

# Sodium Reduction in Communities Program Abstracts

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## **California Department of Public Health (CDPH)**

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is partnering with Shasta County to create healthier food environments through the implementation of sodium reduction strategies related to policy and environmental change. CDPH chose to partner with Shasta County on this application because of Shasta's demonstrated need, past success establishing nutrition policies, and capacity to expand upon their prior efforts. Shasta County's age-adjusted death rate due to heart disease and stroke is among the top ten highest among California's 58 counties. Shasta County has an innovative health department and the committed support of elected officials to target sodium reduction policies. CDPH will provide trainings, technical assistance, and resources to support Shasta's efforts. Shasta plans to address two policy strategies and one media strategy to advance their sodium reduction efforts. They plan to work with restaurants, schools, and local governments to build support for the adoption of policies that limit sodium consumption. Specifically, Shasta will work toward the adoption of sodium guidelines in school wellness policies, the establishment of a sodium policy for foods sold in government run facilities, and the expansion of a nutrition labeling intervention to include sodium guidelines. One media campaign will support these policy efforts.

## **Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)**

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) in partnership with the Shawnee County Health Agency (SCHA) propose to plan, coordinate and implement intervention strategies aimed at reducing sodium intake, decreasing blood pressure and improving blood pressure control among residents throughout the entire jurisdiction of the Shawnee County Health Agency.

After careful consideration of community needs and opportunities, the following four strategies have been selected for inclusion in the project's Community Action Plan:

1. Adopt procurement policies and practices to enhance nutrition including reducing sodium. Beginning with a baseline assessment of current procurement policies of city and county government agencies, project leaders will craft recommendations for procurement standards, meet with government leaders to effect change, and implement related media strategies.
2. Promote venue-based policies that support healthy nutrition and sodium reduction efforts. A baseline assessment of worksite policies will be conducted in venues that offer vending or cafeteria services. Technical assistance, training and media strategies will be employed that support sodium reduction strategies in these venues.
3. Promote policies to change relative prices of healthy vs. unhealthy high sodium items. Project staff will convene a group of food retailers, producers and decision-makers to examine the economic impact on price decrease for fruits and vegetables and develop a consensus set of recommendations for using price as an incentive to increase purchases of fruits and vegetables. Partnering retailers will participate in a pilot project to implement selected pricing strategies and will develop a report with results of these strategies in pilot retail outlets to support expansion throughout Shawnee County.

# Sodium Reduction in Communities

## Program Abstracts

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4. Counter-advertising of high sodium foods to promote heart healthy low sodium foods. Media strategies designed by a media vendor, project staff and key partners will be employed to support the specific policy, systems and environmental strategies outlined in this project's Community Action Plan.

A state-community management team will coordinate resources and provide technical assistance to the project. Day-to-day activities will be guided by the coordinated efforts of multiple coalitions in the county, and carried out by members of the Shawnee County Health Agency and KDHE, through the Sodium Project Leadership Team. Evaluation activities will be coordinated by a SCHA Project Evaluator, with assistance from KDHE.

### **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health**

Los Angeles County is the most populous local public health jurisdiction in the nation (10.4 million residents), spans more than 4,000 square miles, and includes 88 cities, a large unincorporated area, and 81 school districts. Although overall cardiovascular disease mortality has declined in the past nine years (age-adjusted rate for coronary heart disease has fallen from 249 to 174 per 100,000; and for stroke, from 59 to 43 per 100,000, 1996-2005), the burden of cardiovascular disease remains substantial among high risk communities. Age-adjusted coronary heart disease and stroke mortality rates are substantially higher for blacks than for whites, and rates of premature death due to cardiovascular disease are higher in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. Morbidity and costs related to the management of cardiovascular disease as well as efforts to reduce cardiovascular risk factors (e.g., hypertension, dyslipidemia, smoking, physical inactivity, diabetes, obesity) are also high; hypertension-related diseases account for over 100,000 hospitalizations annually. Presently, more than 1.8 million adults in Los Angeles County have hypertension and another 1.5 million have pre-hypertension.

