



# North Country Healthy Heart Network

Serving Clinton, Essex, Franklin and Hamilton Counties



Spring 2012

Volume 3, Issue 1



The Heart Network offices are located at 126 Kiwassa Road in Saranac Lake.

### Upcoming events

**June 27th.** *Tobacco Use and Pharmacotherapy Options.*  
CME credit opportunity.  
Register at [nysmokefree.com/ConfCalls](http://nysmokefree.com/ConfCalls)

### Heart Network Board of Directors

- Eileen Gillen, Chair
- Holly Stretch, Vice-Chair
- Fred Mueller, Treasurer
- Sue Patterson, Secretary
- Megan Murphy
- Sandra Gothard
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Got a smartphone? Use it above to sign up for e-updates

## Message From the Executive Director

In the last issue of our newsletter we discussed how public policy can impact our lives and how our commitment to be healthy can be supported or sabotaged by the environments in which we live. The last issue focused mainly on local policy and provided examples of personal policies that can be established for the home. We will continue to focus on policy in this issue; however we will concentrate on examples of state and national policy that also shape the context of our lives.

### First in the nation– local law

Having said this, I can't proceed without congratulating the Village of Haverstraw, Rockland County, NY for becoming the first municipality in the United States to pass a tobacco product display ban. Customers 18 and older can still purchase tobacco products in local stores; however, they will choose products from a menu of tobacco items available at the store. This menu will be kept under the counter and only shown to "age-verified" consumers. This policy further de-normalizes tobacco use and protects children from the retail marketing strategies of tobacco.

**Policies can create environments that make healthy behaviors the default choice. People would have to exert effort to act differently, e.g. fluoridated water, no trans-fats served, lead-free paint etc.**

*"Health Impact Pyramid", Thomas Freiden, MD, MPH*

### Website

The North Country Healthy Heart Network has improved its website! While you can still find us at [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org) we think you'll find it easier to grab information and resources you are looking for. The site is organized by the top lifestyle behaviors that impact health. Under each section it identifies initiatives our staff are involved with, how you can get involved, plus, extensive resources for you to explore.

### Newsletter

The Heart Network initiated its newsletter two years ago to increase awareness of our organization's efforts. Since then, not only has our newsletter developed but so have we. Our increased efforts combined with the ever changing media landscape motivated us to move our newsletter to a digital format. On our website you can sign up for our monthly **"e-updates."** This will be the primary way we will communicate with you in the future, so please go to [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org) and click the "sign up" tab on the right hand side of the page today!

### Staff Changes



The Heart Network is very pleased to announce the hiring of a new staff member, Megan Johnson. Megan is the Nutrition Coordinator with the Heart Network's Creating Healthy Places program. Megan is working with business owners to expand fruit and vegetable offerings in local restaurants and convenience stores in Franklin County.

## SPOTLIGHT



### Policy and Public Health: Federal & State Policy

#### **Why advocate for local policy change? Because it works!**

In our last newsletter we described how “policies can be developed and adopted at different levels of government, by schools, employers, and even households to encourage physical activity, healthy eating, and restricting tobacco use.” The Heart Network is focused on supporting effective local policy change and other population-based measures that positively impact the health of communities in the North Country.

#### **Federal and state policy is important too.**

Federal and state laws, regulations, and budgets affect us all. Advocates must continuously monitor how decisions made by policymakers in Washington and Albany will impact our local efforts to improve community health. This requires constant vigilance as many important policy decisions are made “under the radar,” which leaves advocates little time to respond.

#### **Often the impact of federal and state policies is not obvious.**

Threats to policies and programs that support public health can come from any direction. Important changes in policy often occur as a result of political negotiation on issues that are unrelated. For example, some members of Congress recently proposed severe cuts to the Public Health and Prevention Fund as a way to cover the costs of maintaining low interest rates on federal student loans. This fund was created by the Affordable Care Act, making it the nation’s first mandatory funding stream dedicated to investing in prevention and public health initiatives. The debate on this issue continues in Washington, visit <http://action.apha.org/site/PageNavigator/Advocacy> to learn more.



