



**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES**  
**Institute for Youth, Education, and Families**

*Curbing Childhood Obesity: Lessons Learned from the Six City Community Wellness Project*  
February 18, 2010

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*Speakers:*

**Michelle Hartzell**, Ed.D., director of health and physical education, Savannah-Chatham County Public School System, Savannah, Ga.;

**Sandra McDiarmid**, superintendent of recreation, City of Jackson, Tenn.;

**Jennifer Payne**, director, Citizen Liaison Office, City of Savannah, Ga.; and

**Annette Wilson**, coordinated school health administrator, Jackson-Madison County School System, Jackson, Tenn.

*SHARMA:* Hello, everyone. Welcome to the “Curbing Childhood Obesity: Lessons Learned from the Six City Community Wellness Project” audioconference. My name is Lisa Sharma and I'm the senior associate for youth development at the National League of Cities’ Institute for Youth, Education, and Families. Today's call will focus on opportunities for municipal and school district leaders to promote healthy eating behavior, access to healthy food, and physical activity for children and youth. Specifically, we'll be hearing from two cities that participated in a 2007-2008 technical assistance initiative, which was sponsored by the National League of Cities (NLC) and the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), on how they developed comprehensive community wellness policies and strategies.

Before we begin the call, I wanted to give everyone listening a brief background about the NLC/AASA technical assistance project. In 2007, NLC and AASA launched a technical assistance initiative with six communities – Charleston, South Carolina; Jackson, Tennessee; La Mesa, California; Oakland, California; San Antonio, Texas; and Savannah, Georgia. Now, this initiative was focused on city-school partnerships to combat obesity on the local level. Cities and school districts are in a unique position to create the environmental and policy changes that affect how much physical activity kids are getting and whether or not they're eating healthy food. So through this project, new opportunities were created for municipal and school leadership to open up a dialog upon how to build upon their wellness program and policies. In each of these cases, the mayors and superintendents played really critical roles in

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forming and sustaining local collaborations among a diverse array of stakeholders. A report detailing the most noteworthy wellness initiatives from these six cities, as well as lessons learned, will be released in early spring of 2010.

Now, this audioconference will give you a preview of the city-schools wellness report specifically on the experiences of Jackson, Tennessee and Savannah, Georgia. So we're really excited to be joined today by four excellent speakers from two of our technical assistance cities. From Jackson, Tennessee, we're joined by Sandy MacDiarmid, who is the superintendent of recreation for the City of Jackson Department of Recreation and Parks, and Annette Wilson, the coordinated school health administrator for Jackson Madison County Schools. Welcome Sandy and Annette.

*McDIARMID*: Thank you.

*WILSON*: Good afternoon, Lisa.

*SHARMA*: Good afternoon. And from Savannah, Georgia, we're joined by Jenny Payne, who's the director of the Citizen Liaison Office at the City of Savannah, and Michelle Hartzell, who's the director of health and physical education at the Savannah Chatham County Public School System. Welcome, Jenny and Michelle.

*PAYNE*: Thank you. Good afternoon, everybody.

*HARTZELL*: Thank you. Good afternoon.

*SHARMA*: And just one other note before we get started – the speakers will take questions from the listening audience at about 12:30 p.m., and the operator will give instructions about how to ask them live, or you can email your questions starting right now and throughout the call to [karpman@nlc.org](mailto:karpman@nlc.org). That's K-A-R-P-M-A-N @nlc.org. We'll try to include any emailed questions in the discussion within the hour. Since we're on a pretty tight schedule, let's go ahead and get started. So the first question I wanted to ask both of you, Sandy and Michelle, is just to give a brief overview of the initiatives that your city has worked on and that formed out of the city-school partnership, and also as part of that, to talk a little bit about how the issue of combating childhood obesity immersed in your community. So Sandy, if you could get started with that, please.

*McDIARMID*: Thank you, Lisa. Back in 2006, the City Council passed a resolution to establish a task force to deal with childhood obesity in the community. And that task force was formed. And fortunately, we were able to partner with the Jackson Madison County School System along with other youth and health-related agencies such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Clubs, our local health department. And then, we moved onto the leadership academy, sponsored by the NLC and the AASA. And that really gave our movement direction and got us focused.

