

Childhood Obesity Prevention: Policy Development Challenges in Tight Budget Times

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Abstract: Developing a childhood obesity prevention policy agenda is no easy task in the best of times. There is no easy panacea for this issue, as it is multi-dimensional and demands policy solutions at multiple levels in multiple disciplines. But the emergent Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition set out on this task in the summer of 2008 by creating a policy agenda across three fronts; schools, community and systems. In late fall of 2008 the Coalition was on the verge of fine-tuning several specific policy ideas and was discussing options for legislative sponsors. Then the economic roof began caving and the Coalition was left to scramble to rebuild an agenda that could withstand the fiscal scrutiny of a very tough budget year. This presentation will discuss how the Coalition made important mid-course corrections in the policy development process, its outcomes in legislative session, and some early prognosis of how to attack the legislative session next year when a similar budget crunch is expected.