

# The Guide to Community Preventive Services: What Works to Promote Health



## What is The Guide to Community Preventive Services?

*The Guide to Community Preventive Services* (Community Guide) is a collection of all the evidence-based findings and recommendations of the Community Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force). The Community Guide is a free resource designed to help local health departments make decisions by providing information on the following:

- Community preventive services, programs, and policies that have been shown to work;
- How these programs, services, and policies may fit the needs of a community; and
- Estimated costs and potential return on investment.

## The Community Preventive Services Task Force

The Task Force is an independent, nonfederal, unpaid group of public health and prevention experts whose members are appointed by the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Task Force was established in 1996 by the Department of Health and Human Services. Congress has mandated that the Task Force provide information for a wide range of decision-makers.

The CDC is mandated to provide administrative, research, and technical support for the Task Force, whose members do the following:

- Oversee the prioritization process for which systematic reviews to conduct;
- Participate in development and refinement of review methods;
- Serve on individual review teams;
- Consider the findings of all reviews and issue recommendations and findings to help inform decision-making about policy, practice, research, and research funding in a wide range of U.S. settings.

## WHO CAN USE THE COMMUNITY GUIDE?

- Boards of health
- City and county planners
- Clinicians
- Community health centers
- Research and program funders
- Educators and school administrators
- Employers and companies
- Health plans and systems
- Non-governmental organizations
- Policymakers and legislators
- Public health practitioners
- Researchers and evaluators
- Social service agencies and organizations
- State and local health departments

## WHAT CAN BE FOUND IN THE COMMUNITY GUIDE?

The Community Guide includes the Task Force's evidence-based findings and recommendations on many public health topics such as the following:

- Adolescent health
- Alcohol
- Asthma
- Birth defects
- Cancer
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Emergency preparedness
- Health communication
- Health equity
- HIV/AIDS, STIs, and pregnancy
- Mental health
- Motor vehicle
- Nutrition
- Obesity
- Oral health
- Physical activity
- Social environment
- Tobacco
- Vaccines
- Violence
- Worksite health promotion

# [FACT SHEET]

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## About Task Force Recommendations

Task Force findings may include a rationale statement that explains why the Task Force made a recommendation or arrived at other conclusions. The Community Guide presents the Task Force findings and recommendations in the following categories:

**Recommended**—The systematic review of available studies provides strong or sufficient evidence that the intervention is effective.

The categories of “strong” and “sufficient” evidence reflect the Task Force’s degree of confidence that an intervention has beneficial effects. They do not directly relate to the expected magnitude of benefits. The categorization is based on several factors, such as study design, number of studies, and consistency of the effect across studies.

**Recommended Against**—The systematic review of available studies provides strong or sufficient evidence that the intervention is harmful or not effective.

**Insufficient Evidence**—The available studies do not provide sufficient evidence to determine if the intervention is, or is not, effective. This does *not* mean that the intervention does not work. It means that additional research is needed to determine whether or not the intervention is effective.

## How Can State and Local Health Departments Use the Community Guide?

- Promote dialogue—Stimulate conversation among local stakeholders on local public health challenges and effective solutions.
- Mobilize communities—Engage local stakeholders to address local public health issues.
- Develop policies—Identify effective policies that communities can pursue.
- Inform research priorities—Develop research agendas, funding priorities, and funding announcements.
- Educate—Promote the use of evidence-based practices in public health in local health programs.
- Evaluate—Find out if programs, services, and policies are meeting goals and objectives and make any necessary changes.
- Identify successful programs—Provide evidence of program effectiveness to local and state legislative leaders.

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### NACCHO SUPPORTS THE USE OF EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES IN PUBLIC HEALTH, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

- The use of analytical tools and methods for evaluating evidence to determine the effectiveness and feasibility of population-based interventions.
- The translation of data to help educate communities and to inform public policy.
- Where data do not exist, community assessment and research into public health prevention and intervention strategies to determine when and what type of public health action is recommended and evaluation, based on the condition’s magnitude, severity, and preventability, of the effectiveness of such action to inform future practice.
- Broad distribution of newly recommended population-based interventions with evidence of effectiveness.
- Emerging best practices that the community has found to be legitimate and effective, which are often precursors to the development of evidence-based practices.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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*The National Connection for Local Public Health*

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The mission of the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) is to be a leader, partner, catalyst, and voice for local public health departments.

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