NJHI Upstream Action Acceleration
Learning Collaborative Session

Policy Strategies for Healthy Communities

April 24, 2019
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Learning Outcomes

- Connect NJHI coalition partners with learning and networking opportunities.
- Learn about RWJF’s policy recommendations report for New Jersey.
- Explore how the report recommendations relate to healthy communities at the local level.
- Share information about the next Learning Collaborative events.
Final Report

Building a Culture of Health:
A Policy Roadmap to Help All New Jerseyans Live Their Healthiest Lives
How we got here

- RWJF, Rutgers University
- Statewide Advisory Group
- Stakeholder & Grantee Meetings
- 5 Community Conversations
- Statewide Surveys & Polls
- Assessment of Evidence
Why Now?

New Jersey is doing well. But challenges remain…
What We Heard

- Economic opportunity, income, and poverty
- Access to high-quality, affordable health care services
- Maternal and child health, and supports for struggling families
- Housing, education, and transportation
- Engaging residents and communities in state policy decisions
A Roadmap to Get Us from Here to There

- 13 policy priorities
- 3 policy areas:
  - Healthy children & families
  - Healthy communities
  - High-quality, equitable health and social service systems
- **Goal:** Advance equity-promoting, evidence-based policies to help all New Jerseyans live their healthiest lives
Why does policy matter?

• It has created inequities, so is essential to reverse them

• It affects entire jurisdictions and, therefore, has broad reach

• It is long-lasting and self-sustaining with appropriate enforcement

• It changes norms, expectations, and cultural understandings of key societal issues (though sometimes these are a pre-requisite for policy change to occur)

• It was critical to each of the 10 greatest public health achievements of the 20th century
How can we influence policy?

- Build evidence base
- Raise awareness and change mindsets
- Conduct policy analyses to inform policy development
- Support non-lobbying advocacy
- Provide technical assistance
- Evaluate policy impacts
What have I learned about policy-making?

• Just ask
• Lay a foundation and be persistent
• Explore motivations
• Seek co-benefits
• Find allies
How can we value and elevate community voice?

- Support grassroots community-led organizations
- Require and support meaningful community engagement
  - Involve agency leadership and front-line
- Support community advisory bodies that have clear accountability mandates
- Demonstrate that it leads to better decision-making and greater progress
Q & A
Healthy Children and Families

1. Improve maternal and infant health outcomes by enhancing care, supports, and prevention

2. Ensure maximum uptake of the recently expanded paid family leave benefit, particularly among low-income workers

3. Increase access to high-quality early education for all of New Jersey’s 3- and 4-year-olds, with a continued focus on children living in poverty

4. Boost the incomes of families support by low- and moderate-wage workers to promote financial stability and economic opportunity
POLSICY PRIORITY 1

Improve maternal and infant health outcomes by enhancing care, supports, and prevention.

Recommended policy options:

- Ensure that state strategic planning efforts are inclusive; address the health care, social, and community determinants of maternal and infant health; and fully incorporate the voices of women from marginalized communities

- Address the full continuum of maternal and infant care and education, engaging all relevant types of providers

- Reduce unplanned pregnancies by increasing availability and use of contraception, particularly long-lasting reversible types

- Increase the capacity and quality of home-visiting programs for new moms and their infants
Ensure maximum uptake of the recently expanded paid family leave benefit, particularly among low-income workers.

Recommended policy options:

- Leverage funding to boost awareness and use of paid family leave benefits
- Simplify application and benefits administration processes and shorten claims process times
- Consider enhancements to the existing paid leave benefit
POLICY PRIORITY 3

Increase access to high-quality early education for all of New Jersey’s 3- and 4-year-olds, with a continued focus on children living in poverty.

Recommended policy options:

- Enhance the ability of the New Jersey Division of Early Childhood Education to assist, monitor, and hold accountable school districts in implementing high-quality, equitable, early education programs aligned with K-3 systems
- Pursue opportunities to steadily increase access to and enrollment in high-quality preschool programs for low-income children
Boost the incomes of families supported by low- and moderate-wage workers to promote financial stability and economic opportunity.

