



Finding Opportunities to Reach Wellness for All Residents of DuPage

About Us

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Our Purpose

Obesity is a severe public health crisis.

For over twelve years, FORWARD DuPage has ensured that obesity prevention through healthy lifestyle choices remains a top priority for DuPage County.

FORWARD leverages expertise from around the corner and across the US through its staff, the Board of Directors, our community partners, and with state and national health experts and initiatives.

FORWARD convenes, educates, connects, and shares best practices using these experts in nutrition, physical activity, and built environment for our broad-based community coalition of more than 1,500 leaders, stakeholders, policymakers, and individuals. They in turn start new initiatives and programs, adopt practices, and help us change policies that improve health for the citizens of the county.

Our Vision

All children and families in DuPage County, regardless of age, income, or ethnicity, will achieve and maintain a **healthy lifestyle**.



Our Mission

Promote effective and sustainable policy, system, and environmental strategies regarding nutrition, physical activity, and the built environment for DuPage County. We will work Through a broad-based community coalition.

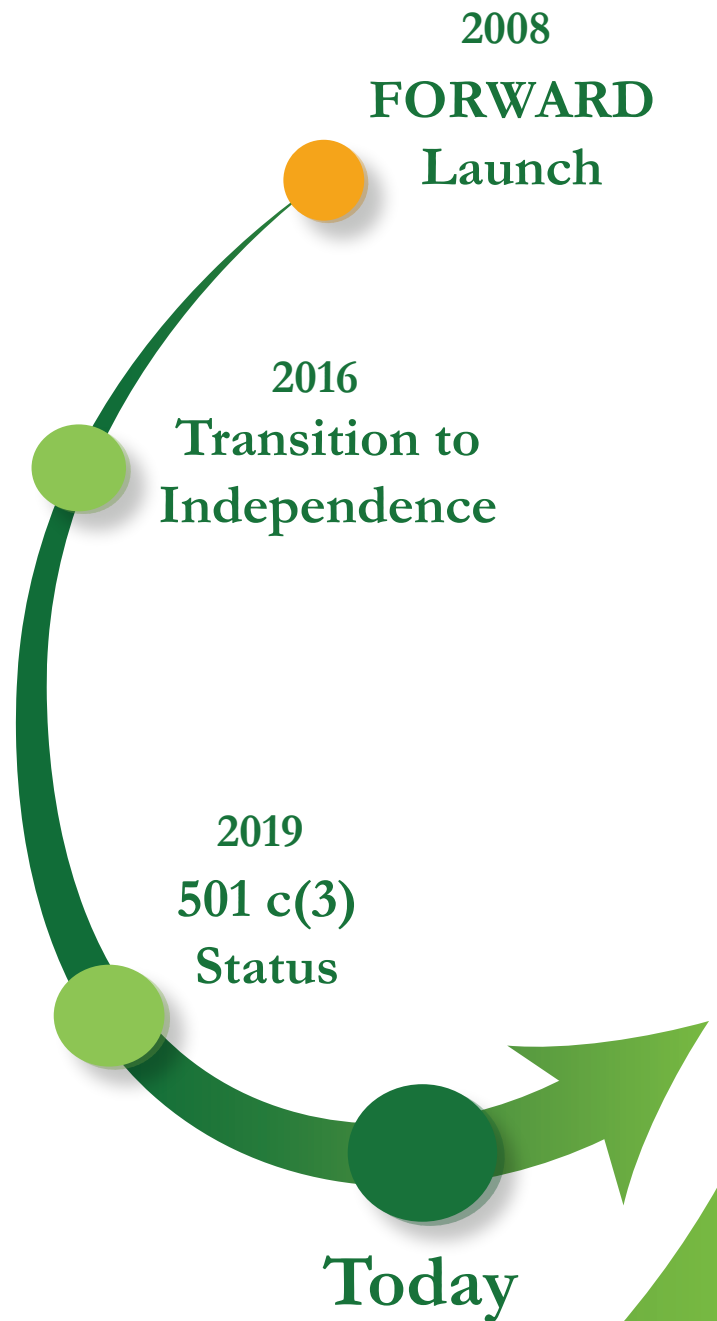


Who We Are

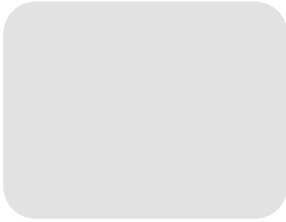
FORWARD was launched in 2008 by a group of DuPage leaders who were concerned that obesity was a serious health problem for residents, particularly our children and families. From 2009 to 2021, FORWARD, through its leaders and partners, established a coalition of more than 1,500 organizations and concerned individuals. Working collaboratively, FORWARD develops strategies and actions to improve the lifestyles of DuPage County families and has helped stop the rise of obesity for children and adults.

