

Connect Policymaker Outreach eTraining Series

Packaging Research for Policymakers

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Goals for today's session

- Translating Your Findings
- Choosing a Path
- What's in Your Toolbox?
- Q&A

Research + Policy= Two Way Street

**A partnership between
researchers and policymakers**



For the **researcher**, what good is knowledge if it's closely held by fellow technicians?

For the **policymaker**, good policy & decisions require information, and research withheld,
is no information at all.

What is “Research Withheld”?

- **Research restricted to technical journals**
- **Research filled with jargon**
- **Research poorly or tediously presented**
- **Research that takes too long to read**
- **Research that has no apparent relevance to policy**



What's in it for the Researcher?

- The opportunity to **inform** the policy process – maybe influence it
- The knowledge that what's learned from researchers can genuinely **improve** quality of life



What's in it for the Policymaker?

- New information to inform sound decisions and the best possible policy
- Outside, **impartial expertise** free of “politics”



Messages

- **What you want to communicate, in every setting**
- **Key takeaway from your research**



Importance of Message

A message provides the big picture and answers:

- Why should anyone care?
- Why is this urgent?
- What should I do?

It must be clear, compelling, accurate – and short!



Tips for Developing a Message

Avoid jargon—use examples

- Economic contextual factors
- Increasing physical activity
- Environmental influences
- Diffusion and adoption of state, local and school district policies which may serve as interventions



Avoid Jargon

Use These Words

health
children start life improving pathway
neighborhood everyone
quality
better active local



Think Audience

- Who is your audience?
- What do you want them to do?
- Do they have the power to do it?
- What is in it for them?



Insert poll question about target policymaker audience (local, state, federal, agency, etc.)

How Much Time Do You Have? Choosing a Path

- Direct engagement
- Indirect engagement
- Media



Choosing a Path

Forms of direct engagement – you are not lobbying!

- Educational meetings with policy-makers
- Invited testimony & technical assistance
- Non partisan analysis and research: F as in Fat
- Weighing in on rules -- Regulatory Process
- Policy “opportunities”



Who do you want to meet with?

- Who are your representatives?
- What committees do they serve on?
- What is their voting history?
- What are they interested in?
- How can you link your work and their interests?



Direct Engagement

Materials: Know what to bring

bridging the gap

Research Informing Policies & Practices
for Healthy Youth

Research Brief
June 2010

Availability of Competitive Foods and Beverages

New Findings from U.S. Elementary Schools

Competitive foods and beverages include all items served or sold in schools outside of federally reimbursable meal programs.¹ Competitive products are commonly sold in vending machines, à la carte lines in the cafeteria, school stores and snack bars. Among elementary school students, classroom parties, student rewards, bake sales and other fundraisers also are major sources of such items.²

This brief reviews research on the sale and consumption of competitive foods and beverages in schools. It also presents the latest findings on the availability of these products among U.S. elementary school students.

Impact on Students' Dietary Patterns

Competitive foods and beverages are widely available in elementary, middle and high schools, and they have increased in prevalence over the past few years.³ National data show that students typically purchase high-calorie, nutrient-poor items, such as candy, cookies, cakes, brownies and soda, from competitive venues.⁴ Further, national studies indicate that many students who purchase lunch also buy competitive items in the cafeteria, and these students tend to eat less of their lunch, consume more fat and take in fewer nutrients.⁵ Among elementary school students, fundraisers and bake sales are significant additional sources of unhealthy foods.⁶ Several major studies have linked competitive foods and beverages with excess calorie consumption and obesity among school-age children.^{7,8}

Setting Limits on Competitive Products in Schools

Despite efforts by leading authorities on children's health, including the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), students' access to competitive foods and beverages before, during and after the school day is virtually exempt from federal regulation. States and school districts, as well as parents, advocates and

Direct Engagement

Pro

Greater control over your message

Con

Time consuming and involved



Indirect Engagement



Menu Labeling in Chain Restaurants
Opportunities for Public Policy

You Have the Right to Know

Menu Labeling

Resources/Background

- Supporters of Menu Labeling
- Why Menu Labeling?
- Laws and Regulations
 - National Menu-Labeling Law
 - Menu-Labeling Map
 - 2009-2010 Bills

