

Health Policy Partners



For 25 years, **Health Policy Partners of Maine**, formerly known as the Maine Coalition on Smoking or Health, has been advocating for the creation of policies that support healthy lifestyle choices including tobacco cessation, healthy eating and physical activity. Health Policy Partners is a diverse group of organizations and individuals that presents a united voice on policy issues to improve health and prevent illness for Maine people.

Strategic Planning: Obesity

Health Policy Partners engaged stakeholders in a strategic planning process initiated in Spring 2010. Three policy priorities of high impact were felt to be strategically possible for introduction to the 125th Maine Legislature.

Policy priorities:

1. Increase the amount of physical education available to children in school.

Despite the evidence that children experience positive health, social and academic benefits from regular exercise, Maine students do not meet evidence based exercise guidelines. To meet established national recommendations for physical education, increase the amount of time physical education classes are offered to students in school.

2. Improve the nutrition standards for all foods available in schools.

Students have access to foods and beverages in school that are not required to follow the federal nutrition standards in place for school meal programs. Adopting scientifically established nutrition standards for all foods available on school grounds including food and drink available in vending machines and at school sanctioned events will improve the nutrient profile provided by these items and ultimately the health of our children.

3. Add physical activity and nutrition standards to licensure and certification standards for child care facilities.

Starting positive health habits early in life has the potential to continue for a lifetime. Including established standards for the amount and type of physical activity and the nutritional quality of foods and beverages offered to children in child care settings will have lasting impact.