#### **Staying informed of federal and state policy action is hard work, but help is available.**

The seemingly endless political gridlock in Congress and the media spectacle of Presidential politics can often leave advocates distracted, frustrated, and confused. Sorting through the ocean of facts and rhetoric to find out what is really going on with federal and state policy is a daunting task, but help is available. Nearly every issue health advocates are concerned with locally – active transportation, access to fresh, healthy food, tobacco-free environments – are also being addressed at the federal and state level by policymakers, government agencies, and organizations. See the links on the pages that follow to learn more about federal and state policies related to your issue.

#### **Educate. Engage. Persuade.**

These are the cornerstones of effective advocacy that any health advocate must understand to influence policy change. Visit the links on this page to learn more.

- **Educate:** Advocates must educate themselves first and foremost. Make yourself an expert and learn to speak the language of the decision-makers you are working with. Reach out to national organizations and government agencies who work on your issue to learn more about federal and state policy action and ask how you can get involved.
- **Engage:** Contact legislators that represent your community or region to find out what their position is on your issue and what they are doing to address it with policy changes. If they are unaware of your issue, provide them with information and explain your role in addressing it. Engaging members of the public to build awareness of your issue and strategies for addressing it is also absolutely critical. Public opinion can make all the difference when it comes to federal and state policy change.
- **Persuade:** Now you are ready to build a persuasive case for addressing your issue through federal or state policy change. National and state organizations often host advocacy days and other events to provide opportunities for local advocates to meet face-to-face with lawmakers. Find out what opportunities are out there and participate. Make phone calls or meet with lawmakers when they are in their home district. Letters are effective, but make sure you either email or fax your letter first.

#### **Learn more about effective advocacy:**

**Heart Network - Advocacy Toolkit**  
<http://heartnetwork.org/advocacy/>

**American Public Health Association**  
<http://www.apha.org/advocacy/tips/>

**Advocacy Progress Planner**  
<http://planning.continuousprogress.org/>

# NORTH COUNTRY TOBACCO CESSATION CENTER

## The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act

In an effort to help advance public health, the United States passed the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act in 2009. This Act gives the FDA (for the first time) authority to regulate the manufacture, distribution, and marketing of tobacco products to protect public health. The Tobacco Control Act gives the FDA a wide array of powers and oversight.

The Tobacco Control Act has come under heavy attack from the tobacco industry. Of particular interest to tobacco companies is the placement of graphic images depicting the effects of tobacco use on the outside of every tobacco product beginning September 2012. A group of the largest tobacco companies in the United States have been unsuccessful in their attempts to overturn this requirement. Graphic warning labels have in fact proven to be effective in other countries; there are currently 43 countries which require some sort of graphic warning on tobacco products. In New York State, the Adult Tobacco Survey of 2009 showed that 80% of nonsmokers and 58% of smokers are in favor of graphic warnings on tobacco products<sup>1</sup>.

### The Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act gives the FDA various oversights including:

- Ban the sale of packages of fewer than 20 cigarettes.
- Require face-to-face sales (no vending machines, unless in an adult only establishment).
- Limit the color and design of packaging and advertisements.
- Prohibit “reduced harm” claims such as “light”, “low”, or “mild” without FDA approval.
- Require larger and more graphic health warnings on tobacco products.

### What this means for New York State

Nearly 25,500 individuals in New York die from smoking related diseases each year and 12% of high school students in NY are current smokers<sup>2</sup>. With the continued regulation of tobacco products, point of sale advertising is one of the last areas where tobacco companies can recruit young smokers. Adding graphic warning labels to tobacco products has a negative impact on the purchase and use of tobacco products among adults and adolescents alike. Combined with increased sales tax on cigarettes in New York State, the new regulations in the Family Tobacco Prevention and Tobacco Control Act promise to provide a powerful deterrent to current smokers and reduce the number of new tobacco users.

### What Can You Do?

If you are a healthcare professional one of the most powerful things you can do is to educate your patients and the community about the dangers of tobacco use and the positive steps our government is taking to reduce disease and death caused by these products. Public letters to the editor are one of the best ways to reach a broad audience. Urging readers to become informed and involved in the political process by advocating for continued changes in tobacco packaging/labeling (and other related initiatives) will have a strong effect.

