

# Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change for Obesity Prevention

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We Choose Health  
Central Action  
Institute

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# The Heart of the Problem

- Energy In: Calories consumed in food
- Energy Out: Calories spent
  - Metabolism, Activity, Growth
- Balance Matters:
  - If  $In = Out$ , weight is stable
  - If  $Out > In$ , weight falls
  - If  $In > Out$ , weight rises

# Excessive Caloric Intake: Coke Sizes Over the Years

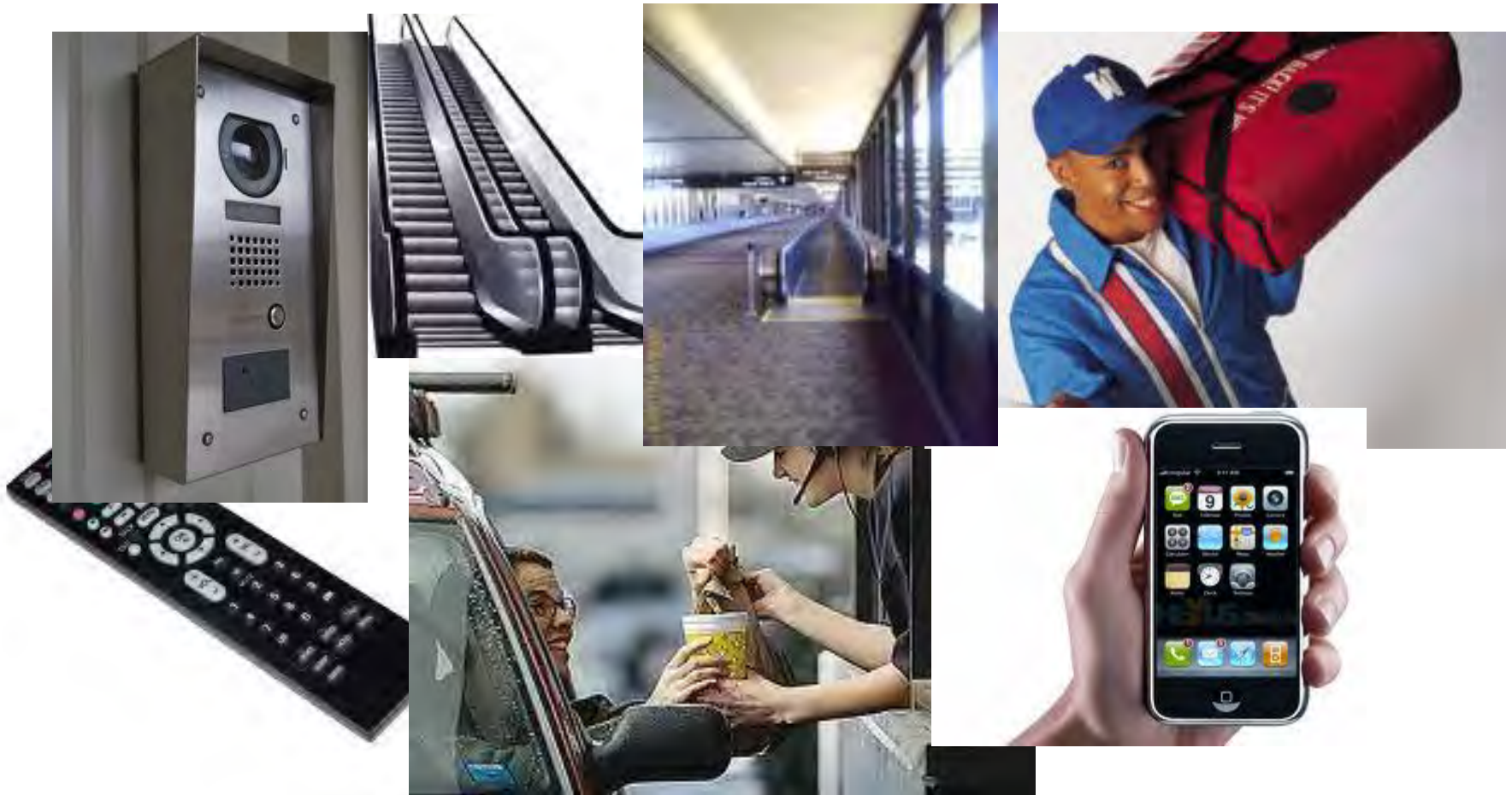


# Excessive Caloric Intake: Hershey Bar Sizes Over the Years





# Inadequate Caloric Expenditure: Time (and motion!) saving devices



Want to take a walk to get lunch?