*SHARMA*: Great. And can you talk a little bit about the initiative that you have now, just the name of it and what you all are doing?

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*McDIARMID:* Yes, actually, it was Annette who came up with the name of Jumpstart Jackson. And we've been operating under that name and format since then.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thanks so much. And, Michelle, if you want to just give a brief overview about how this issue emerged in your community, and then also a little bit about the initiative that you all are doing in Savannah.

*HARTZELL:* Okay. The initiative in Savannah, Georgia is called the Healthy Savannah Initiative. This is a partnership between the city and schools as well as partnership with over 106 partners within the community. And I'm going to stress partnerships because that's really a key to the whole initiative. Our initiative began back in 2006 with the mayor. He had a challenge with Albany, Georgia, a 20 family challenge. That was really the kickoff of the initiative. And then, from that, again, the partnership with the American Association of School Administrators and the National League of Cities through the technical assistance workshop with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, that was really the catalyst and the first workshop that we attended in 2007. From that, we were able to pull together a team of experts within the city and county and within the school system. And we brought all the stakeholders to the table to begin our planning and our partnership. And I know we'll go into more detail in a little bit about how all of those processes came together.

*SHARMA:* Thanks so much, Michelle. Actually, Annette, if you could talk about – I know that the role of strong city and school leadership played a really integral role in developing and implementing your city's wellness policies and programs. If you could, talk a little bit about how this leadership affected the community acceptance of the initiative and really got things started.

*WILSON:* Well, I think at the same time when we became involved with the NLC and the AASA initiative, at the very same time, our governor had implemented a statewide coordinated school health program. And I will say, Governor Bredesen is very devoted to the health of children and all of Tennessee. But, our focus was the same, so Sandy and I were able to work together collaboratively because the focus with coordinated school health was that the obesity rate was so high in Tennessee. So it made it an easy fit for us to work together and to have that same vision, and it really broadened the horizon because I was able to get into all the schools and get them up and going with the concept of the coordinated school health and the Jumpstart Jackson initiative at the same time.

*SHARMA:* Great. And I know that in Savannah, Jenny, the role of strong city and school leadership also played a key role in developing Healthy Savannah. Did you want to talk a little bit about the role that the mayor and superintendent played in developing Healthy Savannah?

*PAYNE:* Absolutely. The mayor – as Michelle mentioned earlier – the mayor really was motivated by personal reasons, which I think is unique and also a great way to use his leadership. He had a heart attack back in the end of 2005, beginning of 2006. And for his last term as mayor, his last four years, he set community health and being proactive and good community

health as a personal priority for his last term, so that leadership was absolutely key. And it lined up with the superintendent and the schools taking a leadership role on applying for this technical assistance grant through the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. So it's one of those stories where all the stars aligned. Both the city and the school system were pursuing similar goals and we – the technical assistance grant really brought us together. It brought us to the same table and gave us time to talk through these issues and come up with strategies that we could work together to have a real impact. So, superintendent, mayor – very strong leaders. They called the right people to the table and have given us a tremendous amount of support.

*SHARMA:* Absolutely, and we've found that in a lot of cities where the strong city and school leadership is really key to using their platform to get other people to the table. So that also brings us into a discussion about both of you have – both cities have talked about partnerships and how that was integral to creating and sustaining your initiatives. Sandy, did you want to talk a little bit about what partnerships came on board with Jumpstart Jackson and what roles the larger community's played in addition to what strategies did you use to bring these partners to the table?

*McDIARMID:* Well, thank you, Lisa. One thing that we used was the roadmap for our local wellness plan that we received from the NLC/AASA, and that directed us and gave us a plan or a guide to developing a vision, engaging diverse stakeholders on our team and implementing strategies. And so, that's what we went after is looking for diverse – we even found some of our strongest supporters from the local business and industry community here in Jackson.

