

# Creating Healthy Policies, Places, & Practices for Faith Based Communities

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# *Creating Healthy Communities*

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# Creating Healthy Communities

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## Community Health Challenge

Currently our communities' are experiencing public health problems that greatly impact the health of its citizens:

- ✓ Health conditions: Heart disease, stroke, obesity, diabetes, cancer, asthma, COPD
- ✓ Causes: Lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating habits, and tobacco use

## Healthy Communities Initiative

The Healthy communities approach assists communities with establishing healthy environments so that people can make healthy choices where they live, learn, work, play, and worship. Faith based organizations can help by:

- ✓ Identifying community needs
- ✓ Collaborating for change
- ✓ Implementing policy, systems, & environmental changes

*Systems and environmental change are sustainable changes that address risk factors such as tobacco use, physical activity, and unhealthy eating*

## Why focus on Policy, Systems, & Environmental change?

Policy, systems, and environmental change looks at laws rules, and environments that impact our behaviors. Health problems cannot be simply solved by individual actions alone. Policy, systems, and environmental changes make healthy choices easy choices for every member of the community.

## What is Policy, Systems, & Environmental Change?

Policy, systems, and environmental change is a way of modifying environments to make healthy lifestyle choices simple and available to all community members. By changing systems and environments, communities can address health issues through collaboration and cost effective solutions.

## Policy & System Change:

Passing laws, regulations, or rules & altering one or more structures of a system. For example:

- ✓ Adopting a tobacco free policy
- ✓ Adopting a physical activity policy
- ✓ Adopting a "healthy foods" policy

# Creating Healthy Communities

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## Environmental Change:

Changes made to physical and social environments.

- ✓ Clearing sidewalks and biking trails
- ✓ Increasing the appearance of stairwells
- ✓ Creating a community garden

## What role can faith based organizations play?

Faith based organizations are major institutions within the community that are a trusted source of information. Faith based organizations can help contribute to improving the health of the community by:

- ✓ Sharing health messages with large groups of people
- ✓ Serving as a support network for health related programs and activities
- ✓ Promoting health along with spirituality, faith, and faith beliefs



Healthy Portsmouth is one of our region's city-wide initiatives to improve health where people live, learn, play, work and worship. Healthy Portsmouth offers technical assistance to faith organizations in implementing healthy policies and places.

# Policy Outline

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Follow these steps to develop policy strategies within your organization. Policies or strategies may include increasing healthy food options, increasing physical activity, and decreasing tobacco smoke exposure.

## Step 1: Identify concerns and interest

- Prioritize the health concerns and interest of members that a policy might address. (*i.e., eating healthier, being more physically active, prohibiting tobacco*)

## Step 2: Develop a policy focus

- What will be the focus of the policy?

## Step 3: Identify health issues, causes, and/or contributors

- What are the main health issues related to the policy? (*i.e., chronic conditions, stroke, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, obesity, etc.*)
- What are the causes of the conditions related to the policy? (*i.e., lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating, tobacco smoke exposure, etc.*)

## Step 4: Identify solutions and benefits

- What will the policy require your organization or members to do to improve health concerns? (*i.e., provide physical activity, offer healthy food options, decrease tobacco smoke exposure*)
- State at least one benefit to the solution

## Step 5: Create a policy statement that includes

- Effective Date
- Faith based organization's name
- A statement that provides detail on what the policy requires the organization or members to do, such as events, specific behaviors, supplies, etc.

## Step 6: Inform everyone about the policy

- Identify who is in charge of announcing and monitoring the policy
- Develop a plan to announce the policy, rationale behind it, and any details about implementation that may impact members
- Provide copies of the policy to members and committees impacted
- Monitor compliance to the policy – provide reminders as needed

**\*\*All policies should include group leader(s) signature(s), title, date, and name of organization \*\***

# Sample Policy Announcement

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## What to include in a policy notification:

1. The problem stated in simple terms
2. Who is impacted and why it's a problem
3. Policy interventions
4. What the policy asks us to do to address the problem



## Example of a Healthy Nutrition Policy

Dear Church Members:

**[State problem]** Lack of physical activity and unhealthy nutrition are taking a significant toll on the health of our citizens and communities. **[Who is impacted and why it's a problem]** Many of our members are experiencing chronic conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and obesity. **[Your name]** has a responsibility to support the good health of our members. It's time to take action for ourselves, our families, and our community.

