

Reducing Chronic Disease Through Partnerships with Business

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Abstract: Many people limit their perception of public health policy development to the creation of ordinances, statutes, and regulations. While these public policies are important to public health, large numbers of people are impacted by the policies and procedures developed by businesses that employ and provide services and products to the public. Frequently, there are opportunities to improve the fiscal bottom-line of these businesses while implementing policies and procedures that also provide a significant positive health impact.

Businesses are more likely to implement and promote these policies when they develop partnerships with organizations having public health expertise. An example is the recent partnership between owners of apartment buildings and the Department of Health to increase the number of multi-unit housing developments with smoking restrictions. This policy provides tenants with the opportunity to breathe clean air, while preserving the financial investment of owners who regularly incur extra costs from smoking related damage to their property. Many other partnerships are ripe for development, but some questions about which ones are appropriate and how to develop them must be answered first.