



# Boston STEPS

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## Project Overview

November 4, 2003



# What is Boston STEPS?

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A community mobilization effort to reduce the burden of diabetes, asthma, and obesity for residents in seven Boston neighborhoods



# Background on Boston STEPS

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- The Boston Public Health Commission convened a planning coalition in spring 2003 to apply for available funding from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- CDC program is part of Steps to a Healthier US
- Start date was 9/22/03. Still in start-up phase.
- First year funding is \$1.2 million
- In years 2 - 5, CDC may fund up to \$2 million per year



# Boston STEPS' Overall Messages

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- *“5-2-1-0 for Better Health”*
  - Eat at least 5 servings of fruit & vegetables
  - Limit ‘screen time’ to 2 hours or less per day
  - Regular physical activity with goal of 1 hour per day
  - No smoking - 0 cigarette or tobacco use

Message links with BlueCross BlueShield’s  
*“5-2-1 Jump Up and Go”* Campaign
- Improved disease management for diabetes and asthma
  - Better provider-patient communications
  - Reduced risk exposure
  - Increased access to community & school supports



# Project Area

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- Boston STEPS targets seven neighborhoods
  - South End, South Boston, Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan, Jamaica Plain, Hyde Park
- Residents in project area have higher rates of obesity and diabetes and higher rates of hospitalization for asthma than rest of City
- About half (~300,000) of Boston's residents live in these neighborhoods
- Population is 40% Black, 32% White, 15% Hispanic, 6% Asian and 6% Other



# Boston STEPS Consortium

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- Alliance of stakeholders concerned with the control of chronic diseases and their risk factors in the project area
- Consortium has more than 30 member organizations signed on from grant planning process, with more expected to join
- Kick-off Consortium meeting on November 6
- New members are welcome



# Boston STEPS Partners

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- Lead Agency:  
Boston Public Health Commission
- Mayor's Office
- Boston Public Schools
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of MA
- Voluntary Health Organizations



## Boston STEPS Partners (cont'd)

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- Health Care Providers
- Community Organizations
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Advocacy Groups
- Academic Institutions
- Community Residents



# Role of the Consortium

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- Active participation in the planning, implementation and evaluation of Boston STEPS interventions
- Most work will occur in smaller Teams that will meet monthly
- Consortium will meet quarterly



# Consortium Teams

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- Neighborhood Wellness
- Health Care Systems
- Healthy Eating
- Healthy Workplaces
- Walkable Neighborhoods
- School Health Council
- Technology



# Core Intervention Strategies

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1. Create and sustain a network of school-based and community wellness and disease management activities
2. Improve health systems to integrate health behavior change into routine medical care
3. Identify and address environmental and institutional factors that contribute to disease burden



# Community Interventions

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*Core Strategy 1: Create & sustain a network of neighborhood wellness activities*

- Support 40 NeighborWalk or NeighborRide groups
- Support 12 Neighborhood Wellness Programs
- Train and deploy 40 Neighborhood Wellness Ambassadors
- Incorporate fitness and nutrition education into other Commission programs
- Implement a marketing campaign



# Boston's NeighborWalk

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- Network of neighborhood walking groups developed by BPHC in 2001
- Funds mini-grant to community-based groups to mobilize local residents to walk on a regular basis
- Brings city agencies together to ensure safe, accessible, and pleasant walking routes



# Community Interventions

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*Core Strategy 2: Systematically integrate support for health behavior change into routine medical care*

- Provide body mass index (BMI) screening and tobacco use screening in primary care
- Use the Health Connection Van to provide BMI, tobacco use, and other screenings
- Support systems changes at community health centers that promote health behavior change
- Encourage technological innovations



# Community Interventions

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*Core Strategy 3: Identify and address environmental factors that contribute to disease burden and disparities*

- *Healthy Eating:* Work with restaurants, markets, community groups and others to improve residents' access to healthy foods
- *Healthy Workplaces:* Work with employers, employees, and others to improve opportunities for physical activity, healthy eating, health screening and a healthier physical environment
- *Walkable Neighborhoods:* Work with government agencies, community groups and residents to improve the walkability of neighborhoods in the project area.



# School Interventions

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*Core Strategy 1: Create & sustain school and after-school wellness activities.*

- Through school and after-school activities, help students make progress toward achieving the 5-2-1-0 wellness goal.
- Through asthma management education, home visiting and improvement in health center and school health systems, reduce the burden of asthma for students in the project area.



# School Interventions

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*Core Strategy 2: Improve the systems by which schools provide fitness and nutrition screening and connect students with wellness activities and disease management support*

- Provide BMI and tobacco screening for all students in project area
- Develop and implement training to improve the ability of school health providers to screen for BMI and tobacco use and to help students make healthy nutritional choices, becomes physically active, avoid tobacco and manage diabetes or asthma.



# School Interventions

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*Core Strategy 3: Identify and address environmental factors that contribute to disease burden and disparities*

- Assess schools in the project area for physical activity and nutrition program and policies and physical hazards.
- Increase the number of students walking to school at four schools through the Safe Routes to Schools Program.



# For Further Information...

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