

# Policy & Environmental Change Fact Sheet



The goal of the Ottawa County Wellness Coalition (OCWC) is to empower Ottawa County residents to adopt healthy, sustainable lifestyles.



## Improving the Health of Your Community

We must collectively work to create communities where healthy choices are easy, acceptable, and fun to make. Communities that implement policies and create environments that incorporate the previous characteristics are healthier and more satisfying places to live, work, and play.

## Change Behavior

While one-time events raise awareness and can be good marketing tools, policy and environmental changes have a much greater impact. Policy and environmental changes increase a community's ability to reach a large number of residents to create and sustain positive lifestyle changes over time.



## What is Policy & Environmental Change?

The Ottawa County Wellness Coalition (OCWC) believes that policy and environmental changes can encourage and support individuals to make long-lasting changes toward a healthier lifestyle. Policy change and environmental interventions can reach people where they work, live and play. These actions provide essential support for individuals to increase daily physical activity, select healthier foods and decrease exposure to tobacco and second-hand smoke.

Policies are laws, regulations and rules that support healthy lifestyles.

Environmental interventions are changes to the economic, social, or physical environments to support health. For some examples, see the table below.



Policies and environmental changes can effect the chronic disease risks of many people simultaneously, rather than the traditional health promotion intervention that focus on changing the behavior of single individuals.

Characteristics of Events	Characteristics of Policy & Environmental Change
One time, not part of an ongoing event	Ongoing
Unique: Usually do not result in behavior change	Repeated: Promote behavior change over time
Individual	Policy level
Short in duration	Long term

Example of Events	Examples of Policy & Environmental Change
Celebrating a "5-A-Day Week"	Adding fruits and vegetables to à la carte options
Hosting a family fitness night	Providing access to school athletic facilities for the community
Providing health screenings	Establishing a wellness team for your organization
Participate in a one day fitness event	Establishing a "Safe Routes to School Program"

### Resources for Policy and Environmental Change (PEC)

The Michigan Department of Community Health and its partners offer several free tools to assist you in identifying policy and environmental changes (PEC) you can make to support healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco-free lifestyles.

Visit [www.mihealthtools.org](http://www.mihealthtools.org) to access PEC tools.

Visit the Ottawa County Wellness Coalition (OCWC) website at: [www.getthehealthyottawa.org](http://www.getthehealthyottawa.org)