Through lasting policy, systems and environmental changes along with ongoing collaboration and education with leaders and residents on the importance of healthy lifestyle choices, FORWARD continues to grow while improving the health for all individuals and reducing the chronic diseases associated with obesity.

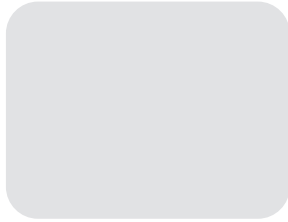
Our Evolution



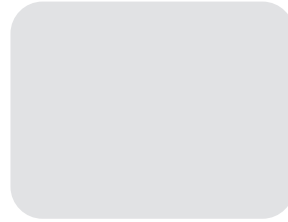
Leadership



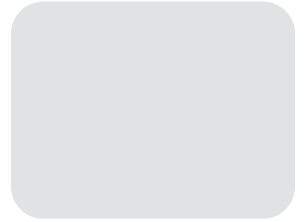
Karen Ayala



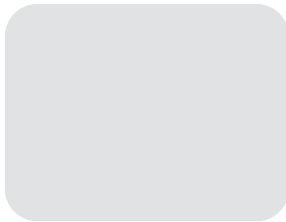
Rob Bisceglie



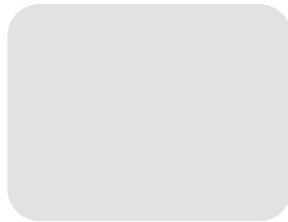
Dr. Vince Bufalino



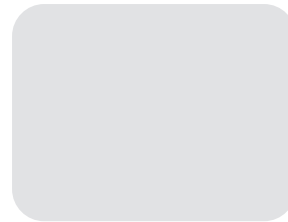
Heather Bury



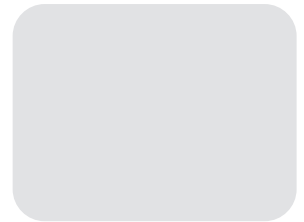
Bill Casey



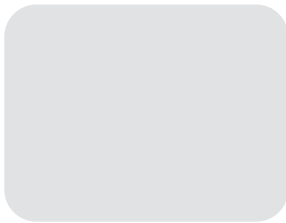
Gary Cuneen



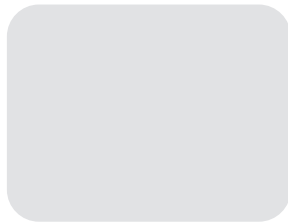
Colin Dalough



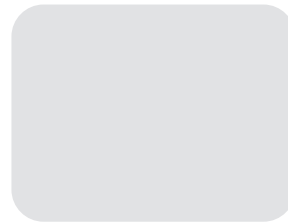
Dr. David Dungan



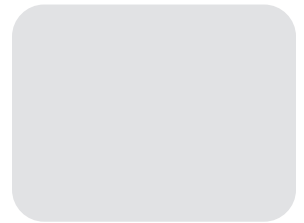
Nichole Edmonds



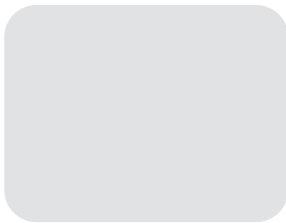
Janice Guider



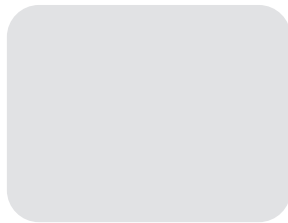
FaKelia Guyton



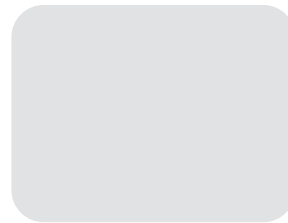
Dr. Deepa Handu



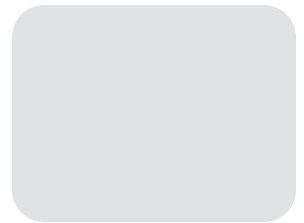
Lulu Hertenstein



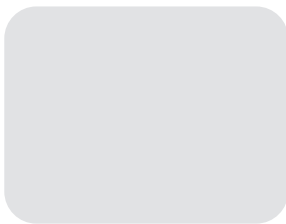
Sidney Kenyon



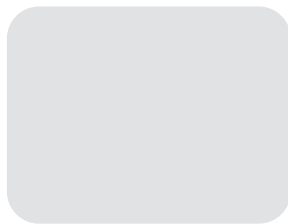
Julie Moreschi



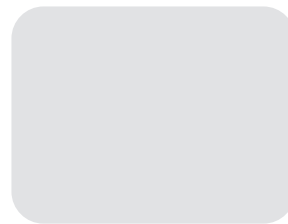
Kara Murphy



Karen Podolski



Amber Quirk



Fabiola Zavala



What We Do

The FORWARD Model

FORWARD DuPage is a **Collective Impact Model** (Collective Impact, Navigating Collective Impact) with a Backbone Agency, a Shared Agenda, Data to support its direction and decisions, Consistent resisting of priorities, and a Coalition of more than 1500 leaders, stakeholders, policymakers and individuals that challenge each other and DuPage residents to lead healthier lifestyles. FORWARD promotes effective and sustainable policy, system, and environmental strategies in nutrition, physical activity and the built environment for children and families to achieve a healthy weight. We leverage resources and expertise, measure outcomes, while we convene, educate, connect, and share best practices through the Coalition. They in turn start new initiatives and programs, adopt practices, and change policies that improve the health and wellbeing for citizens of their communities, including neighbors, political leaders, schools and universities, community groups and state and local organizations.

Our Programs

