

# Communities Putting Prevention to Work



## LOS ANGELES COUNTY, CALIFORNIA Obesity and Tobacco Use Prevention

***Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) is an initiative designed to make healthy choices easier by promoting environmental changes at the local level. Through CPPW funding, which was awarded in February and September 2010, a total of 50 communities are working to prevent obesity and/or tobacco use—the two leading preventable causes of death and disability.***

### Early Successes

- *All LA County hospital food-service providers will offer healthy food/ beverage options.*
- *Patrons of the Santa Monica Pier and parks in the city of Inglewood will no longer be exposed to secondhand smoke. Additionally, the city of LA and West Hollywood now provide smokefree environments at all outdoor dining locations.*

### Community Overview

Los Angeles (LA) County, California, is tackling obesity and tobacco use throughout the community. As the most populous county in the United States, LA County encompasses 88 cities and 93 school districts, and is home to a diverse population of more than 9.8 million people. Obesity rates are rising in LA County—approximately 26.2% of adults and more than 20% of students in junior-high school are obese. LA County's adult smoking rate (12.1%) is among the lowest of any U.S. metropolitan area. However, after declining for several years, smoking prevalence has remained fairly steady. The smoking rate among high-school students in the city of LA declined from 26% in 1997 to 12% in 2005, but has since leveled off, and is now around 11%.

Obesity and tobacco use rates are disproportionately high among certain populations. For example, within a one-mile radius, the childhood obesity rate is as low as 4% in one neighborhood and as high as 37% in another, with the highest obesity rates in low-income neighborhoods. Smoking in LA County is higher among African-American men (32.1%), African-American women (19.6%), Asian-American men (20.5%), and Latino men (17.7%) than the general population. In addition to obesity and tobacco use prevention efforts aimed at the county's general population, certain initiatives target these high-risk groups.

### Community Vision

Community changes will help build a healthier LA County and create a more satisfying place to live, work, and play. Residents will learn more about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity and be provided with more opportunities to make healthy choices. Students will be offered healthier food options at school cafeterias. Adults will find it easier to walk or bike to work and partake in other activities. Children will have more safe parks and recreation areas where they can play. Residents will find smoke-free parks, beaches, and housing. Students who smoke will receive smoking-cessation support at schools, and adult smokers will be offered tools and resources to help break the cycle of tobacco use. Social norms around tobacco will continue to shift, making tobacco use even less acceptable and pervasive.





“THIS FUNDING REPRESENTS A TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS THE HEALTH BEHAVIORS THAT CAUSE CHRONIC DISEASES, THEREBY PROMOTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING ILLNESS AND ITS CATASTROPHIC IMPACTS... NOW THE REAL WORK BEGINS IN PUTTING THIS GRANT MONEY TO USE IN IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF OUR RESIDENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENTS IN WHICH THEY LIVE.”

— Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH,  
 Director of Public Health/  
 Health Officer, LA County

## Community Action

If healthy options are not available, then healthy decisions are not possible. From increasing access to smoking-cessation services to offering healthier foods and beverages in schools and communities, the availability of healthier choices can change behaviors and help reduce chronic diseases.

To decrease the prevalence of obesity, LA County is taking action to:

- Work with partners in communities with the highest levels of childhood obesity to educate residents about healthy choices through a media campaign focused on unhealthy drinks.
- Support LA County Public Schools' plans to improve cafeteria menus to include healthier options and promote physical education.
- Encourage county hospitals and employers to adopt and implement breast-feeding policies.
- Provide education to help cities comply with the new Complete Streets state law.

To decrease tobacco use, LA County is taking action to:

- Run media and education campaigns to change social norms about the acceptability of tobacco use, reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, and promote smoking-cessation services.
- Partner with the American Academy of Pediatrics to mobilize its member physicians in support of *CPPW* tobacco-use prevention goals.
- Support LA County Public Schools' provision of smoking-cessation services and student-led tobacco prevention programs.

(The list above is a sample of all activities to be completed by the community.)

## Leadership Team

The leadership team includes high-level community leaders from multiple sectors who have the resources and capacity, when combined, to make healthy choices easier. The members of LA County's leadership team are key agents for change in their community. The leadership team includes representatives from the following organizations:

- American Heart Association Western States Affiliates
- American Lung Association in California
- City of Baldwin Park
- Coalition for a Tobacco-Free LA County
- Community Health Councils, Inc.
- Kaiser Foundation Health Plan, Southern California Region
- Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
- Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors
- Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
- Los Angeles Unified School District
- State Senate Offices
- The California Endowment
- University of California, Los Angeles School of Public Health
- University of California, San Francisco Tobacco Cessation Leadership Center

## Additional Information

For more information, please visit: [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/arra.htm](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/arra.htm) or contact the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health at 213-240-8117.