Though Americans eat out more than ever before, few restaurants provide nutrition information at the point of ordering. As a result, we often get more calories, fat, and salt than we realize. Without clear, easy-to-use nutrition information at the point of ordering, it's difficult to make informed choices at restaurants. Few people would guess that a small milkshake has

Center for Science in the Public Interest

au bon pain, PopPeyes, Cosi, KFC, Subway eat fresh, Burger King, Starbucks Coffee, Dunkin' Donuts, McDonald's

Restaurant Quiz

Sample Menus

Find us on Facebook

Menu Labeling: Does Providing Nutrition Information at the Point of Purchase Affect Consumer Behavior?

A Research Synthesis, June 2009

Healthy Eating Research

Building evidence to prevent childhood obesity

Americans spend nearly half of their food budget on away-from-home food, and 45 percent of adults agree that restaurants are an essential part of their lifestyle.¹ In addition to purchasing meals for their own consumption, parents frequently purchase restaurant foods for their children.^{2,3} The majority of parents report purchasing restaurant food for a family meal one or more times per week.² Annual restaurant sales are projected to total \$395 billion by the end of 2009, up from \$42.8 billion in 1970.^{1,4}



Indirect engagement

Pro

Wider reach, less time

Con

Less control over your message



Media

Tips for engaging with the media

- Coordinate with your communications person
- Drill down to your key findings – what is the message?
- Develop your materials
- Practice tough questions
- Respect the embargo



Print Coverage

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.
WSJ

The Simple Idea That Is Transforming Health Care

By Laura Landro, April 16, 2012

GOVERNING
THE STATES AND LOCALITIES

2012 Health Rankings Highlight Income Gap

By Dylan Scott, April 3, 2012

**The
New York
Times**

Longevity Up in U.S., But Education Creates Disparity, Study Finds

By Sabrina Tavernise, April 3, 2012

desototimestribune.com
It's all about your life

"As a mayor, I use the county health rankings to let the people know we care about them and their health," Johnson said. "For instance, with our no smoking law that we passed in Hernando, that's something that will actually save lives."



Farm Bill: More deserve access to healthy food

Minnesotans shouldn't have to worry about whether they can buy healthful and nutritious foods for themselves and their families.

By Mary Story

July 10, 2012

In the House of Representatives, lawmakers have taken up the debate. They should finance this initiative in their version of the farm bill in order to bring healthful foods to Duluth, Clinton, and communities all over Minnesota and the United States.

Mary Story is professor and senior associate dean at the School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota.



Engagement Through Media

Pro

Massive reach

Con

Little control over your message



Choosing a Path

Path	Pros	Cons
Direct Engagement	Greater Control Over Message	Time Consuming & Involved Process
Indirect/Advocacy	Wider Reach, Less Time	No Direct Involvement Necessarily, Less Control
Media	Massive Reach	Little Control

What is in Your Toolbox?

- Research/Issue Brief
- In-Person Meeting
- Executive Summary
- Commentary
- Webinar
- News Conference
- Reaction Statement
- Web Site
- Op-ed
- New/Social Media



Q&A



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Institute for Health
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University of Illinois at
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Sarah Dash

*Georgetown University Health
Policy Institute
Formerly with the Office of Senator
Jay Rockefeller (D-WV)*

How important/helpful is it that research
be accompanied by a discussion of
potential policy implications?

As a researcher, **has it been difficult** to translate your research into policy-relevant materials? Have you had trouble maintaining the integrity of your research?

How does **timing** of legislation, agency regulations, and the larger political environment affect interactions with researchers?

How do you **forecast research priorities**?

Tell us about the **importance of emerging research** from both perspectives: that of the researcher and of the policymaker. Why is it so important to make research relevant to policymakers?

What sorts of **messages or materials**
make an impression?

What role can the media play in communicating research results?

Are there other ways to **maximize the impact of your research** for policymakers?

What are the key differences between presenting your research to legislators and using research to inform the regulatory process? What should researchers be aware of when it comes to **working with the executive branch on regulations?**