Obesity is still one of the most pressing and critical public health threats to our country yet is no longer easily embraced by the community as a public health crisis. As a result, FORWARD continuously alters our programming to ensure that the community will be both supportive and responsive. Programming topics include obesity prevention and treatment, building healthy lifestyle choices, reducing risk factors, improving healthy immune systems, reducing chronic diseases and topics specific to nutrition/food security, physical activity/education, stress, sleep, and the built environment.



Our Programming



Technical Support and Training

FORWARD provides assessments, technical support and training to community groups, programs and organizations. This includes hospitals and health systems; schools, home visiting programs, and community organizations; and using the evidence-based Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) tool for early care and education programs.



Monthly Virtual Education

Led by physician experts and certified healthy lifestyle practitioners to provide education to all ages and all populations.



FORWARD DuPage Website

www.forwarddupage.org reaches 20,000 individuals yearly and is filled with robust evidence based resources, tools, and examples to assist stakeholders working with DuPage children and families to advance obesity prevention and treatment, improve healthy lifestyle choices, and help build healthy immune systems.



Newsletters and Social Media Posts

Via Constant Contact, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook, FORWARD provides: tools, tips, updates, and programming opportunities to over 10,000 organizations and individuals.



Advocacy

FORWARD works with state and national partners to advance policy alerts and advocate for healthy lasting change.



Monthly FORWARD Corner

In partnership with the Regional Office of Education, the YWCA, and the DuPage Early Childhood Collaborative, FORWARD creates a monthly newsletter with best practice education and evidence-based information to more than 11,000 organizations, parents and stakeholders working with young children. It is disseminated in multiple languages.



Data Collection and Dissemination

In partnership with the DuPage Health Department and the Regional Office of Education, FORWARD helps to disseminate BMI surveillance data collected yearly since 2009. Based on data collected from schools, and Woman, Infant and Children programs, FORWARD also helps identify risk factors and develops programming to address the lack of healthy lifestyle options for children and families across DuPage County.



