



Childhood Obesity Council Activities & Forum and Childhood Obesity Legislation

Connecticut Childhood Obesity Council

May 28, 2009

presentation by Thomas Brooks, co-chair



Vision

Connecticut's Children
Practice Sensible Eating Behaviors and
Engage in Regular Physical Activity
to Prevent Disease and Optimize Health

The background is a dark blue field filled with various sizes of semi-transparent gears. On the left side, there is a vertical strip with a colorful, abstract, and textured pattern in shades of orange, yellow, and brown. The word "Mission" is centered at the top in a bold, yellow font.

Mission

To Prevent and/or Reduce Obesity and
Related Chronic Disease
Among Connecticut's Children



Council members

Executive Branch:

- ✦ Department of Agriculture
- ✦ Department of Children and Families
- ✦ Department of Education
- ✦ Department of Environmental Protection
- ✦ Department of Public Health
- ✦ Department of Social Services
- ✦ Office of Policy and Management



Council members

Legislative Branch:

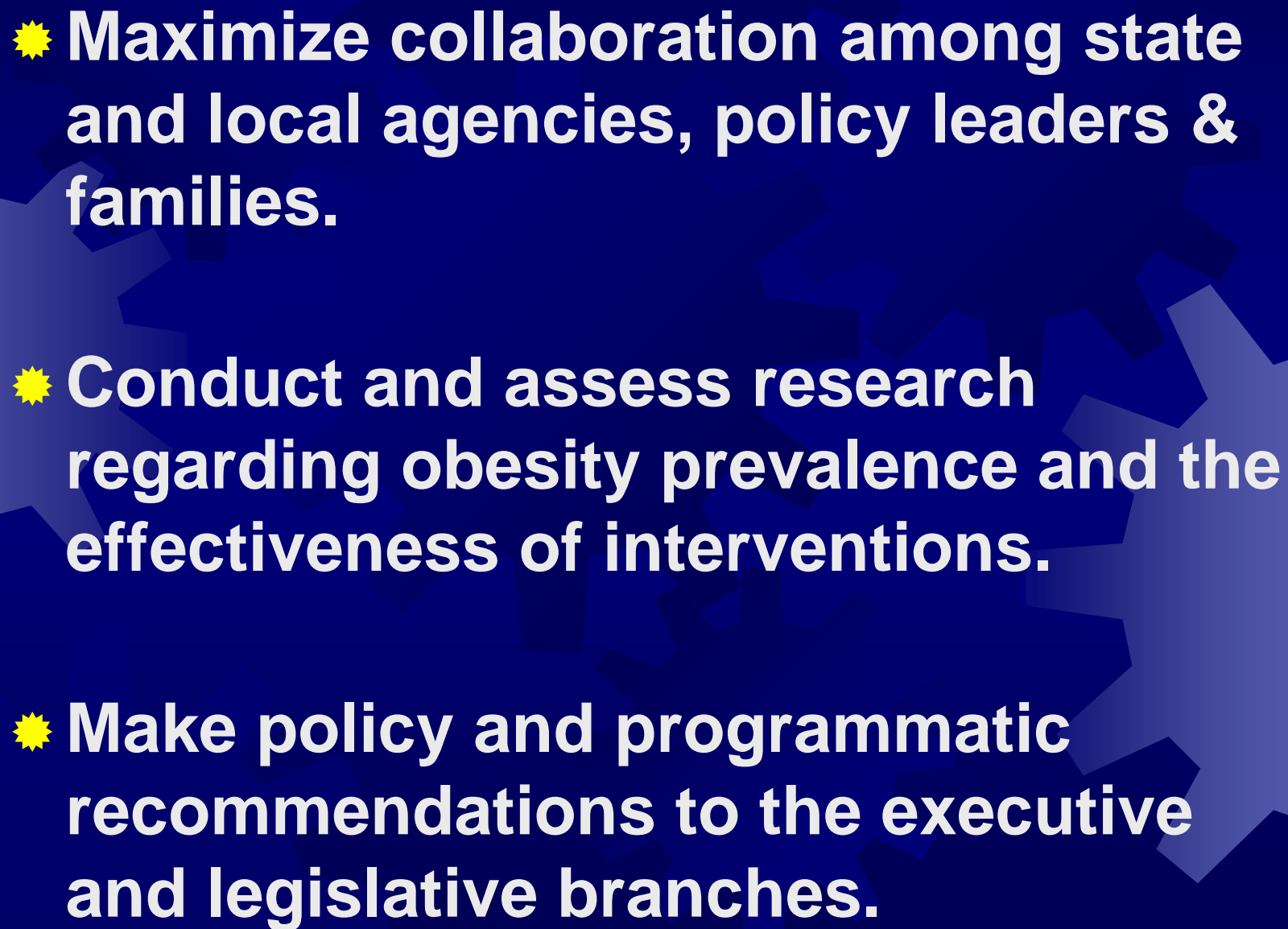
- ☀ Speaker of the House
- ☀ Senate President Pro Tempore
- ☀ Senate Minority Leader
- ☀ African-American Affairs Commission
- ☀ Latino & Puerto Rican Affairs Comm.
- ☀ Commission on Children

New members bring expertise from outside state government.

