# Factors That Increase Obesity



- Increased food portions;
- Promotion of a processed food culture;
- Increased marketing efforts that target communities of color;
- Neighborhoods that hinder or prevent outdoor physical activity;

# Factors that Increase Obesity

- Limited physical activity in schools;
- Limited access to healthy food especially in communities of color;
- Reduced access to safe green spaces in many neighborhood;
- Failure to educate, influence and inform families about good nutrition (page 8).

# Factors That Increase Obesity



## ■ Lifestyle Choices (Page 10).

- Decisions people make about what to eat and the level of physical activity within which they will engage.
  - People make these choices based on available food, personal finances, knowledge of nutrition and exercise, available time, and their neighborhood environment.
    - Children take cues from their parents or head of households. Behaviors that are cultivated within the family will ultimately influence how they make lifestyles decisions.
    - Children usually do not have choices of what to eat, play, or live

# Factors That Increase Obesity



## ■ Cultural Norms (page 11).

- There are important traditions and cultural beliefs in the Black community that guide families in their daily food choices, perceptions about their weight.





# Cultural Barriers – Obesity & Weight Loss

- Perception
  - Cultural Normalization of Obesity
  - If your parents are “fat” you will be too
- Fat is a Protective Shock Absorber
- Starving Promotes Weight Loss
- Spot Reducing Works (i.e. 6-pack from stomach crunches)

# Cultural Barriers – Obesity & Weight Loss

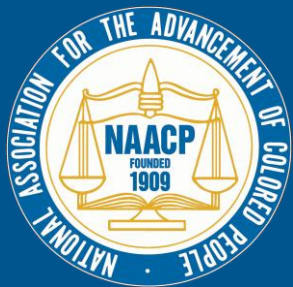
- Corporate Media: “Big is Beautiful”
- Fat Babies are Healthy
- Losing Weight will affect my intimate partnerships
- Hair & Beauty will be affected

# Solutions: Programs, People Power and Policy Change

E – Education

A - Advocacy

D - Direct Action



# PROJECT H.E.L.P: Healthy Eating Lifestyles & Physical Activity

*EDUCATION*

# Project H.E.L.P.

- To provide an intergenerational approach to Health and Wellness for the African American community using the Project H.E.L.P principles:

**Healthy  
Eating**

**Physical  
Activity**

**Chronic  
Disease  
Prevention**

# Project H.E.L.P. Objectives

- ◆ Increase participant knowledge of risk factors that lead to cardiovascular disease (i.e. hypertension, stroke, obesity, and diabetes);
- ◆ Reduce health disparities in the African American community;
- ◆ Develop community health advocates to build healthier environments for families .

# 2011 Awardees – Project H.E.L.P.

- **Region 1** - Fairbanks/ Alaska/ Washington
- **Region 2** -Brooklyn (NY) Branch
- **Region3** - Laporte County Branch, Michigan City, IN
- **Region 5**- Limestone County (AL) Branch
- **Region 6** - Dallas (TX) Branch
- **Region 7**- Alexandria (VA) Branch, Washington (DC) Branch