*SHARMA:* Great. So it sounds like you have a great broad array of stakeholders that are coming aboard and that they all bring their own special expertise to the table. In Savannah, as well, I wanted to ask the same question to Michelle. I know that from what Jenny and you have been saying, partnerships are really integral and the fact that you have 106 players at the table is just amazing. So did you want to talk about the strategies that you all used to bring these partners to the table and really get them engaged?

*HARTZELL:* One of the things that we utilized was the leadership, which was the mayor and the superintendent, the mayor actually sending out a letter to different stakeholders within the community, a personal invitation to the table to come and discuss some of the issues and concerns as they relate to not only obesity, but environmental impact of health within the community as well. So when I talk about 106 partners – that doesn't include people. It's thousands of people are part of this partnership within our community. And one of the things that's key about the partnership and the leadership is that there is such a passion for this topic and this area and to build a healthy community that, no matter what, even as we go through processes and maybe try to apply for grants, our initiatives keep moving forward and our plan keeps us on track and moving forward. And all the stakeholders and experts – we'll continue because we have sustainability and people and places that will continue health initiatives long after Jenny and I and others – the mayor and the superintendent – are gone in the community.

*SHARMA:* I actually have a follow up question that just came in from one of the audioconference listeners for both Michelle and Annette. This comes in from North Little Rock. What suggestions do you have to ensure parental buy-in for local obesity prevention programs? And if, Annette, you wanted to handle that first, and then Michelle.

*WILSON:* Well, I think that childhood obesity oftentimes is a very delicate topic with parents. So I think you have to handle that with kid gloves many times, but parental involvement is crucial. We're trying to encourage schools to increase the opportunities for parents to become more involved. When they are developing their local policy at the school, for example, for snacks, get input from the parents. Many times, the parents – it's not that they do not want to comply with new rules or regulations. They just want a voice and want to be heard. So we've tried to do as much as we can to involve the parents. Bring them in to participate with PE classes to see what the kids are doing and to make them realize that what we're trying to do is about lifestyle changes for sustainability. We're not just trying to say you can't bring the cupcakes into the building. That's not it. We're trying to make them understand we're giving education out there for the students so they can have the knowledge to make the right choices. And you know, it's the parents, too. They're the ones that are buying the food and bringing it into the home. So, it's vital to have that parental piece.

*HARTZELL:* And to add onto that, exactly, it's offering parents choices and options. And the question is parental buy-in. One of the things that you have to do is educate and offer education classes to the parents. Part of the local wellness policy, which is a federal mandate, mandates parents be part of that team. Well, one of the initiatives we're doing is we're using the Alliance for Healthier Generation framework, which requires schools and districts to have teams and wellness teams within the schools. So as parents become more involved and as we begin to educate parents a little bit more on the obesity initiative and the more it's out there in the community, the more buy-in that we are getting from parents. And we also started this year with FitnessGram assessments. And with that, we do the BMI, which is the body mass index. And, yes, a lot of times, you get concerns from parents about – oh, I don't want, you know, the body fat of my child being recorded – and that is a legitimate concern that parents have. But, you utilize it as a tool to promote health and wellness, and then you say, okay, what are some options? Instead of watching TV or sitting on a computer, what are some ways that I can provide for my child to be healthy? So it's really educating and offering some alternative choices for our children. And that's why it's Healthy Savannah and that's why it's a community initiative, just not a person initiative. It's community, and it has to have total buy-in of the community, and as Healthy Savannah gets out and the word gets out in the community and it's promoted, I think health and wellness is definitely gonna be more promoted within the community and we will have more parental involvement.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thank you, Michelle, for that. We just have another question that's come in from the audience. They're looking for if you could all – this comes from White Plains, New York – if you could please share some examples of community activities that are jointly sponsored by partner organizations. Jenny, did you – or actually, sorry – Sandy, did you want to

talk about that, some of the great joint initiatives that Jumpstart Jackson has been able to do with the city and school and other partner organizations?