Personal Responsibility? Environmental Support?

Let's do an experiment in self-  
reflection...

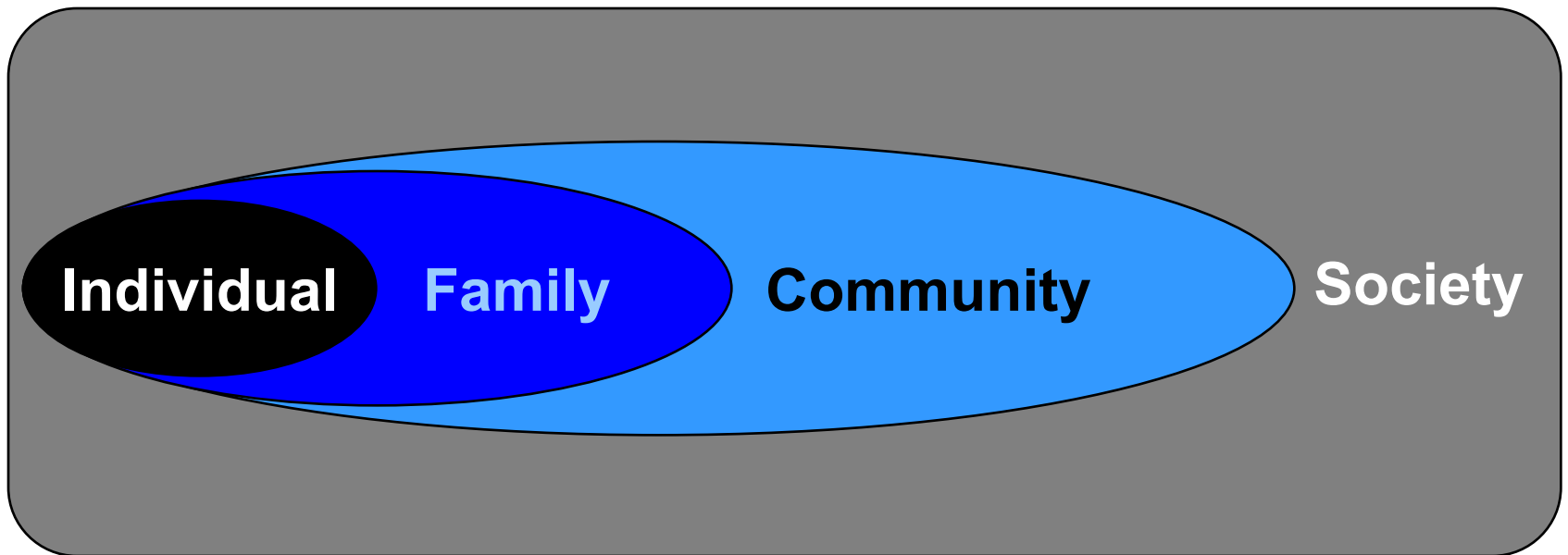
## Q and A for You

- Take out a pen or pencil and a piece of scrap paper
- Think of one unhealthy or unsafe behavior you engage in, one thing you know would be better for you if you didn't do it or did it less....
  - *Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to share it!! 😊*
- Write down the biggest reason you can think of for why do that thing or why you don't stop doing it?
- Stand up if you listed....
  - ✓ Things related to your knowledge about the health effects of that behavior
  - ✓ Things related to your attitudes about your health or about that behavior
  - ✓ Things related to a lack of skills to change the behavior
  - ✓ Things related to convenience, access, time, affordability of the behavior or of its healthier alternative