# People Power

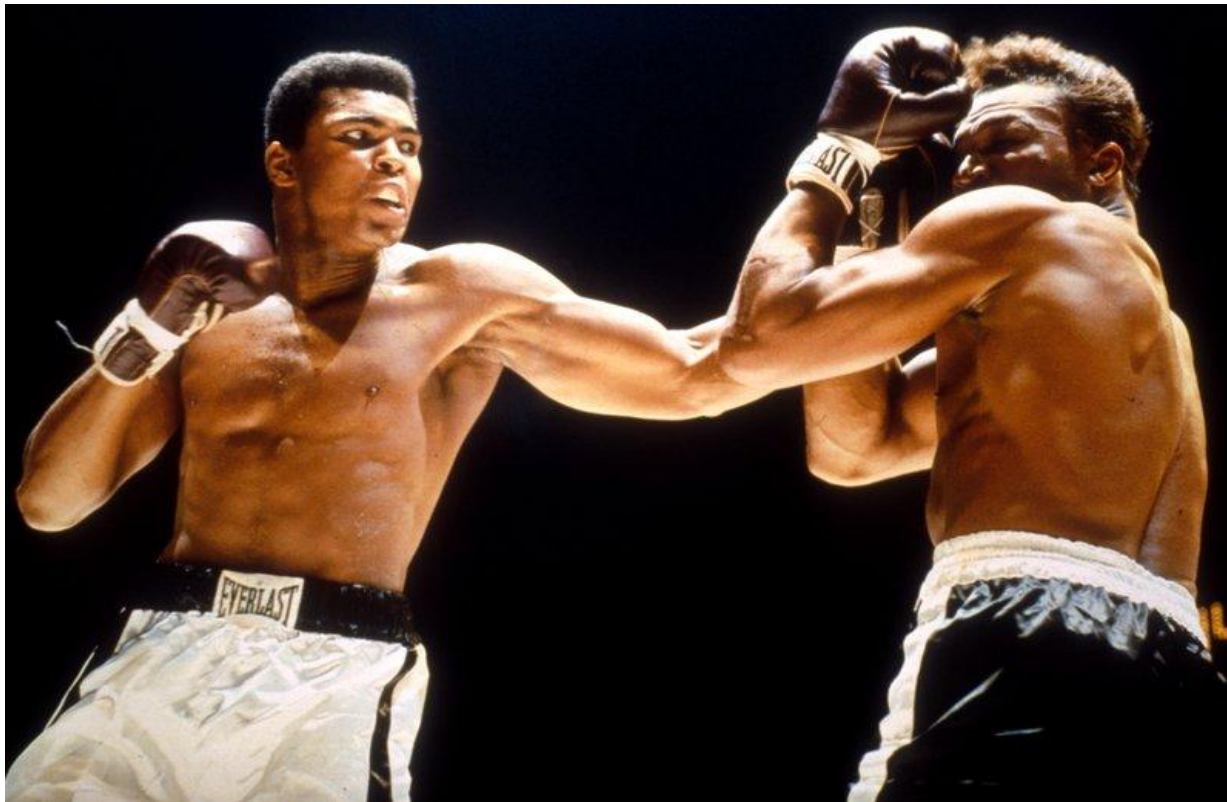
ADVOCACY



# People Power

## ■ Individual Power

- Voting Power – BALLOT BOX(ING)
- Power pendulum shift - Power to the People!



# People Power



- **The Individual** (page 12).
  - How and where I spend my dollars when buying food
    - “Voting with your fork” correlation with Montgomery Bus Boycott
    - Influences the food vendors offer based on profitability



# Policy as a Solution

DIRECT ACTION

# Policy as a Solution



- **What is Public Policy** (page 15).
  - Public Policy is a system of laws, regulatory measures, course of action, and funding priorities set by a governmental entity or its representatives (Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual, 2011).
    - Type of neighborhood we live in
    - Physical activity opportunities offered in schools
    - What type of food are served in schools

## Public Policy

Laws passed by  
state, federal,  
elected officials

VS.

## Policy

Regulations that  
guide local  
agencies,  
organizations, such  
as non-profits,  
colleges and  
schools

# Polices Areas



- The manual focuses on three advocacy approaches because they are the primary policies that affect childhood obesity.
  - **Built Environment** (page 17).
    - Man made structures space and conditions;
    - Includes roads, schools, neighborhood, parks, even air pollution;
    - The Built Environment's relationship to childhood obesity is important because it affects access to healthy food and options for physical activity.

## Sedentary Lifestyle



# Polices Areas



- How the **Built Environment** impact our ability to live healthy include:
  - Neighborhood where supermarkets or food outlets are in walking distance for area residents;
  - Neighborhood that does not have safe or accessible places for children to play;
  - Zoning rules that influence the number of corner stores in a community;
  - Joint use agreements that allow school facilities to be used by the community after school hours;
  - Town polices that ask for side walks and complete streets to encourage “walkable/bikeable” neighborhoods.



- **Food Environment** (page 21).
  - Available food outlets such as restaurants, supermarkets, farmer markets;
  - Many communities of color are deemed unhealthy because of the their food environment;
    - High-fat/calorie foods, deficient grocery stores;
    - Access to only poor quality food;
    - **Food Deserts and Food Swamps.**



## Food Justice

## Brown Bananas



## ■ School-Based Policies (page 22).

- School environment plays a critical role in childhood obesity because children spend most of their time in school.
  - Policies that support sound nutrition and consistent physical activity;
  - Currently, Illinois is the only state that requires daily physical educations for **ALL** students ( K-12);
  - Numerous jurisdictions have banned high calorie high fat foods and sugary beverages on school property or school events.
    - **68% of students drink sugary beverages during the school day.**





## ■ School- Based Polices

### – Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act 2010

- Improvements to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Programs;
- Includes school meals, vending machine and school stores.
- More training for food service workers;
- Major funding increase to assist schools with healthier meals options.

### – USDA Guidelines

- HHFKA requires the USDA to update national nutrition standards for all food sold in schools.

# Researcher's Responsibilities

# Ten Commandments of Community-Based Research

- Source: Leland Browne, Executive Director, Community Academy, University of California, Berkeley.
- In Bor D, et al (editors) Community Health Improvement through Information and Action: An Anthology from the Health of the Public Program. Health of the Public Program Office, University of California, San Francisco CA. 1995

# Ten Commandments of Community Based Research

- Thou shalt not define, design, nor commit community research without consulting the community!
- As ye value outcomes, so shall ye value processes!
- When faced with a choice between community objectives and the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity, thou shalt hold community objectives to be the higher good!
- Thou shalt not covet thy community's data!

# Ten Commandments of Community-Based Research

- Thou shalt not commit analysis of community data without community input!
- Thou shalt not bear false witness to, or about, members of the community!
- Thou shalt not release community research findings before the community is consulted (premature exposition)!
- Thou shalt train and hire community people to perform community research functions!

# Ten Commandments of Community-Based Research

- **Thou shalt not violate confidentiality!**
- **Thou shalt freely confess thyself to be biased and thine hypotheses and methodologies likewise!**

# Research Opportunities

# Research Opportunities

- ALR commitment to Diversity & Inclusion (Researchers, cohorts)
  - Communities of Color
  - Gender
  - Sexual Orientation
- Humanize your research experience – **LEAVE THE DATA sometimes!!**
- Build community skill sets for positive behavior change
- Hypothesis to include the role of civil rights advocacy in behavior change
- Explore the “healthy marriage” between Programs & Policies



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