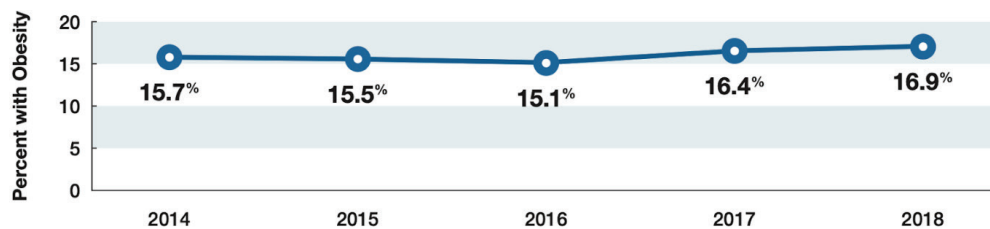
FORWARD Impact

During the past 12 years, FORWARD DuPage's achievements include improved pedestrian and bicyclist transportation networks; expanded and healthy sustainable food systems; expansions in school and community gardens, farmer markets, and changes promoting individual health in early childcare facilities, schools and businesses result in positive impacts to DuPage County residents' lives. Specific milestone activities and projects through the FORWARD coalition members have included:

Annual Measurement of Body Mass Index (BMI)

Via a partnership with DuPage County Health Department (DCHD) and the Regional Office of Education BMI Surveillance, we provide information for kindergarten, sixth and ninth grade students, DuPage Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and adults.

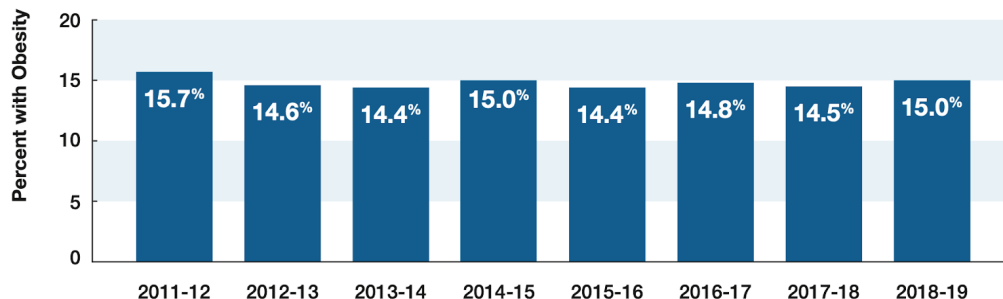
Obesity in DuPage County Children Aged 2 to 4 Years Enrolled in WIC*, 2014-2018



* USDA's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

School-Aged Children

Obesity in DuPage County, Kindergarten, 6th, and 9th Grade Public School Students, 2011-2019^s



FORWARD Impact

Changes in Hospital/Healthcare Food and Beverage Offerings

We create a healthier workforce by advocating for sustainable changes among **eight (8) hospitals, the largest pediatric practice serving DuPage and the DCHD** to encourage changes in their food and beverage offerings.

Healthier and Sustainable Environments in Schools and Communities

We have distributed **over \$340,000** locally via grants.

Improving Healthy Lifestyle Choices

We communicate and advocate for policy, systems and environmental change by providing quarterly newsletters to **over 1,500 organizations** and individuals and weekly social media posts to over **28,000 individuals** annually.

Linking Families to Community Resources

We created an **online resource tool** to help physicians link families to community resources that promote nutrition, physical activity and support healthy lifestyle choices. (DuPage County Community Resource Information System)

Advancing a Common Regional Message

Via partnership with the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC) and collaboration with the DCHD, we provide these resources to more than **17,564 school aged children** (5-4-3-2-1 Go! poster)

County Fair Programming

We provide interactive educational programming, including healthy messaging and physical activity stations, to more than **1,600 children and families at the DuPage County Fair.**

FORWARD Impact

Advance Changes in Licensing Standards with the State of Illinois for Children Ages 0-5

We coordinate and lead discussions with the DuPage early childhood leadership community:

- Administer technical assistance and support to improve the nutrition and physical activity in each site to 27 early childhood centers
- Reassess and develop action plans, and deliver technical assistance collectively for 2,436 children
- Administer a monthly educational newsletter with evidence-based information to over 12,000 organizations and individuals through a partnership with the YWCA, DuPage Early Childhood Collaborative and the Regional Office of Education

Gardens in Schools and the Community

We expand and educate the community on the benefits of community and school gardens. Our efforts unite gardening leaders across DuPage County to increase education, provide bus tours to promising sites (DuPage Community Gardens), and provide support where needed throughout the county.