**[What we are going to do about]** Regular physical activity can prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease. Let's take control of our lives by participating in health enhancing activities. Therefore in order to encourage member participation in healthy eating, our organization **[name]** is adopting a policy, Healthy Nutrition. This policy asks **[expected behavior]** our organization and its members to always provide at least one fruit and one vegetable option at every meal. This policy also requires that water is offered at every meal.

# Sample Physical Activity Policy

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**Whereas:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*) is concerned about the health of its members;

**Whereas:**

People are interested in becoming more active;

**Whereas:**

Chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and obesity are greatly affected by what we eat and how physically active we are;

**Whereas:**

Physical activity is associated with many positive health benefits and can prevent or delay the onset of many chronic diseases. Short amounts of as little as 10 minutes of physical activity can contribute to these benefits:

**Therefore:**

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ (*today's date*), it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*) that all meetings and events (i.e. conferences, Bible study classes, vacation Bible school, etc.) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for physical activity by:

- ❖ Providing 5-10 minute physical activity breaks before, during, or after the scheduled event.
- ❖ Encouraging stairwell use for all (except the elderly and disabled)
- ❖ Providing encouragement from group leadership for physical activity.

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**Signature**

**Title**

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**Name of Organization**

**Date**

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# Sample Healthy Foods Policy

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**Whereas:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*) is concerned about the health of our members; and

**Whereas:**

People have become more interested in eating better and being more active; and

**Whereas:**

Chronic conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and obesity are greatly affected by what we eat and how physically active we are; and

**Whereas:**

Foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and pastas, and low-fat dairy options are healthier for preventing many diseases.

**Therefore:**

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ (*today's date*), it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*) that all meetings and events (i.e. conferences, Bible study classes, youth group meetings, etc.) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for healthy food options that include:

- ❖ **Serving at least one fruit and/or one vegetable such as:**  
Fresh, frozen, canned, or dried fruits (apples, oranges, grapes, or raisins),  
or fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables (carrots, green beans or peas, or salads).
- ❖ **Serving low fat/nonfat milk and dairy products** – 1% milk; cheese, yogurt, and ice cream
- ❖ **Serving foods made from grains especially whole grains-** breads, cereals, rice, pasta and snacks
- ❖ **Providing fresh cool water**

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**Signature**

**Title**

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**Name of Organization**

**Date**

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# Sample Tobacco Free Policy

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**Whereas:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*) is concerned with the health of our members; and

**Whereas:**

We would like to provide a healthy environment for our members, employees, visitors, and community residents; and

**Whereas:**

Tobacco use and exposure to second hand smoke is hazardous to the health of human beings; and

**Whereas:**

Tobacco smoke is a major cause of preventable disease;

**Therefore:**

Effective \_\_\_\_\_ (*today's date*), it is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ (*organization's name*), that there will be no use of tobacco at any meeting or event (i.e. conferences, Bible study, vacation Bible school, etc.) sponsored or supported by this organization. To support this policy we will:

- ❖ Prohibit tobacco use in or on any grounds of the building, and vehicles within 25 feet of the building
- ❖ Prohibit tobacco use within any vehicles owned and operated by (organizations' name)

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**Signature**

**Title**

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**Name of Organization**

**Date**

# *Tobacco Free Guidelines*

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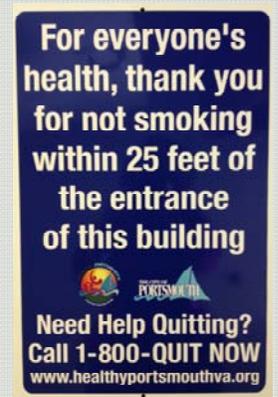
*The following examples can be used to create a tobacco free policy for your organization.*

- ❖ Post smoke free signs that are visible in and around the building
- ❖ Provide information on or promote smoking cessation programs for those in need
- ❖ Prohibit tobacco use in or on any grounds of the building
- ❖ Educate all members regarding the harm of tobacco use and exposure
- ❖ Reject any sponsorship from tobacco related producers or marketers
- ❖ Choose tobacco free facilities for meetings and activities held outside of the organization

*Smoke free signs can be posted inside and outside of the building as a way to inform and enforce policy*



*Please! No Smoking, we value the health of our members as well as the health of the community*



*For the health of our members as well as the community, please do not smoke within 25 feet of the building*

# Healthy Meetings and Events Guidelines

***The following examples can be used to offer healthy foods and beverages for meetings, conferences, and other events held by your organization.***