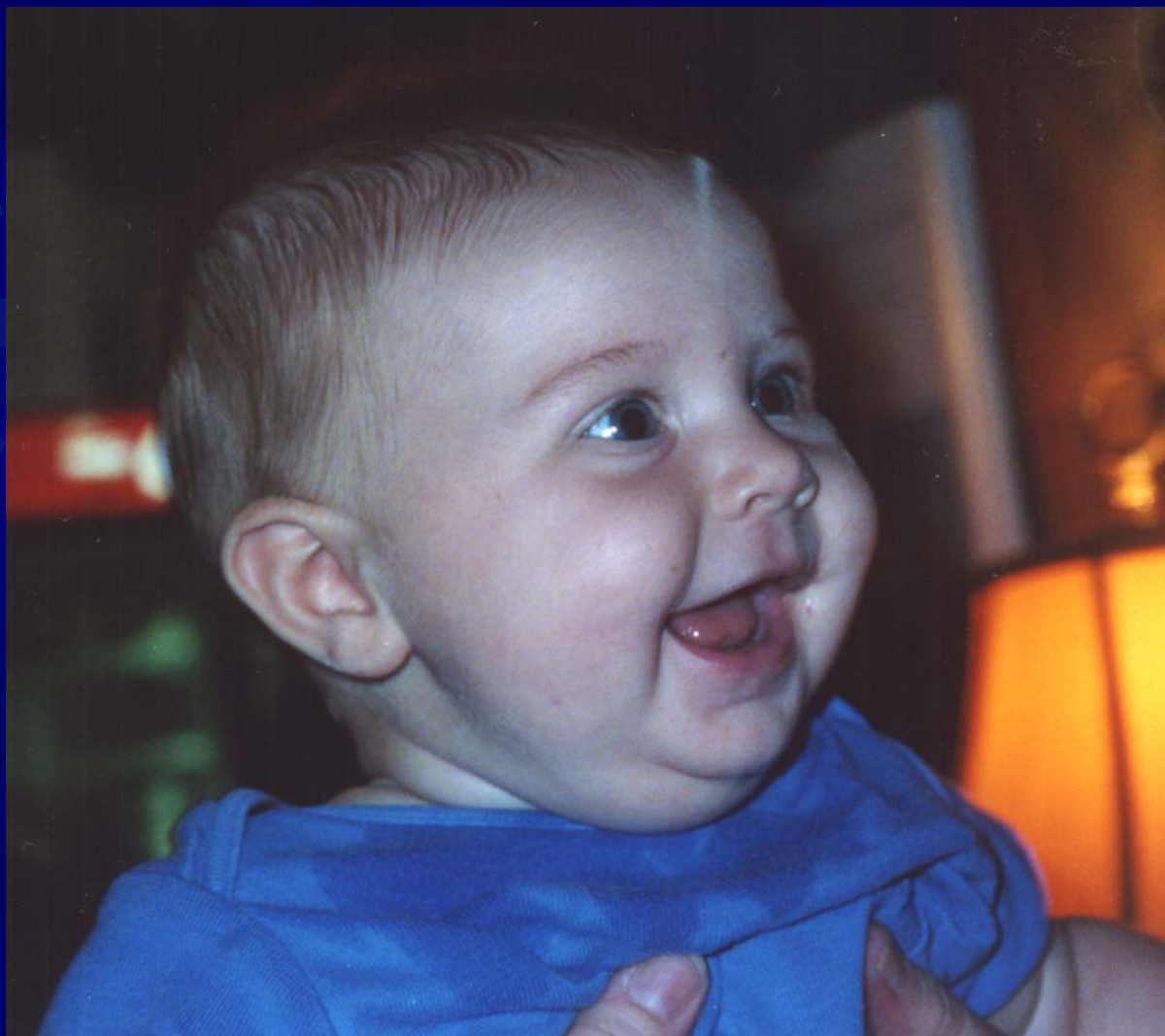


Council's primary goals:

- ✦ **Develop strategies & establish state priorities that prevent and reduce childhood obesity and related health risks.**
- ✦ **Coordinate inter-departmental policy, public information and program activity regarding childhood obesity to reduce related health and economic burdens.**

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- ✦ **Maximize collaboration among state and local agencies, policy leaders & families.**
 - ✦ **Conduct and assess research regarding obesity prevalence and the effectiveness of interventions.**
 - ✦ **Make policy and programmatic recommendations to the executive and legislative branches.**

Connecticut Childhood Obesity Council:
“What have we done so far?”