Health on a Budget

We provide training and education on how to cook and shop healthy on a budget by organizing **cooking demonstrations and healthy food sampling** at multiple retail outlets (Local Nutrition Offerings)

Lifestyle Education Programming

We piloted an interactive **healthy lifestyle education program** for families with Benedictine University and the Northern Illinois Food Bank (impacting ten families with 23+ children), including parents of children aged 2-4 years who are enrolled in the DCHD WIC Program.



FORWARD Impact

Action Plans for School Wellness Policies

In partnership with Action for Healthy Kids, we enhance school wellness committees at **seven DuPage elementary schools** by writing and implementing action plans for school wellness. Those action plans seek improve practices and environments in schools.

Every Kid Healthy Week

We engage **seven DuPage County schools in Every Kid Healthy Week** by working with families and community members to advance healthy nutrition and physical activities-- fun runs, healthy food tasting and yoga for students and staff in partnership with AFHK.

Improving DuPage Work Environments

Improving the nutrition and physical activity policies, programs, and environments for DuPage based businesses by **providing assessments and technical support** in working with sites ranging from 80 to 1,400. Our programs impact the **work environments of over 3,700 employees**.

Cross-Collaborative Task Forces

We lead workgroup dedicated to advancing policies, programs, resources and practices to improve nutrition, transportation and physical activities at the municipal level. FORWARD DuPage's **Active Transportation, Land Use and Planning Task Force** continues to share ideas and collaborate on improvements in community nutrition, transportation and physical activity.

Prescriptive Information via Our Website

We educate and provide resources to advance obesity prevention and treatment through the **FORWARD DuPage website** (www.forwarddupage.org) which includes healthy lifestyle tools, resources and educational materials for DuPage children and families. Educating and providing resources through more than **21,000 visits annually**.



Nondiscrimination Policy

Policy Statement: As a public health organization working to promote healthy lifestyles across DuPage County, FORWARD DuPage is committed to engaging in and contributing to freedom, equality of opportunity, and human dignity for our employees, Board members, coalition partners and the community that we serve based on individual merit and free from invidious discrimination in all its forms.

FORWARD DuPage will not engage in discrimination or harassment against any person because of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, order of protection status, genetic information, marital status, disability, sexual orientation including gender identity, unfavorable discharge from the military or status as a protected veteran and will comply with all federal and state nondiscrimination, equal opportunity and affirmative action laws, orders and regulations. This nondiscrimination policy applies to volunteer opportunities, employment, and access to FORWARD's programs and activities.

Reason for Policy: To ensure that FORWARD DuPage is compliant with federal and state laws related to discrimination and harassment and to promote the highest level of human dignity for all individuals.

Related Laws, Regulations, Statutes, and Policies:

Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/ et seq.);

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended;

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA);

Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the American with Disabilities Amendments Act of 2008 (ADA);

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (GINA);

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972.

Statement of Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct
November, 2012

Approved by: Executive Committee, November 2021

Expected Approval: Board of Directors, March 2022



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

Our Fight for Health Equity

Vision: All residents of DuPage County deserve equitable opportunities to achieve optimal health regardless of racial, ethnic background, age, gender, income and/or body size.

Mission: Partnering through collaborative relationships to empower those who historically carry the burden of health inequities to transform and raise awareness, provide education, foster accountability, ensure action and measure progress.

Purpose Statement: Poor health outcomes commonly linked to obesity disproportionately affect people of color. FORWARD will lead a broad DuPage County focused community coalition dedicated to eliminating barriers to health equity, reducing obesity and improving health through aims including improved access to nutritious food, increased physical activity and improved built environment, addressing social determinants of health in our region.

- Our Fight for Health Equity means **FORWARD DuPage works for everyone.** We will transform knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and practices in order to empower all DuPage residents and communities to improve healthy choices and opportunities.

- We help childcare providers, pre-schools, home visiting staff and schools in low income/high risk areas through training and resources to help them build healthy environments and habits for better nutrition and physical activity. We train staff to be educators for kids and parents, and to better understand the importance of food choices and physical activity for developing children.

- Our Fight for Health Equity means that we work with municipalities and local organizations to improve transportation options, food choices, and the built environment. These improvements make it easier for people of all backgrounds to access the tools they need to make healthier choices.