The Los Angeles County Sodium Reduction Initiative (LACSRI) will implement policy and systems changes that will increase access to low sodium food options, decrease access to high sodium foods, and reduce overall sodium content in the county's food environments. To achieve these objectives, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (the lead agency) will leverage and capitalize on the resources and expertise from the ongoing Renew Environments for Nutrition, Exercise & Wellness in Los Angeles County (RENEW LA County) obesity prevention initiative, a two-year, \$15.9 million CDC-funded project under Communities Putting Prevention to Work. By partnering and integrating with RENEW LA County, the LACSRI will gain broader access to and extend its reach into school, preschool, government, city, and community settings, including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, collaboration with two city health departments, County of Los Angeles departments and programs, and a rich array of community organizations, coalitions, task forces, foundations, voluntary organizations, and business communities. Without this partnership, this extensive reach would not be feasible. In turn, LACSRI will synergistically contribute to and provide staff expertise to strengthen RENEW LA County's food policy agenda, focusing increased attention on sodium reduction and cardiovascular health, which will complement obesity prevention strategies such as sugar-sweetened beverage reduction, physical activity promotion, and changes in the built environment. In partnership with

# Sodium Reduction in Communities

## Program Abstracts

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RENEW LA County, LACSRI will specifically: 1) develop and implement a targeted public outreach campaign that includes sodium reduction messaging; 2) develop, adopt, and seek implementation of low sodium food policies (e.g., food procurement, menu labeling) in the County of Los Angeles, cities, school districts, and preschools; and 3) conduct an integrated project evaluation that examines the process of change and the tangible outcomes anticipated as a result of these policy efforts. The LACSRI will also feature a pilot of a monitoring program for menu labeling compliance and sodium content in restaurants as a potential part of the Los Angeles County Restaurant Hygiene Inspection Program. This potentially innovative addition to the inspection process will allow DPH to gauge sodium content in foods served by restaurants with 20 or more outlets, a major source of dietary sodium in the county. Collectively, these efforts could lead to changes that will benefit the diverse segments of the county population.

### **New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)**

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) seeks Sodium Reduction in Communities funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to reduce cardiovascular disease (CVD) in NYC by reducing New Yorkers sodium intake. With CDC funding, DOHMH will implement a set of sodium reduction interventions impacting all of NYC. These strategies will substantially expand DOHMH's existing sodium reduction efforts, and work toward the agency's long-term objectives to reduce mean NYC population blood pressure and rates of hypertension, with the ultimate goal to reduce CVD morbidity and mortality and related health disparities. DOHMH has won international recognition for its cutting-edge approaches to CVD prevention and control, including restricting trans fat, mandating calorie labeling in restaurants, and introducing food procurement nutrition standards and beverage vending machine standards for all NYC agencies. Further, DOHMH's leadership of the National Salt Reduction Initiative (NSRI), a coalition of more than 50 cities, states, and health organizations, is achieving nationwide impact by working toward the goal of reducing Americans salt intake 20% by 2014.

DOHMH's Sodium Reduction in Communities initiative is comprised of policy, systems and environmental intervention strategies supported by media advocacy and rigorous evaluation. Funding will enable DOHMH's Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Control Program to launch a set of aggressive sodium reduction strategies, which will include reducing sodium levels in food prepared by independent restaurants and food service suppliers; working with public and private NYC hospitals to improve the healthfulness, including reducing sodium, of food served in their cafeterias, snack bars, and cafes; and launching a print media campaign to raise awareness to the dangers of high sodium consumption and influence social norms. These interventions will complement DOHMH's current sodium reduction efforts to achieve a broad impact across the agency's full jurisdiction, with dissemination potential across the United States through the NSRI partnership. To direct and implement this ambitious set of interventions, the DOHMH will rely on a Leadership Team made up of influential policymakers, community leaders, and CVD experts. DOHMH will also assemble a Community Coalition from members of the NSRI and the NYC Food Policy Task Force, as well as other local stakeholders, to provide community input and guidance. As

# Sodium Reduction in Communities Program Abstracts

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the bona fide agent of DOHMH designated by Mayor Michael Bloomberg, the Fund for Public Health in New York will act as the fiduciary agent for this application.

## **New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)**

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) will partner with Broome and Schenectady to implement the Sodium Reduction in Communities program. This program will create healthier food environments to reduce sodium intake through public health application and implementation of population-based sodium reduction strategies related to policy, system, and environmental change.

Broome County will work to reduce the sodium content of school meals served in all 12 school districts in the county and increase the availability and sales of lower sodium products in grocery stores in high needs areas of the county. Schenectady County will work to reduce the sodium content in meals served at senior centers, through home-delivered meals, and at senior residential facilities. Schenectady County will also increase the sales of lower sodium items at restaurants frequented by seniors such as coffee shops, diners, and restaurants offering senior citizen specials or early bird specials. Media and social marketing campaigns will be developed to support and promote all interventions.

Evaluation will consist of: assessment of policy components and documentation of policy adoption; environmental and systems assessments pre and post policy implementation; characterization of policy reach; and tracking of behavioral outcomes and potential health impacts. The NYSDOH will place a strong emphasis on sharing and disseminating successful sodium reduction strategies, approaches, lessons learned, and evaluation results throughout NYS and nationally. The sodium reduction work of Broome and Schenectady counties will be replicated with other local municipalities and at the state level.