



Obesity and Disparities

Public Health Law, and Obesity

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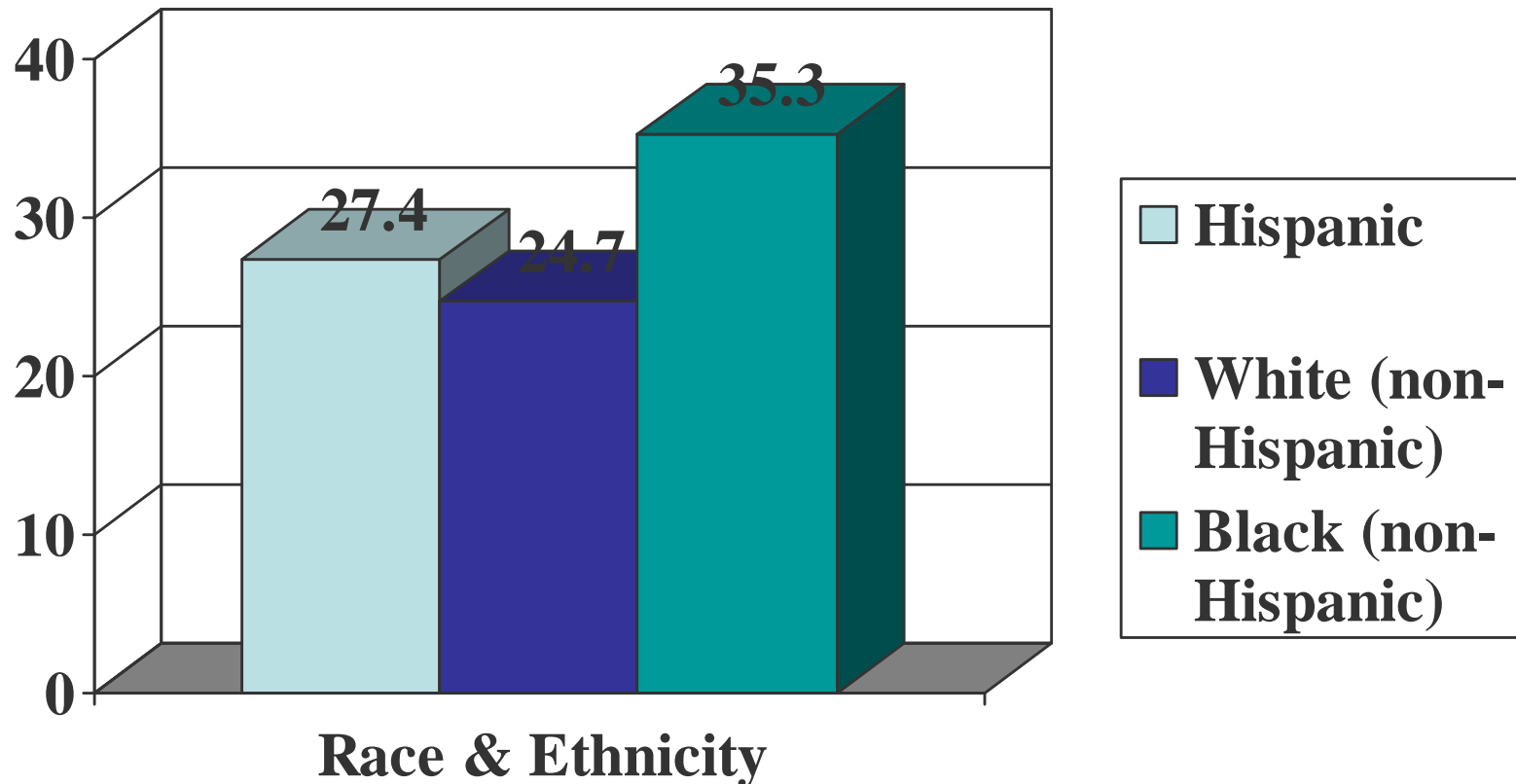
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The PolicyLink Center for Health and Place