Council Progress: Round 1

- ✦ Established Council, held initial meetings
- ✦ Presented statistical picture of childhood obesity in Connecticut
- ✦ Shared departmental priorities & initiatives
- ✦ Public outreach through:
 - ✦ TV & radio appearances
 - ✦ Website resources: DPH and COC
 - ✦ Regional forums and discussions
 - ✦ Engaging stakeholders for “action team”



Council Progress: Round 2

- ✦ **First “action team” completed its work:**

Data Surveillance and Reporting

- ✦ **Included state/local government, schools, health depts., pediatricians**
- ✦ **Produced data proposal for chronic disease**
- ✦ **Led to Connecticut legislation focused on statewide data analysis of children’s overweight, diabetes and cardiovascular health**

Council Progress: Round 3

- ★ **H.B. 6725 (AAC the Reporting of Student Obesity Data - 2007)**
- ★ **H.B. 5490 (AAC Student Health Data - 2008)**
- ★ **Introduced by Rep. Betty Boukus, Council member**
- ★ **Endorsed by:** (one or both bills)
 - ★ **American Academy of Pediatrics**
 - ★ **American Heart Association**
 - ★ **Connecticut After School Network**
 - ★ **Connecticut Assoc. of Directors of Health**
 - ★ **End Hunger Connecticut**
 - ★ **African-American Affairs Commission**
 - ★ **Commission on Children**



Council Progress: Round 4

- ★ **General Assembly and Gov. Rell approved \$500,000 for FY 2008 grants for childhood obesity projects**
- **DPH issued RFP and oversaw implementation of several projects:**
Population-Based Environmental and Policy Change Projects



Council Progress: Round 5

- ★ 2008 goal: Hold **conference** to explore Connecticut's response and options to address childhood obesity.
- ★ Result....(thanks to the hard work of Council members and colleagues):

Council Progress: Round 5

Connecticut Childhood Obesity Council
all-day conference on childhood obesity prevention
Legislative Office Building, Hartford
November 7, 2008

***Preventing Childhood Obesity:
A Healthy Imperative for Connecticut's Next
Generation***





Preventing Childhood Obesity forum

- ✦ 23 speakers yielded 116 policy recommendations
- ✦ Recommendation examples include:
 - increase physical education in schools
 - reverse “food deserts”
 - BMI and other health data collection, analysis
 - severe-need schools: School Breakfast
 - promote Coordinated School Health; NorWalkers; No Child Left Inside; Farm-to-School; CT Grown
 - universal school Healthy Food Certification
 - menu labeling at chain restaurants
 - “complete streets”: bicycle/pedestrian safety



Preventing Childhood Obesity forum

- ✦ Presentations by Kelly Brownell and Senator Chris Dodd
- ✦ Strategies presented:
 - New York City's recent enactment of requirements for menu labeling and removal of trans fats from restaurant food.
 - "No Child Left Inside," the state Department of Environmental Protection's campaign to encourage Connecticut families to utilize parks, forests & waterways.
 - The groundbreaking success story in Somerville, Massachusetts, where community leaders undertook an initiative to improve children's weight.

Preventing Childhood Obesity forum

☀ Breakout sessions:

- *The Home Environment/
Early Childhood Nutrition*
- *The School Environment*
- *The Community Environment*
- *Fostering Physical Activity*





Forum materials available at:

- ★ Commission on Children website
www.cga.ct.gov/coc/obesity_forum.htm
and
- ★ Department of Public Health website
- ★ www.ct.gov/dph (search for “obesity”)

Legislative Update: 2009

What is happening?



photo: Patricia Estill



Connecticut legislation: 2009

Menu labeling (S.B. 1080)

- ✦ Requires chain restaurants to disclose calorie counts on printed menus and menu boards.
- ✦ Based on New York City's successful program, presented at obesity forum.
- ✦ **STATUS: Senate approved 29-6; now before House**

Connecticut legislation: 2009

Bicycle/pedestrian “complete streets” (S.B. 735)

- ✦ Requires state and each municipality to use at least 1% of road funds on bikeways and sidewalks. Exception: if all-user accommodation not consistent with program.
- ✦ Establishes state bicycle and pedestrian advisory board.
- ✦ **STATUS: Senate approved 31-4; now before House**



Connecticut legislation: 2009

Junk food law threatened:

- ★ 2006 law banned soda in schools; voluntary healthy food certification increased food reimbursement to schools that provide healthier food to students.
- ★ By 2009, 2/3 of school districts participate
- ★ Gov.'s budget would cut reimbursement by 50%; Dems. budget would cut it by 25%
 - ★ budget result = fewer fruits/vegs. in school
- ★ **STATUS: Awaiting budget negotiations**



Federal legislation: 2009

- ★ Menu Education & Labeling (MEAL) Act:
 - requires chain restaurants to provide info. on calories, sodium, fat and carbohydrates
- ★ Obesity Prevention, Treatment & Research Act:
 - establishes federal obesity council to update guidelines & identify best practices, create state grant programs, and improve access to nutrition counseling & prevention
- ★ Improved Nutrition & Physical Activity Act
 - funds community-based programs that treat and prevent child obesity and eating disorders and enhance exercise and nutrition education.



Federal legislation: 2009

- ★ Stop Obesity in Schools Act

- ★ Directs HHS to reduce childhood obesity rates by 10 percent by 2013 through federal/state collaboration, CDC grants.

- ★ Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act

- ★ key issues: reimbursement rates, school wellness policy language

- ★ School Nutrition: Competitive Standards

- ★ Updates national school nutrition standards for foods, beverages sold outside of meals

Council co-chairs:

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photo: Patricia Estill