

Promising Strategies for Improving Participation in Physical Activity in King County

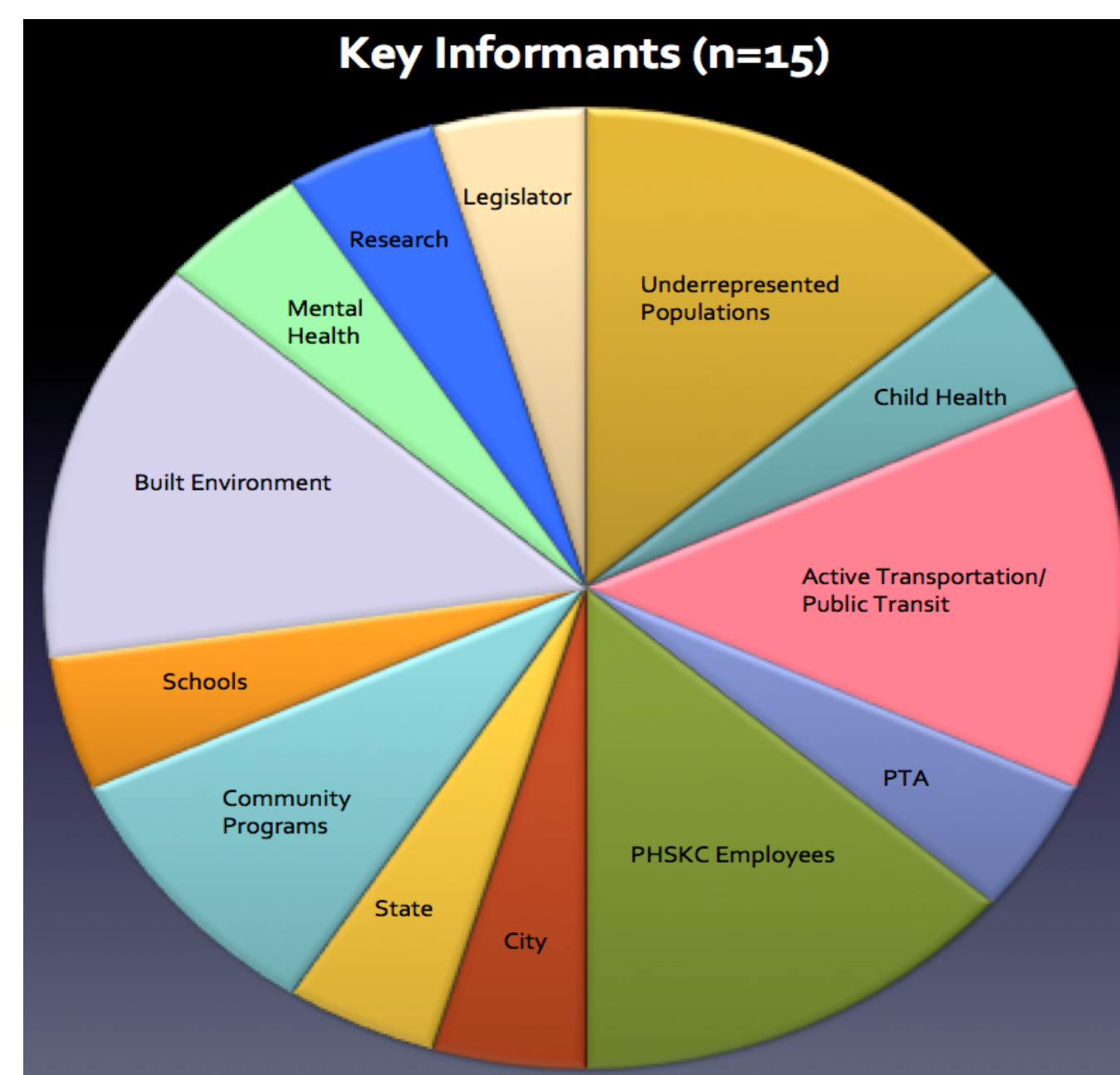
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Introduction and Objectives

Environments that promote physical inactivity, poor nutrition, and stress contribute to rising rates of obesity and other chronic conditions. Thirty-one percent of King County adults and 78% of King County students grade 6, 8, 10, and 12 do not meet the national recommendations for physical activity (PA). Adults living in South King County, adults with a low household income, and people of color report the highest prevalence of physical inactivity in King County, which demonstrates need for activities that will promote a more healthful environment in these populations.

The purpose of this project was to create recommendations for public health leaders that inform policy, systems, and environment (PSE) change to improve physical activity in King County, Washington.

Figure 1: Key Informants' Fields of Expertise



Recommendations for Community-based PA Initiatives

- Promote Safety through PSE change
 - Bicycle and pedestrian friendly communities
 - Improve personal and traffic safety
 - Support access to safe PA facilities
- Form partnerships to promote and advocate for active living
 - Establish a common goal
 - Train community leaders and champions
- Spread the message in the community
 - Create a culture around PA initiative through community-based activities
 - Address major barriers to PA
 - Promote PSE changes made
- Fund PA initiative
 - High-risk populations should be priority
 - Examples include: Complete Streets, individually adapted health behavior change programs, increased access to PA opportunities and facilities, public transportation
- Include PA in comprehensive plans
 - Advocate for inclusion of PA in King County city comprehensive plans that will be updated in 2015
- Adopt or adapt public policies supportive of PA
 - Focus on community health and safety in built environment policies
 - Emphasize need for safe, adequate and affordable modes of public transportation through policy
 - Prioritize urban planning policies
 - Require distribution of community programs and facilities for PA evenly throughout King County

Table 1: Physical Activity Statistics

	% Not Meeting PA Rx	% Participate in Zero Leisure-time
King County Adults	31	16
Minority	37-40	23-31
White	29	14
AHI <\$15,000	46	31
AHI \$75+	25	9
South	34	20
North	29	13

Methodology

A literature review and key informant interviews (see figure 1 for fields of expertise) were conducted to identify priority areas of organizations engaged in various efforts affecting the health of communities, key policies and strategies that hinder or promote physical activity, opportunities to build momentum for changing activity norms and environments, and evidence-based research that has shown to positively affect participation in physical activity. Semi-structured interviews were used to identify common themes, current activities, and novel ideas for strategies to improve physical activity in King County.

Based on the collected information, recommendations for community-based physical activity initiatives were made. Table 1 depicts a clear need for focusing PSE efforts on people of color, low-income areas, and south King County in order to increase health equity.

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