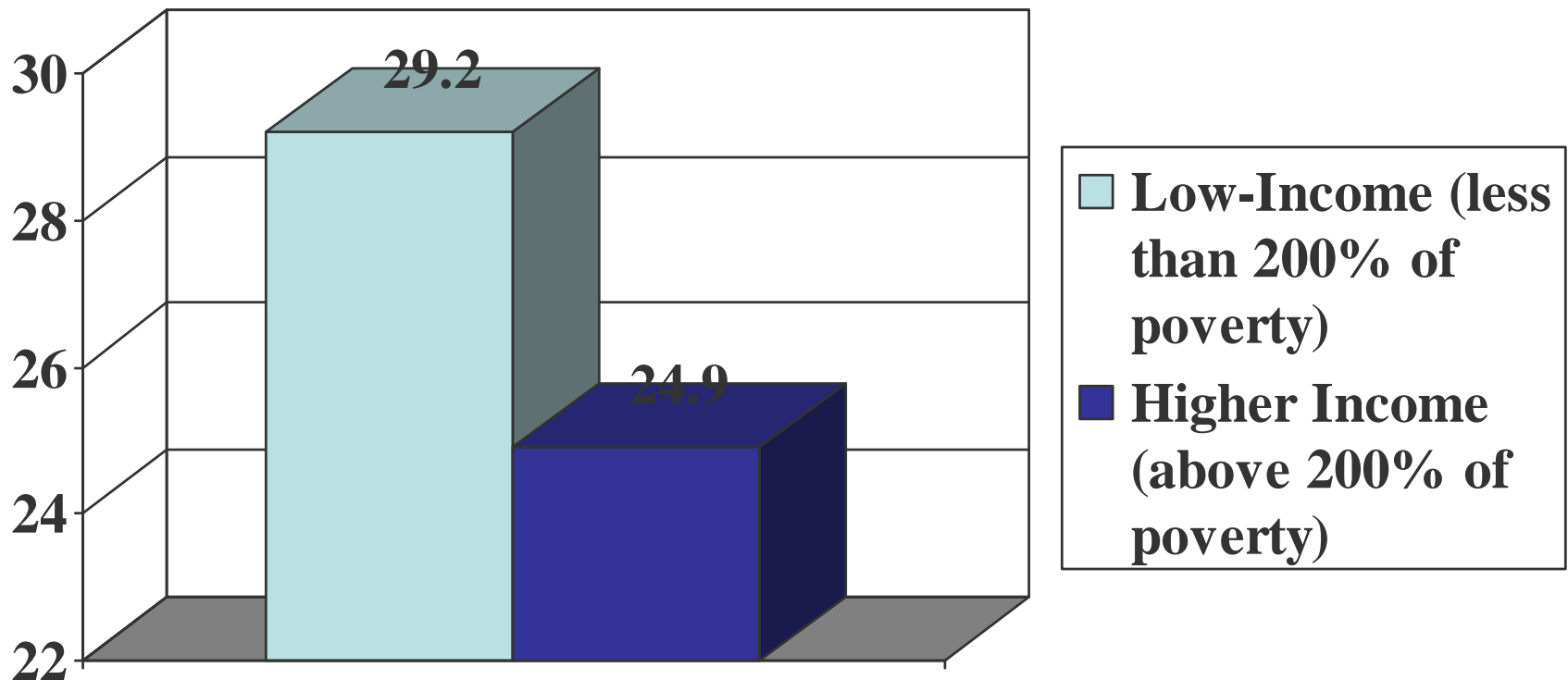
- **Disparities- the unequal distribution of poor health conditions such as obesity**
- **Obesity disparities are prevalent between different:**
 - socioeconomic levels;
 - race/ethnicities;
 - educational attainment levels.