Recommended policy options:

- Increase uptake of the state and federal earned income tax credit (EITC)
- Consider enhancements to the state EITC
- Evaluate the impacts of the state’s phased-in minimum wage increases on economic and health outcomes
- Develop a strong plan for enforcing the state’s minimum wage increase
Healthy Communities

5. Ensure New Jerseyans have equitable access to safe, affordable, and stable housing in the communities where they choose to live

6. Prevent childhood lead poisoning by maximizing state and federal funding and ensuring properties are lead-safe through inspection, remediation, and enforcement

7. Expand equitable access to healthy food in communities and schools

8. Ensure all roads, sidewalks, and public transit systems are safe and accessible to all potential users

9. Reduce tobacco use disparities through price increases and cessation programs
POLICY PRIORITY 5

Ensure New Jerseyans have equitable access to safe, affordable, and stable housing in the communities where they choose to live.

Recommended policy options:

- Engage and empower community residents and organizations in housing and community development decision-making
- Increase affordable housing production and preservation
- Promote economic and racial diversity within communities
- Continue to engage hospitals, health systems, and insurers in collaborative efforts to develop affordable housing for those most in need
Prevent childhood lead poisoning by maximizing state and federal funding and ensuring properties are lead-safe through inspection, remediation, and enforcement.

Recommended policy options:

- Maximize the use of the New Jersey Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund for lead poisoning prevention efforts and target funding toward effective interventions
- Seek additional federal support, including funding via the Children’s Health Insurance Program, to target lead prevention efforts to low-income children
- Require all rental and owner-occupied properties be certified as lead-safe prior to turnover or sale and/or on a periodic basis
POLICY PRIORITY 7

Expand equitable access to healthy food in communities and schools.

Recommended policy options:

- Increase enrollment in and use of federal food assistance programs
- Increase participation in federal free and reduced-price meal programs in schools
- Improve availability and accessibility of fresh produce and healthy foods in communities
Ensure all roads, sidewalks, and public transit systems are safe and accessible to all potential users.

Recommended policy options:

• Accelerate adoption and implementation of Complete Streets policies in localities, with a focus on health equity

• Engage the metropolitan planning organizations in leveraging federal funds to support county and municipal transportation investments that promote health equity
POLICY PRIORITY 9

Reduce tobacco use disparities through price increases and cessation programs.

Recommended policy options:

- Consider substantial increases to state tobacco taxes
- Dedicate a substantial portion of tobacco tax revenue to:
  a) State tobacco control programs with a focus on prevention and cessation for populations with high smoking rates
  b) Other policy recommendations in this report that require funding
10. Shift the health care system’s focus toward delivering whole-person care, working with other systems to promote overall health and well-being

11. Ensure access to comprehensive, integrated mental health and addiction services

12. Improve access to health and social services throughout the state by leveraging technology

13. Foster collaboration within and across state agencies to improve health equity
POLICY PRIORITY 10

Shift the health care system’s focus toward delivering whole-person care, working with other systems to promote overall health and well-being

Recommended policy options:

- Enhance Medicaid managed care contract incentives and requirements to address people’s social needs
- Support health systems and hospitals in addressing peoples’ health and social needs in the context of community
- Enable state health care, public health, and social service funding streams to be aligned or combined to achieve common health and well-being goals
- Elevate people’s voices in state health policy decisions
Ensure access to comprehensive, integrated mental health and addiction services.

Recommended policy options:

• Pursue integrated mental health, addiction, and physical health services for the entire Medicaid managed care population

• Accelerate adoption of integrated health care models through stable funding streams

• Further reform the New Jersey Department of Health’s licensure process and policies to enable more seamless provision of coordinated mental health and addiction services
Improve access to health and social services throughout the state by leveraging technology.

Recommended policy options:

• Move toward a “mobile-first” strategy, making program information and applications accessible and seamless through mobile technologies

• Continue to advance easy access to a single application for all major health and social service programs

• Encourage more widespread adoption of tele-health and ride-sharing services to ensure timely access to care for hard-to-reach populations
Foster collaboration within and across state agencies to improve health equity.

Recommended policy options:

• Create an inter-agency well-being working group to provide statewide leadership on cross-sector collaboration

• Assess the impact of major new legislation and regulation on health and well-being
Q & A

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Upcoming Events

In-Person Convening – May 1
• Where: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
• Who: 3-5 partners, including the project director and/or coordinator

Webinars – Third Wednesdays, 1:00-2:15 pm
Chat-in your feedback:

+ liked, helpful

− not helpful, suggestion for improvement

Thank you!