## **Snack Ideas:**

- ❖ Whole fresh fruits like apples, oranges, bananas, and plums
- ❖ Bite sized fruits and vegetables; grapes, strawberries, cherries, baby carrots, broccoli florets, and cherry tomatoes
- ❖ Whole grain crackers, unsalted pretzels, and unsalted nuts
- ❖ Low fat yogurt with whole grain granola

## **Breakfast Ideas:**

- ❖ Fruit – whole or cut up, fresh, frozen, canned or dried
- ❖ Whole grain muffins, bagels, or toast
- ❖ Whole grain hot or cold cereals and 2% or less milk
- ❖ Hard boiled eggs

## **Lunch Ideas:**

- ❖ Sandwiches; Lean meats; grilled or baked turkey and chicken
- ❖ Sandwiches; Whole grain bread such as wraps, pitas, or buns
- ❖ Toppings: shredded lettuce, peppers, tomatoes, low fat cheeses
- ❖ Salads with a variety of low sodium/fat dressings

***\* Since food allergies are common, always make sure that ingredients are clearly visible on all packaged foods or drinks served\****



***Fruits and vegetables contain a wide variety of vitamins, minerals, and fiber that may help protect the body from chronic diseases***



# Healthy Meetings and Events Guidelines

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## Hot meal Ideas:

- ❖ Roasted, broiled, or grilled chicken, turkey, or fish
- ❖ Steamed vegetables
- ❖ Whole grain pastas with low sodium/fat dressings like tomato or pesto
- ❖ Low sodium vegetable based soups

## Beverage Ideas:

- ❖ Water
- ❖ 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- ❖ 2%, 1%, or skim milk
- ❖ Tea - regular and herbal - hot and cold
- ❖ Sugar free drinks
- ❖ Coffee – caffeine free



# ***Healthy Meetings and Events Guidelines***

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***The following examples can be used to include physical activities into meetings and events.***

## **Meetings:**

- ❖ For two hour meetings, include a stand up stretch break
- ❖ Include a 10 minute walk break in the agenda
- ❖ Allow 15-30 minute walk breaks as well as 5 minute stretch breaks for meetings that are 8 or more hours long

## **Events:**

- ❖ Choose venues that offer physical activity opportunities for participants (i.e. outside events)
- ❖ Use stairwells instead of elevators at inside events
- ❖ Provide time before, during or after an event for a 5-10 minute walk

## **Physical activity breaks for meeting and events:**

- ❖ Marching in place
- ❖ Slowly stretch arms, neck, legs, shoulders, and back
- ❖ Walking around the inside or outside of the building

## **Other suggestions for members to increase physical activity:**

- ❖ Park cars towards the back end of the parking lot (*be sure to use the buddy system during evening and night hours*)

# Sample Community Health Assessment

Before changes are made within your organization, it may be necessary to get health information and interests from your members. The health survey should be confidential and used only to determine the health interest and needs of your members.

*Please read each statement or question carefully and check the response that best describes you.*

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Question/Statement	YES	NO	NOT SURE
1. I eat fruits and vegetables 2 to 3 times a day			
2. I drink sugar sweetened beverages on most days (regular soda, sweet tea, juice)			
3. I exercise for at least 20 to 30 minutes most days			
4. Do you have or have you had any of the following: (check all that apply)			
Diabetes			
Heart disease			
Asthma			
High blood pressure			
High cholesterol			
Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)			
Problems with obesity			
5. Do you or anyone in your household use tobacco products?			
6. I would like to have healthier meals and snacks offered by our organization			
7. I would like to have more opportunities for physical activity during meeting and events			
8. I would like for there to be no smoking on the grounds of our organization (inside, outside, and parking lots)			
9. I would like to participate in physical activities offered during regularly scheduled meetings and events?			
10. I would like for my organization to be tobacco free?			

# Sample Community Policy Assessment

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Now that changes have been made within your organization, you will want to get feedback from your members. Feedback from your members will help you to continue to make improvements. It will also help you to determine if the changes have made a difference within the organization and within the community.

*This survey is confidential and will only be used to help make improvements in changes made within the organization regarding the health of our members.*

Question	YES	NO
1. As a member of this organization, are you aware of the recent policy changes that were made concerning <b>(enter change here)</b> _____?		
2. As a member of this organization, did you or anyone in your household participate in the recent changes?		
3. Do you think that the changes will help you make healthier choices for yourself and those in your household?		
4. Overall, are you satisfied with the recent changes that have been made?		
5. Would you like to see more changes concerning health within the organization?		