Percent Obese by Race/Ethnicity (18 years and older)



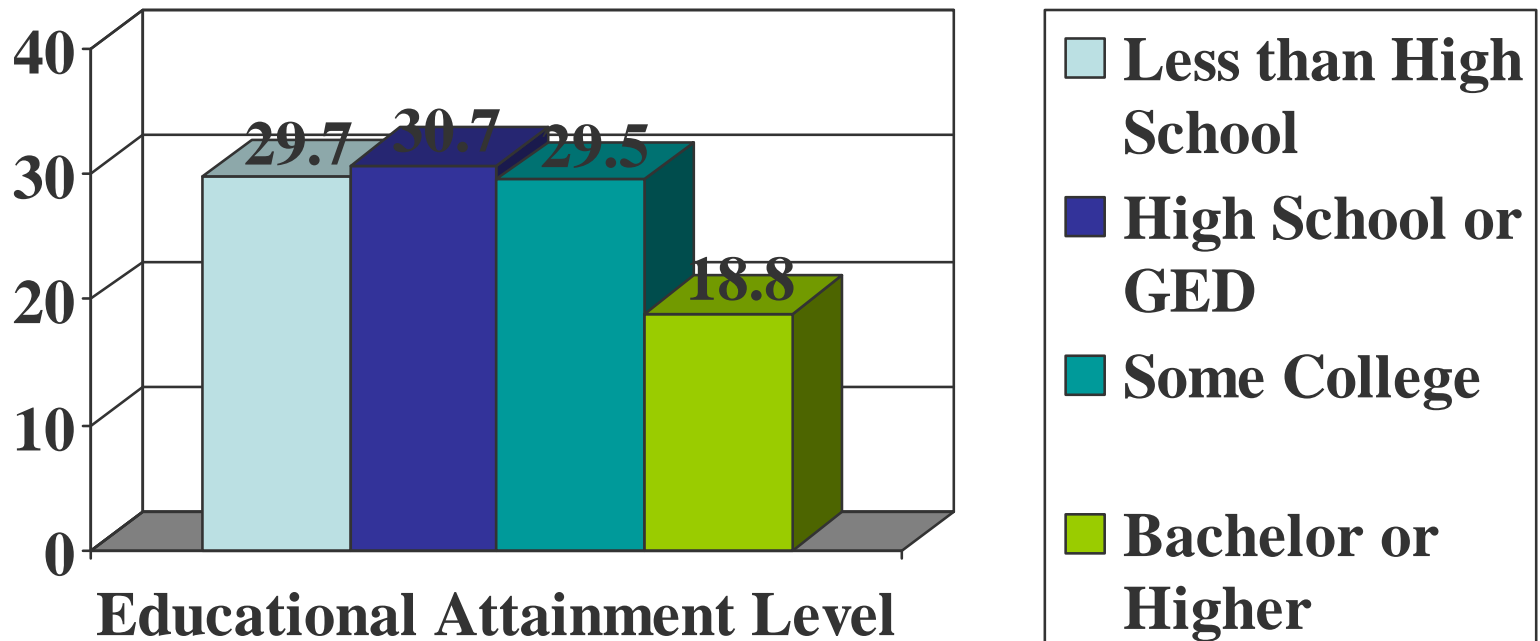
Source: CDC Health Interview Survey, published Dec. 2007

Percent Obese by Income Level (18 years of older)