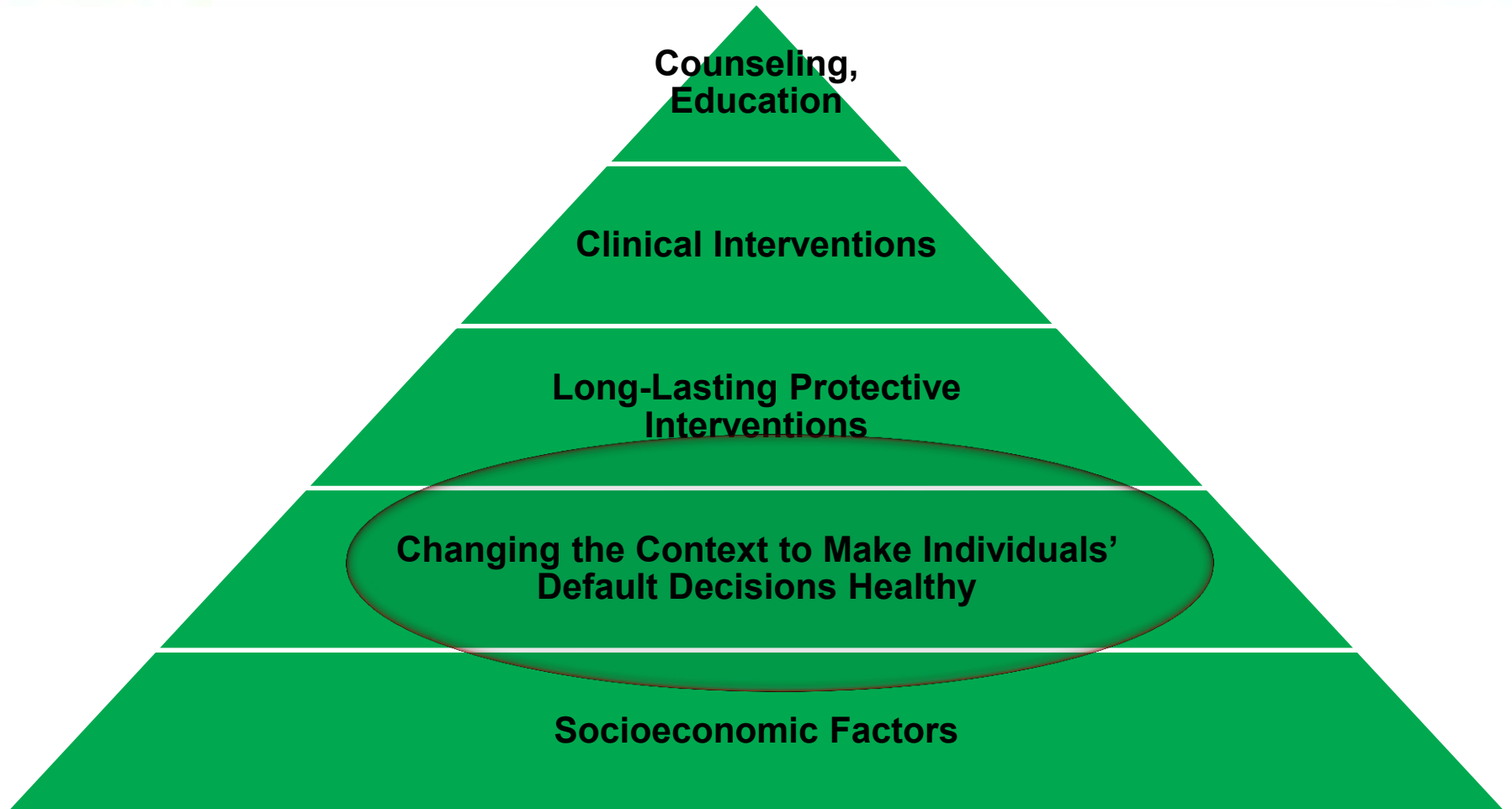


# Addressing Childhood Obesity

An ecologic approach is required



# Health Impact Pyramid\*



Making health easier

*or*

“if you build it, they will come”  
(sort of)

# What do we mean by "Policy "

- a definite course of action adopted for the sake of expediency, facility, etc.:  
*"We have a company policy to flex schedules so employees can work out."*
- a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, ruler, political party: *"As a matter of policy, the preference of the United States is to capture terrorist suspects."*
- action or procedure conforming to or considered with reference to prudence or expediency: *"It is good policy to allow people to telecommute in today's cost-controlling environment."*
- "Big P, little p"



