Center for Public Health Systems Science

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Partnership Success in Putnam County: Important Policy & Program Development Resulting From Community Collaboration

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BACKGROUND

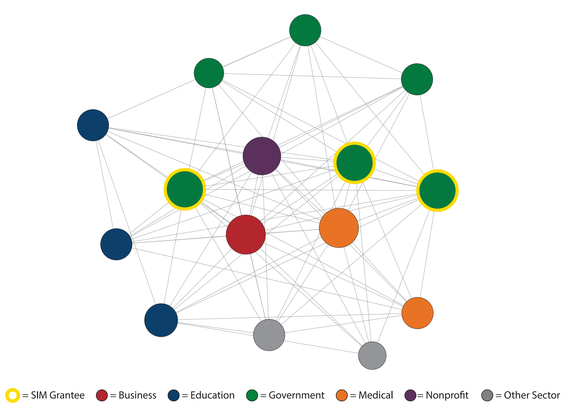
Social Innovation for Missouri (SIM) is a tobacco and obesity prevention initiative funded by the Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH). Tobacco use and obesity are the most common preventable causes of death in Missouri. Therefore, SIM's goal is to improve the health of Missourians by addressing these health issues via policy, environmental, and community changes. In order to inspire social change, SIM uses the Community Health Improvement model that emphasizes collaboration across multiple sectors to develop a strong community-wide initiative that engages all stakeholders.

As part of the SIM evaluation, we used social network analysis (SNA) to examine community relationships between stakeholders that are involved with multiple components of health promotion and disease prevention. SNA focuses on the connections between individuals to define collaborative ties and determine strength of partnerships. This poster highlights one SIM community's network and their efforts to expand opportunities to engage in physical activity and reduce overall tobacco use.

METHODS

Putnam County is a small, rural community (517 square miles) with an estimated population of 4,979 people (US Census, 2010). As a SIM grantee, this community was required to partner with a diverse group of stakeholders to stimulate community-wide collaboration and policy change for improving public health. The Center for Public Health Systems Science conducted SNA to demonstrate the collaboration among stakeholders. Quantitative data in the form of quarterly reports were also collected and analyzed to determine success in achieving policy and programmatic goals.

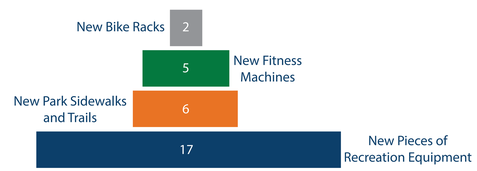
Putnam County's SIM Collaboration Network



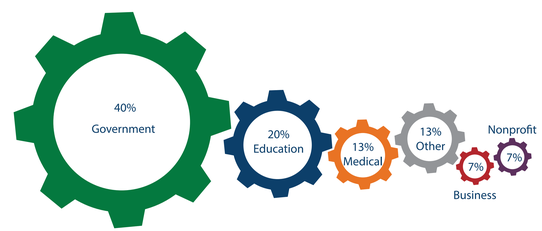
RESULTS

Putnam County engaged stakeholders from multiple sectors such as education, government, and nonprofit organizations to accomplish several milestones in increasing physical activity and decreasing tobacco use during the SIM project. These milestones include park and trail improvements; increased access to new physical activity equipment; increased advocacy and policy development resulting in smoke free businesses; and a new complete streets policy created and passed for Unionville, the largest city in Putnam County.

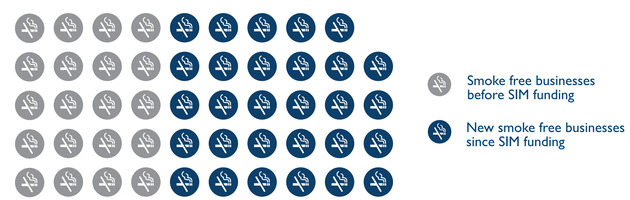
Putnam County's successes in improving the physical activity built environment.



Putnam engaged several partners from a diverse group of sectors.



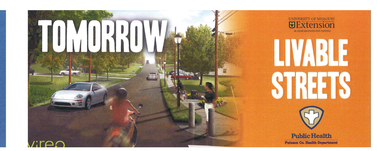
Since SIM funding, 29 additional businesses went smoke free, in Putnam, a 145% increase for the county.



Walkability Audit Results:

Using the results from their walkability audit and billboard advertisements that displayed the potential of Livable Streets, Putnam County garnered community support and persuaded the city council to pass a complete streets policy for the largest city in Putnam, Unionville.

Putnam's Walkability Audit scores demonstrated that Putnam County streets 'need a lot of work' in order to be walkable streets.



CONCLUSIONS

Putnam County is an example of a small rural community uniting a diverse group of stakeholders to advocate for and implement public health policy changes within their community to reduce tobacco use and obesity. Although the project is only in its third year, Putnam has successfully implemented many built environment and policy changes that are expected to improve their community's health. In the next stages of this project, we will attempt to evaluate the behavior changes within the community since the SIM intervention.

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