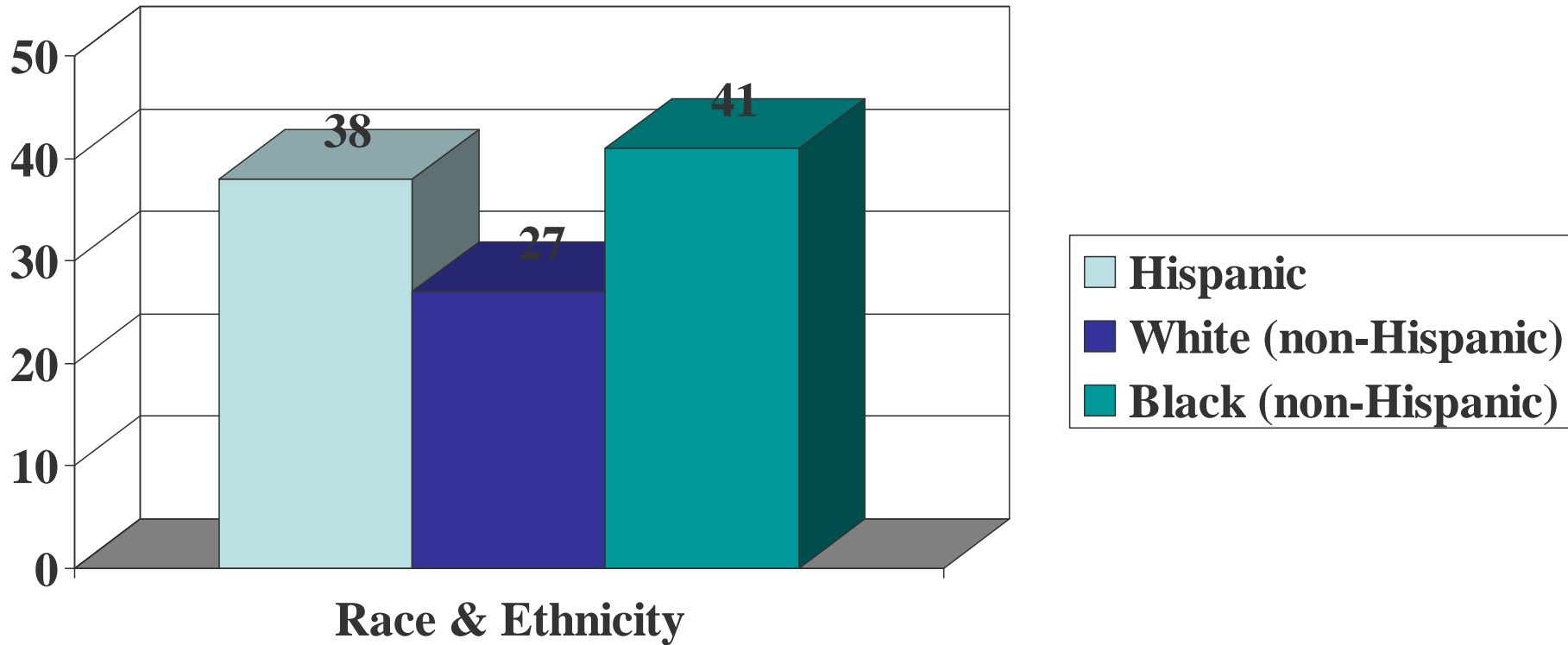
Source: CDC Health Interview Survey, published Dec. 2007

Percent Obese by Educational Attainment (18 years and older)