Government representatives value your *professional judgment* and support as well. Describing your experiences treating tobacco caused diseases and voicing your support for tobacco control measures will carry enormous weight. Visit the Advocacy section of our website at [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org) for resources and tips on advocacy, or visit any of the sites listed here to learn more about the effects of tobacco use and developments in Federal Tobacco Policy.



An example of the graphic warning label which would be required. You can view all the proposed labels at <http://1.usa.gov/JHimjA>

### Want to Keep up on the Latest Federal Tobacco Policy Updates?

**FDA: Tobacco Products** - [www.fda.gov/tobaccoproducts](http://www.fda.gov/tobaccoproducts)

**Tobacco Free Kids** - [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org)

**Action To Quit** - [www.actiontoquit.org](http://www.actiontoquit.org)

1) Tobacco Free Kids. *Tobacco Warning Labels: Evidence of Effectiveness*. 2) NYS Department of Health. *Key Tobacco Control Outcome Indicators*. September 2011

You may have noticed that the Heart Network's quarterly Newsletter is going paperless.

The North Country Tobacco Cessation Center will continue to produce a monthly newsletter for healthcare providers

## NUTRITION

### The Federal Farm Bill

#### What is the Farm Bill?

Every five to seven years, Congress drafts and passes a package of legislation about food and farming. It gets a formal name but people generally refer to it as “the Farm Bill.” The Farm Bill addresses multiple issues that fall into three categories: 1) food assistance and nutrition programs (72%), 2) income and price supports for commodity crops (22%), and 3) conservation incentives (6%). Ultimately the Farm Bill determines the types of food we eat and how much it costs.



#### How does the Farm Bill affect nutrition and access to healthy foods?

The Farm Bill is divided into 15 chapters, known as “titles,” that are important to nutrition. The Nutrition title authorizes funding and policy for eight nutrition assistance programs thereby improving food security and nutrition for millions of low-income Americans. The Horticulture and Organic Agriculture title funds programs that support farmers’ markets and the production of fruits and vegetables which help to strengthen local and regional food systems and economic development. The Commodity Programs title establishes subsidies for farmers growing commodity crops (including corn, soybeans, wheat, barley, oat, and rice). Fruit and vegetable production is not eligible for subsidies. This affects the price of fruits and vegetables in comparison to crops that are subsidized.

The Local Food, Farms and Jobs Act is contained in the current Farm Bill draft. The Act aims to drive economic growth by creating economic opportunities for farmers through local and regional markets, improving processing and distribution infrastructure, and expanding access to healthy foods. These are important issues for North Country farmers and communities. The Act is co-sponsored by Senator Gillibrand & Congressman Owens.

#### What can I do?

If you want to ensure that federal food policy supports access to healthy and affordable food for everyone, there are several things you can do. Learn more about the Farm Bill provisions that are important to your community. Share local success stories with your members of Congress so they understand what is working. Write to members of Congress to share your perspectives about Farm Bill issues.

#### Want to know more about the Farm Bill?

**National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition:**  
[www.sustainableagriculture.net](http://www.sustainableagriculture.net)

**Growing Change: A Farm Bill Primer for Communities:**  
<http://bit.ly/JBZQK7>

**United States Department of Agriculture:**  
<http://1.usa.gov/JC00Ry>

#### Do my representatives work on the Farm Bill? YES!

**Senator Kirsten Gillibrand** is on the US Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition & Forestry

**Representatives Chris Gibson & Bill Owens** are on the US House Agriculture Committee

### New York State Council on Food Policy



NYS Council on Food Policy (CFP) was established by Executive Order to bring the public, producers and government together to explore ways in which we can improve our existing food production and delivery systems, expand capacity and in particular, ensure the availability of safe, fresh, nutritious and affordable food for all New Yorkers, especially children, seniors, and low-income residents. NYS CFP develops and makes recommendations to the Governor on state regulations, legislation and budget proposals in the area of food policy to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive inter-agency approach to state food policy issues. In 2010, NYS CFP issued a report to the Governor's Office with food policy recommendations. Four key issue areas were identified in the report: 1. Maximize participation in, and support for, food and nutrition assistance programs; 2. Strengthen the connection between local food products and consumers; 3. Support safe, efficient and profitable food production and retail food infrastructure; and 4. Foster a culture of healthy and local eating for all New York State residents. Read more about the Council on Food Policy and their recommendations at <http://www.nyscfp.org>.