Please provide any suggestions that you feel should be included in the **(enter change here, i.e. physical activity, healthy foods, tobacco free)** \_\_\_\_\_ in the space below.

# Measuring Success

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Now that you have made changes within your organization and received feedback from your members, you will want to measure your success. The following questions can be used to measure awareness and participation.

## **If you adopted a Tobacco Free Policy:**

1. Are the members of your organization aware of this policy?
2. Were no smoking signs visibly posted in and around the building?
3. Do the members and the community follow this policy?

## **If you adopted a Healthy Foods Policy:**

1. Are the members of your organization aware of this policy?
2. Were the healthy food options always included as your policy stated?
3. Do the members recognize and accept the healthy food changes?

## **If you adopted a Physical Activity Policy:**

1. Are the members of your organization aware of this policy?
2. Do members regularly support the physical activity policy?
3. Do the members enjoy the types of physical activity that have been provided in the recent policy change?

*This information can be shared with members so that you may celebrate the changes that your organization has made towards the health of your members and the community.*



# Appendix I – Additional Resources

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The resources in this section provide information, tools, and resources to help your organization take steps towards creating a healthier organization and community.

**Disclaimer:** *The following educational resources are for informational purposes only and should not to be used to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease. Consult with your doctor for any medical recommendations.*

## **Tobacco Free Policies**

### **Centers for Disease Control (Smoking and Tobacco Use)**

This site provides sample tobacco free policies, tobacco related fact sheets, and health information on second hand smoke. There is also information on smoking cessation programs, information on how to quit, and referrals to local resources.

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic\\_information/secondhand\\_smoke/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/secondhand_smoke/index.htm)

### **Virginia Department of Health (Quit Now Virginia)**

Virginia Department of Health offers a toll free tobacco cessation phone counseling program to Virginia residents ages 13 and older. The program is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

<http://www.vahealth.org/cdpc/TUCP/QuitNow.htm>

### **South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control**

This site provides model policies for schools, worksites, faith based organizations, and hospitals.

<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/chcdp/tobacco/model.htm>

## **Physical Activity**

### **Eat Smart Move More, NC (North Carolina Division of Public Health)**

This site provides a sample physical activity policy for any organization wanting to create more opportunities for physical activity.

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/PhysicalActivityAndHealthyEatingPolicy/PhysicalActivityAndHealthyEatingPolicy.html>

### **StairWELL to Better Health (Centers for Disease Control)**

This site offers information on increasing physical activity through transforming stairways to encouraging people to take the stairs instead of elevators.

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/toolkits/stairwell/index.htm>

# *Appendix I – Additional Resources*

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## **Let’s Move Faith and Communities (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services)**

This site provides a toolkit for faith based and neighborhood organizations that includes ideas for creating and supporting physical activity. *(pg.29)*

[http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets\\_move\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets_move_toolkit.pdf)

## ***Breastfeeding***

### **Building Breastfeeding Friendly Communities in Wisconsin (Wisconsin Department of Public Health)**

The materials provided on this site are designed to assist local communities and faith based organizations promote and support breastfeeding. It also contains sample policies on breastfeeding, physical activity, and healthy food and beverages. There is a sample wellness policy that details policies for meetings, events, and all other fellowship events.

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/Nutrition/Breastfeeding/bffriendlycomm.htm>

### **Live Healthy Georgia (Georgia Department of Public Health)**

This site provides a sample lactation policy for faith based organizations as well as other resources for policy and wellness.

<http://www.livehealthygeorgia.org/workpolicies.shtml>

## ***Faith and Health***

### **Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy**

This site provides information on a variety of issues including healthcare, advocacy issues, healthy kid’s campaign, and faith and theology.

<http://www.virginiainterfaithcenter.org/Home.aspx>

### **Body & Soul: A Celebration of Healthy Eating and Living**

This resource offers tools on empowering faith communities and its members to eat for better health. It also offers tools on how to create a body & soul program tailored to your faith members.

<http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/viewProduct.do?viewMode=product&productId=257631>

**Developed by**  
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Follow Healthy Hampton Roads, our community health movement, on Facebook at:  
[www.facebook.com/healthyhr](http://www.facebook.com/healthyhr)



*Engaging the community to improve children's health since 1993.*