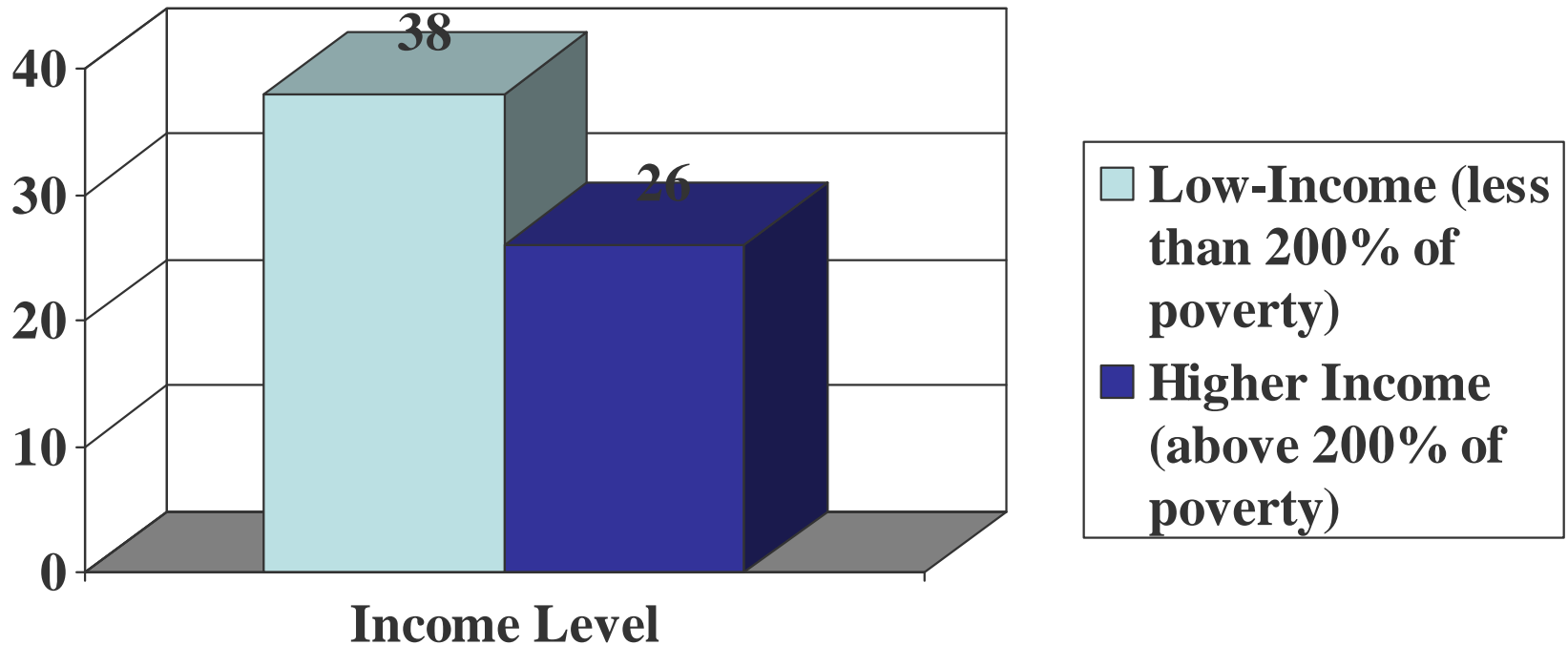
Source: CDC Health Interview Survey, published Dec. 2007

Percent of Children Overweight & Obese by Race/Ethnicity (Ages 10 to 17)



Source: KIDS COUNT analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health

Percent of Children Obese or Overweight by Income Level (ages 10 to 17)



Source: KIDS COUNT analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children's Health

Disparities in Community Environments Impact Health

- Disparities in access to healthy food and opportunities for physical activity
- Disparities in access to goods and services, economic opportunity, clean environments and more...
- Evidence that access influences behaviors