## What is "Policy?" – The “Big P”

- A city council passes an ordinance to ban the inclusion of toys in children’s meals not meeting certain nutrition standards
- A county board adopts a policy to implement a “complete streets” approach in all transportation projects
- A state passes a law requiring minimum minutes of daily physical education in public schools
- The U.S. Congress votes to keep SNAP funding in the Farm Bill
- *Educate yourselves and constituents about policy issues, disseminate effective approaches from other places, share research on best practices with policy makers*
  - **FOLLOW FEDERAL AND STATE GUIDANCE!!**

## What is "Policy?" – The “Little p”

- A church include salads and/or fresh fruits and vegetables in every meal
- A school decides to do only healthy fundraising (either nutritious low-calorie food or no food at all)
- A YMCA sets minimum minutes for physical activity in all children’s programming – even tutoring
- A worksite develops a health committee to work with leadership on healthy policy initiatives

# Systems Change

- Systems interventions are changes that impact all elements of an organization, institution, or system.
- A shift in the way that an institution or a community makes decisions about policies, programs, and the allocation of its resources
- Types of systems include: school, transportation, parks and recreation, etc.
- Sometimes takes “Big P” and sometimes “small p”

# Examples of Systems Change

- Department of Transportation decides it will prioritize pedestrian safety in all infrastructure projects
- Board of Education decides it will consider all health-related agenda items immediately after those focused on educational achievement, and before any others
- Community-based organization decides it will use a “health in all policies” approach in all decision-making



# Environmental Change

- Making improvements in the built and physical environment that will support healthy eating and physical activity
  - Pertains to “access” and making sure the healthy option is the easy option
- Sometimes takes “big P” policy
  - Laws, ordinances, zoning codes can change environments
- Sometimes takes “little p” policy
  - Organizations, businesses, community residents can make their environments different

# Examples of Environmental Change

- Local stores and restaurants make fruits and vegetables more available
- Permanent signage promotes healthier items in retail establishments
- School opens its playground to community for physical activity after school hours
- Community cleans up vacant lots to create play spaces
- Municipal government removes obstacles to walking and biking

## So, what's with the “sort of?”

- Policy, systems, and environmental changes alone won't change behavior – usually
  - Store owners talk about un-purchased fruits and vegetables
  - School food workers talk about healthy food getting tossed in the trash
  - Park staff talk about lack of use
  - Cyclists talk about drivers not following the rules of the road (and vice-versa)
- City of Chicago – Childcare Policy Study Example
  - Policy ≠ Change in Childcare Practices
  - BUT...
    - Training and resources for providers DID lead to change!

## Closing Thoughts...

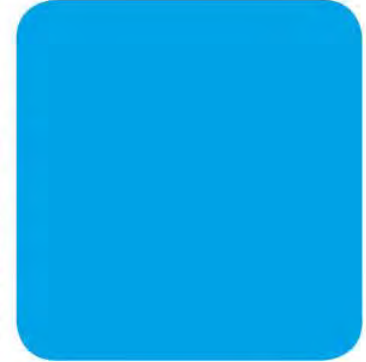
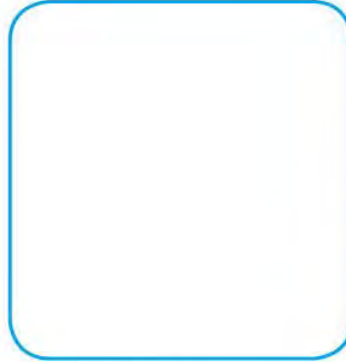
- PSE alone will not change the world – but it sure does help!
- Policy and environmental change are not always easy but can go a long way!
- Policy and environmental change can start with anyone!
- Many communities are in the same boat!



# CLOCC Resources for PSE Change

- Website: [www.clocc.net](http://www.clocc.net)
  - *Blueprint for Accelerating Progress in Childhood Obesity Prevention in Chicago*
  - Policy and Legislation Page
    - Compendium of evidence-based obesity prevention strategies
    - CLOCC Policy Agenda
    - Protocol for Requests for CLOCC's Support of Policies
  - Healthy School Environment Fact Sheets
  - *...and much, much more!*

*THANK YOU for  
YOUR ATTENTION*



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