Plan4Health: Design 4 Active Sacramento Coalition

SUMMARY
Plan4Health connects communities across the country, funding work at the intersection of planning and public health. Anchored by American Planning Association (APA) chapters and American Public Health Association (APHA) affiliates, Plan4Health supports creative partnerships to build sustainable, cross-sector coalitions. Design 4 Active Sacramento (D4AS) seeks to create communities built for health and unites a range of professions to create streets that are conducive to safely walking, biking, and living through active design.

CHALLENGE
Sacramento County is a diverse community with nearly 1.5 million residents. Health disparities exist not only when comparing Sacramento to the rest of California, but also among racial groups and locations within Sacramento. In 2012, the prevalence of diabetes in Sacramento was higher than the state average. Projections estimated that nearly 97,000 adults living in Sacramento would receive a diabetes diagnosis in their lifetime. Additionally, Sacramento County’s lifetime prevalence of asthma rate of 15 percent was six percent higher than the rest of California. In 2013, South Sacramento was identified as a “Focus Community,” indicating health disparities, such as higher rates of death from diabetes, more emergency room visits for asthma, and higher rates of obesity when compared to the rest of Sacramento County. South Sacramento was also identified as having high rates of poverty and low rates of educational attainment.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY
To learn more about Plan4Health check out the project website (www.plan4health.us) and join the national conversation by using and following #plan4health. Also, learn more about Design 4 Active Sacramento at www.walksacramento.org.

SUCCESSFUL MOMENT
In November 2016, D4AS held a design audit that brought together residents, staff and the councilmember.

"Nobody really listened to students or our voices. They just wanted to hear what adults said… Our voice, us students, we can be heard. We can make what we want to happen, happen."

- Anastasia Thanpaen
11th Grade Student
Hiram Johnson High School
SOLUTION
Design 4 Active Sacramento seeks to improve the way communities are designed and built to improve community health and livability as well as to build on the progress that has been made in Sacramento County and the community of South Sacramento over the past few years. Through collaboration and engagement, the coalition will work to encourage dialogue across sectors and between decision-makers to ensure health is a consideration in policy recommendations and implementation strategies. Community education will help enact change and will allow the voices of residents to be heard.

RESULTS
Design 4 Active Sacramento’s work under the Plan4Health project has had significant impacts on the way that planning and health intersect. A few successes include greater awareness of active design, new efforts to address health through general plan policies, and increased community awareness of the impacts of community design on health outcomes. Most significantly, D4AS has created lasting relationships between residents, planners, and health professionals, leading to more regular dialogue on how one another’s work impacts community health. Having worked with over 350 planners, public health professionals, and community members through technical assistance, policy development, or community empowerment and educational programs, active design and health equity are becoming more commonplace in the Sacramento planning landscape. D4AS also worked with over 100 teenagers at two schools in underrepresented parts of Sacramento to analyze how their health as teenagers is impacted by the design of their communities. Students explored transportation safety, opportunities to increase physical activity, and ways to improve access to healthy foods. As a result of their “Active Design audits”, new bus stops were installed and policy was created to more regularly involve youth voices in the community development process.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS
Our approach to sustaining this work is by creating lasting relationships, collaboration, and dialogue around Active Design and health in the built environment. Sustained, cross-sector dialogue ensures that health is considered across projects and policies throughout the region. By supporting ongoing collaboration, opportunities for more in-depth technical assistance on policy, design, community engagement, and other areas will naturally arise. Additionally, through contracts with local jurisdictions and grants from organizations such as the California Endowment, D4AS will continue to build upon healthy equity and Active Design work in 2017, making the case for more of an intentional approach toward health in the planning process.

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Plan4Health is made possible with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The views expressed in this success story do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC or imply endorsement by the U.S. Government. Learn more about Plan4Health and the National Implementation and Dissemination for Chronic Disease Prevention project at www.cdc.gov/communityhealth.

Success Stories
http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/