PLACE MATTERS

A COMMUNITY FACTORS FRAMEWORK

Contextual factors

Race
Ethnicity
Economics



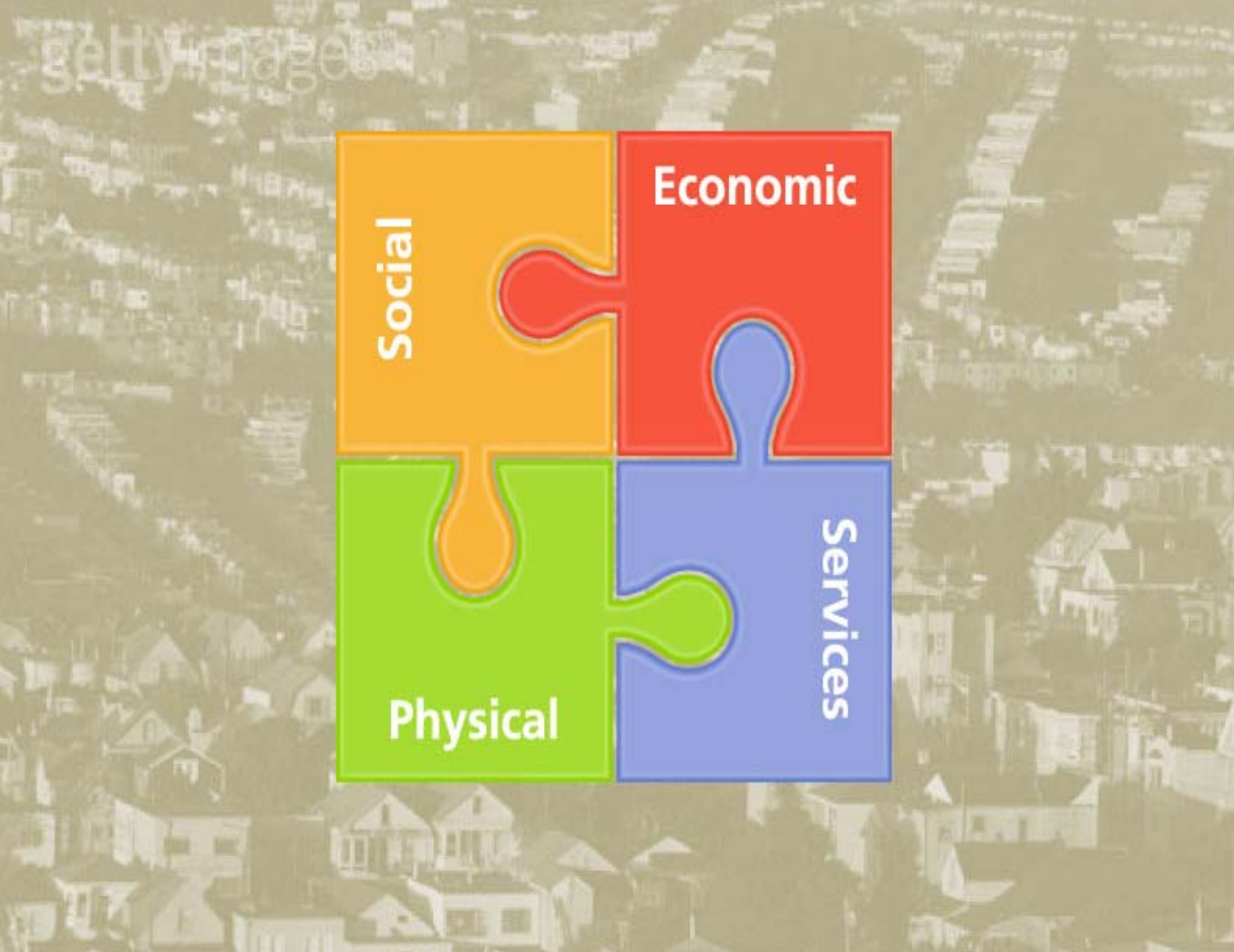
Components of place

Economics
Social
Physical
Services



Outcomes

Health status



Environments	The Problem	Recommendations
Economic Environment	Lack of jobs; lack of commercial businesses (grocery stores; banks)	Living wage jobs; safe workplaces; home ownership; Community investment
Social Environment	Racism; language barriers; lack of social support; lack of leadership and political power.	Social cohesion, social support and networks; civic participation; political organizing;

Environments	The Problem	Recommendations
Physical Environment	Presence of toxic polluters; poor urban design and land use; isolation from job centers and food outlets.	Policies that maintain clean environments; affordable high quality housing; local parks; walkable & bikeable communities; healthy urban design; affordable transit oriented development.
Services Environment	Lack of affordable childcare; lack of public safety; lack of needed services – transportation, healthcare.	Affordable, adequate public transportation; subsidized childcare facilities; adequate police, fire and emergency services.



