

Cooper Institute Conference

Parks, Recreation and Public Health:
Collaborative Frameworks for Promoting
Physical Activity

October 26-28, 2006



Cooper Institute



The Cooper Institute is dedicated to advancing the understanding of the relationship between living habits and health and to providing leadership in implementing these concepts to enhance the physical and emotional well-being of individuals.

[Defining the scope]

- Historical context between parks & recreation and public health



State of Illinois Department of Health, Illinois Department of Public Health, July 2005

[Physical activity reduces risk]

- Significant research from the 50's to today on relationship between ↑physical activity and ↓various disease
- Plays out across health and wellness areas
- Over-60 population risk of death lowers with more physical activity

[Cost trends]

- Health care as a % of GDP
 - 1980: 8.8%
 - 2000: 13.2%
 - 2006: 16.5%
 - 2015: 20%
- It is less expensive to prevent than to treat (and more humane)

[Future direction]

- Stand alone professionalism is a dead idea. Parks and recreation professionals and public health people need to work together on important projects.

-Geoffrey Godbey

Goals and measures

- CDC recommends all adults engage in at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity PA on most (preferably all) days
- Measure frequency, intensity and duration

[Perspectives of leisure]

- 1/4 of youth age 12-21 report NO vigorous physical activity... another 1/2 reported low levels
- Understand why people don't do what is good for them in the context of leisure
- Start with benefits of leisure, then work backward to design programs and parks/facilities

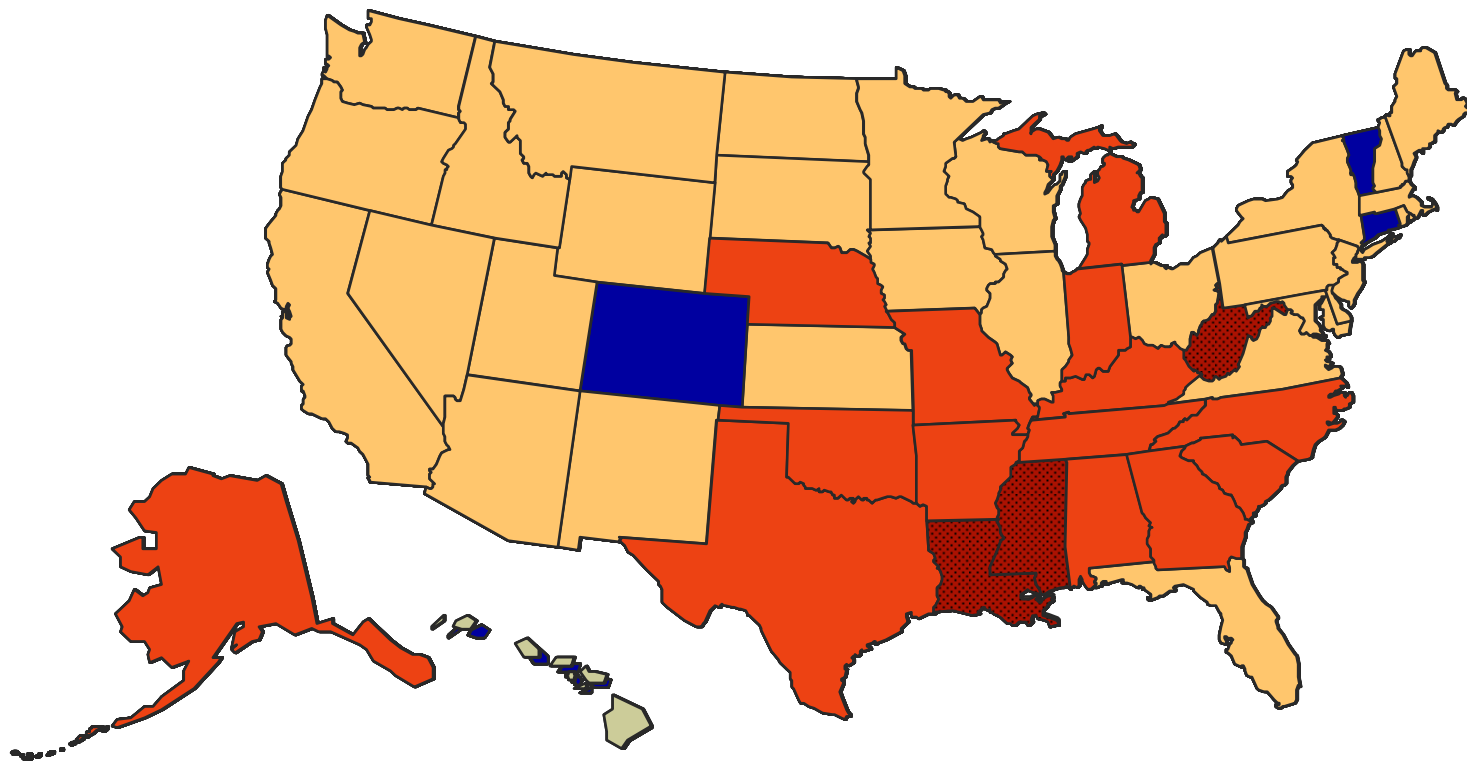
Environmental justice

- Lower SES groups have significantly lower access to park land and leisure programs. Example from LA:
 - Latino = .6 acres/1,000 people
 - African American = 1.7 acres/1,000 people
 - Anglo = 31.8 acres/1,000 people

[Economics of obesity]

- Obesity rates have increased over past years, cutting across every sector
- Non-leisure time physical activity has been declining
- The “benefits” of inactivity have gone up (physical activity competes against internet, TV, computer games, etc.)
- Food prices dropped dramatically since the 1980’s

Obesity trends (1985 to 2005)



BMI \geq 30 No Data <10% 10%–14% 15%–19% 20%–24% 25%–29% \geq 30%

Source: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC.

Economic value of recreation

- Activity rates are 51% higher in areas with places to walk
- Walking/hiking several times per week = 14% fewer medical claims
- Current and projected health crisis affecting Americans cannot be solved by today's dependence on the medical model in lieu of prevention and quality of life

[What's next]

- Preventive effects of physical activity are tremendous – spread the word!
- Develop programs that fit the lifestyle of those less active
- Encourage ‘active visits’ to parks
- It takes time!