- Our Fight for Health Equity means FORWARD coordinates its efforts with key stakeholders to achieve our mutual goals of building awareness, educating individuals, and providing resources.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

● Our Fight for Health Equity means we will use our extensive and knowledgeable coalition to capture data, create new programs and spread sustainable best practices on obesity prevention and treatment, grounding our work on an understanding of the social determinants of health and health inequity among racial and ethnic groups.



Advocacy Policy

Board Advocacy

Whereas, FORWARD DuPage (FORWARD) is dedicated to lead DuPage County through a broad based community coalition by promoting effective and sustainable policy, system, and environmental strategies regarding healthy nutrition, sleep, stress, physical education, and physical activity including the built environment as they relate to obesity prevention and treatment, healthy lifestyles and healthy immune systems.

Whereas, policies, systems and environmental changes are critical to impacting and sustaining healthy people and communities in the larger goal of obesity prevention and treatment including its associated chronic diseases;

Whereas, from time to time policies, systems and environmental changes are needed to advance and/or protect access to healthy nutrition, sleep, stress, physical education and physical activity, including the built environment.

Therefore, FORWARD has established the following Policy to better support legislative and regulatory action:

FORWARD will:

- Serve as a clearinghouse to inform the Coalition on potential legislation and regulatory action affecting health-related policies and request support/action. (see FORWARD DuPage Coalition Advocacy Policy)
- Take a position (including sign on letters, position statements, witness slips, working with sponsors and other affected organizations) on health policies and legislative issues impacting access to healthy nutrition, sleep, stress, physical education, physical activity (including the built environment) as they relate to obesity prevention and treatment, healthy lifestyles and healthy immune systems.

Parameters:

- Legislative and Regulatory Action Updates will be approved by of the FORWARD Executive Committee and shared with the entire Board.
- The scope of information will be limited to issues impacting FORWARD's mission such as: nutrition/physical activity/P.E./built environment/data surveillance/healthy communities.
- Legislation and regulatory action information will be mined from trusted advisors/sources at the regional, state and national levels such as: Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), YMCA of the USA, American Heart Association (AHA), Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK), Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium (NIPHC), and Trust for America's Health, etc.
- This policy will be revisited on a regular basis to adapt to the organization and changing environment.



Advocacy Policy

Coalition Advocacy

Whereas, FORWARD DuPage (FORWARD) is dedicated to lead DuPage County through a broad based community coalition of over 1500 stakeholders, by promoting effective and sustainable policy, system, and environmental strategies regarding healthy nutrition, sleep, stress, physical education, and physical activity including the built environment as they relate to obesity prevention and treatment, healthy lifestyles and healthy immune systems.

Whereas, policies, systems and environmental changes are critical to impacting and sustaining healthy people and communities in the larger goal of obesity prevention and treatment including its associated chronic diseases;

Whereas, from time to time policies, systems and environmental changes are needed to advance and/or protect access to healthy nutrition, sleep, stress, physical education and physical activity including the built environment

Therefore, FORWARD has established the following Policy to better support legislative and regulatory action:

FORWARD will:

- Serve as a clearinghouse to inform the Coalition on potential legislation and regulatory action affecting health-related policies and request support/action.
- Use a standard template to disseminate legislative and regulatory action information to the Coalition.
- Send out information as needed via email.
- Updates will include a summary of issues and the name of bill (federal/state/local).

Parameters:

● Legislative and Regulatory Action Updates will inform members about legislation and regulatory action items related to obesity: i.e., There was/will be a [hearing/vote/meeting/etc...] on the [name of act/law/rule] in the [Senate/ House/Name of committee] on [date]. [Identifying House or Senate number], [description of what the bill/ law entails] [what is the next step for this piece of legislation]. For more information, please visit [website to find out additional information].

● The scope of information will be limited to issues impacting FORWARD's mission such as: nutrition/physical activity/P.E./built environment/data surveillance/healthy communities.

● Legislation and regulatory action information will be mined from trusted advisors/sources at the regional, state and national levels such as: Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity (IAPO), Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC), YMCA of the USA, American Heart Association (AHA), Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK), Northern Illinois Public Health Consortium (NIPHC), and Trust for America's Health, etc.

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