- **New research on the link between local food environments, community income, and health**
 - The Retail Food Environment Index (RFEI)
- **Representative sample of 43,000 Californians**
- **Key findings**
 - People who live near an abundance of fast food restaurants and convenience stores, compared to grocery stores and fresh produce vendors, have a higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes
 - People living in lower-income communities have higher RFEIs
 - Obesity and diabetes prevalence are highest for adults with higher RFEIs who live in lower-income communities

Communities of Opportunity

- Parks
- Sidewalks
- Grocery Stores
- Financial Institutions
- Better Performing Schools
- Good Public Transportation

Good Health Status

Poor Health Status
 Contributes to health disparities:
 •Obesity
 •Diabetes
 •Asthma
 •Infant mortality

Low- Income Communities

- Fast Food Restaurants
- Liquor Stores
- Unsafe/Limited Parks
- Poor Performing Schools
- Increased Pollution and Toxic Waste Sites
- Limited Public Transportation

- **Policy impacts the economic, social, physical and services environments**
- **Policies not traditionally thought of as health policies (transportation, land use, education, economics) impact health and obesity rates.**

The next federal administration can address the escalating epidemic of obesity through effective policymaking.

- **Transportation Reauthorization**
- **Infrastructure Bank**
- **Complete Streets Legislation**
- **Farm Bill Implementation**
- **No Child Left Behind Reauthorization**
- **Child Nutrition Reauthorization**

Recommendation: Access to Healthy Foods

Issue: Lack of access to healthy foods in communities across the country is a barrier to healthy eating.

Recommendation: An array of federal policies designed to increase access to healthy foods including an innovations fund to support grocery store development, changes in corner stores, new cooperatives, and local entrepreneurship, and requirements for electronic access in all retail environments, including farmers markets.

Rationale: People with limited access to healthy foods have higher prevalence of obesity and diabetes. Successful state and local innovations should be expanded to the federal scale.



Issue: Affordable transit-oriented development

Recommendation: Include a program and pool of funding for affordable transit oriented development (TOD) in the next federal transportation reauthorization. Or, prioritize TOD development in all relevant housing programs. Eligibility criteria to include affordability of home/rent prices; siting in low-income, underserved communities; community design features that promote safety and safe walking and biking; mixed use development.

Rationale: Public transit users are more physically active in their daily lives than those who commute via car. Dense communities –with appropriate community design features –can promote safety, increased commercial viability (for instance for small healthy food vendors), and make walking and physical activity accessible in the daily lives of residents.



Source: images from www.transitrienteddevelopment.com, www.reconnectingamerica.com, and State of CA website on TOD. ²⁵

Recommendation: Physical Education in Schools

Issue: Physical activity in schools

Recommendation: Include physical education (PE) as a core subject in the upcoming No Child Left Behind (NCLB) reauthorization while increasing support for current core subjects.

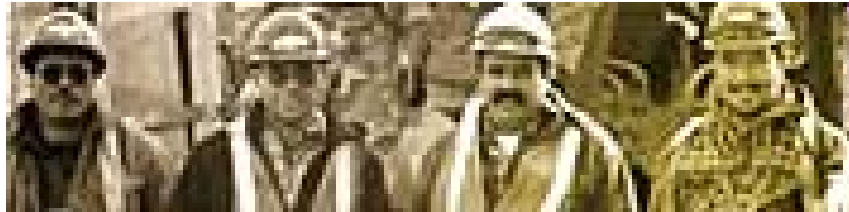
Rationale: NCLB dictates school responsibilities and establishes a system for accountability. Since its inception, NCLB has not provided adequate funds for implementation. Including PE should be linked to funding stream for schools to create PE programs and give physical activity prominence within schools to ensure needed allocation of time and space.

Recommendation: Economic Opportunity

Issue: Economic opportunity for low-income communities and communities of color.

Recommendation: Focus federal infrastructure spending in communities with greatest needs. Include policies to target hiring and training of workers to increase access to living wage positions. Launch a federal infrastructure bank to provide needed new capital to be matched with local, state, and private funds.

Rationale: The Federal Government spends billions every year in infrastructure maintenance and development. This includes high paying construction jobs –which typically do not require high educational attainment –to build, rebuild or maintain roads, public transit and bridges. Tax payer investment could stimulate jobs and support access to opportunity for those most vulnerable to obesity.





Thank You!



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