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

## The Federal Transportation Bill

### What is the Transportation Bill?

Every five to six years Congress must create a new federal transportation bill through a process called “reauthorization.” This is a complicated process that has implications for public health and many other sectors. Among other things, the Transportation Bill creates policy and authorizes spending for a number of federal transportation programs that are crucial sources of funding for bike and pedestrian projects.

### How does the Transportation Bill affect physical activity?

For many years the Transportation Bill has authorized the Transportation Enhancements (TE), Safe Routes to School (SRTS) and Recreation Trails (RTP) programs, which have made possible dozens of projects in North Country communities that promote active living. The Centers for Disease Control recommends “enhancing community infrastructure supporting biking and walking” as an evidence-based strategy for improving physical activity. Bike and pedestrian projects improve health and safety for people of all ages and abilities, contribute to local economies, and help create livable communities.

### Want to Learn More about the Transportation Bill?

#### **America Bikes**

[www.americabikes.org](http://www.americabikes.org)

#### **American Public Health Association - Transportation & Health Toolkit**

<http://bit.ly/KLwuZ3>

#### **Association of Pedestrian & Bicycle Professionals**

[www.apbp.org/](http://www.apbp.org/)

### What can I do?

Early in 2012, the House and Senate each passed their own versions of a transportation bill. The Senate’s transportation bill included the Cardin-Cochran amendment – which would make it much easier for local governments to access federal funding for projects to support biking and walking. The House and Senate began negotiations on a final bill in early May. This process has the potential to progress quickly, so this is a critical time for advocates to engage their members of Congress. Public health professionals and others who are advocating for local policies, planning and projects to support biking and walking can use their experiences to advocate at the federal level.

Start by reviewing the valuable resources referenced on this page to learn about provisions included in the Transportation Bill. Share local success stories with your members of Congress and emphasize how programs like Safe Routes to School benefit the community and how increased physical activity will improve health and reduce future healthcare costs.



*A bicyclist travels on Route 86 near Lake Placid*

## Petition to make Route 86 more Bike-Friendly

In May, the Heart Network joined a grassroots coalition of residents, local businesses, and statewide bicycle advocacy groups called BIKE 86, which petitioned the NYS Department of Transportation to create a cycling-friendly shoulder on an 8-mile stretch of NYS Route 86 between Lake Placid and Saranac Lake.

BIKE 86 used an email petition tool called ‘change.org’ to create the petition, and the Heart Network’s Rural Action Now program provided technical assistance and support to coalition members. The petition was circulated using social networking, and in less than a week the petition gained over 1,500 signatures. This caught the attention of state officials, and within days the NYSDOT publicly committed to improving conditions for bicyclists.

This is an inspiring example of grassroots advocacy in action. The NYSDOT’s own policy states that they will “promote pedestrian and bicycle travel for all persons on the state transportation system.” Sometimes the policy is already there, but advocates need to take action to ensure the policy is implemented.



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*Facilitating Community Change to Prevent Heart Disease Since 2000*

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## The Takeaway

- This issue is devoted to **Federal Policy and Public Health**. You will find information about the latest developments in several key pieces of federal legislation. You will learn how these changes will improve your life and tips on what you can do to **influence decision makers**.
- We have a new website! You can still find us at [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org)
- The Heart Network will be going paperless so please be sure to sign up for our **e-updates** at [www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org).

### The Heart Network's Newsletter is Going Paperless!

This is our last issue in print.

#### That is not all

we now offer e-updates, advocacy alerts and training announcements.

You choose the e-items you want.

**Go to our sign-up page: [www.heartnetwork.org/sign-up](http://www.heartnetwork.org/sign-up)**

And sign-up today

We don't want to lose you!

If you have any questions/comments please feel free to contact us at (518)891-5855

[www.heartnetwork.org](http://www.heartnetwork.org)

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