*McDIARMID:* Thank you. Well, actually, we work year round, even when school is out, with summertime programs, as well, for children and their families. But we host community wellness marches and walks and encourage the parents to come out and walk with their school children. And Annette has done some great work in the schools offering incentives and having the schools compete against each other to see who can get the most turnout. We also participate in the Tennessee Healthy Children's Month and have a whole schedule of activities where the mayor, our parks and recreation people and everybody in our Jumpstart Jackson Coalition go into the schools and lead PE (physical education) and exercise classes, lead walks around the schools in the school yards. So during the summer, we continue on with a six-week fitness and activity exercise program. And here, we partner with some of our other lead agencies in the community such as YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, virtually everyone in town that has a summer day camp program. And we have about 1,200 children that are involved in that doing exercise and fitness programs and also classes in nutrition and health during their summer camp program.

*PAYNE:* And to add to that – this is Jenny from Savannah. What's really interesting about the Savannah initiative, and probably applies everywhere that's really had a sustainable, successful program, is that we actually don't have a lot of dedicated resources dollar-wise to make this happen. That's why we really rely on the partnerships with the city and schools. An example of a program that the city and schools did jointly actually with the Savannah Sand Gnats I thought was an absolutely great opportunity and event. The schools, through Michelle's leadership, actually had a competition for students to create PSAs – public service announcements – that are now up on their website that you could go take a look at, I believe – Michelle, correct me if I'm wrong. But, you can actually take a look at the PSA that won. And students voted on these PSAs, and it was all about students telling students not to sit around and play video games and watch TV all the time, but to get out and be active. And the winner, the winning PSA was presented at our Sand Gnats – that's our local baseball team. The winning PSA was highlighted at one of their games, which happens in a city park. And I believe students received some free tickets to attend and it was just very – it was one of those things that didn't take a lot of money, but it took all of us to pull our resources together to make it happen.

Another example of our partnership is through – the city every year runs a summer lunch program that is funded federally. It offers free lunches to the community when school is not in. Well, the schools actually partner with us to offer this program and a couple of different locations are highlighted. The Sand Gnats again come out. They send their mascot out. And not only do we provide the free lunches, but we also provide physical activities, and that could not happen without the partnership with the schools and bringing in the resources, the people and the equipment that they bring out to help make those things available. So those are two specific examples of how Healthy Savannah is successful and really not using a lot of money but using your creativity and our partnerships to do some really cool stuff in the community.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thanks so much, Jenny. And we actually have two questions that have just come in from the audience, as well, from Jacksonville, Florida and from The Finance Project asking if, in Savannah, there are any efforts that involve afterschool programs in particular?

*PAYNE:* Michelle, would you like to talk to that?

*HARTZELL:* I'm sorry. Can you repeat the question? I apologize.

*SHARMA:* Sure. We were talking about the programs that you're working on and looking at the goals and results of them. Can you talk about any activities specifically that are being implemented in afterschool programs?

*HARTZELL:* Well, again, we partner with the YMCA and the Prime Time, as well as a lot of our schools participate – our students participate in other programs, and we also partner with the city and we have a lot of city recreation. One specific partnership that we have is with the Savannah Area Tennis Association. And Jenny mentioned how you talk about utilizing resources within the community, and that's a national resource. That's one partnership that I think any community can utilize. And what they've done is – we're at six different schools right now, and they offer free tennis clinic and lessons to our students. So that's one program that students would not be exposed to at all. Another partnership that we have is with First Tee Savannah, and what that is, it's a golf partnership. So we're in the process of helping get computers put in a lab at a location on a golf course that students can go there afterschool and utilize the computers to work on homework as a resource as well as receive golf lessons free from community experts. Again, another partnership that would not work without the schools, without the cities and without the First Tee Savannah, so just another, you know, three successful partnerships that we have.

*SHARMA:* Thanks so much Michelle. And Sandy, did you want to touch on that?

*McDIARMID:* Yes, this is Sandy from Jackson. Here in Jackson, as far as afterschool, we have drawn on the resources of our local University of Tennessee Extension Office. And they send somebody out once a week to do cooking classes for the children. That's at one of our recreation centers. And so, we've got a kitchen facility there that comes in handy. And they come in and teach the children how to make healthy snacks and foods and good food choices.

*SHARMA:* Thank you, Sandy.

*McDIARMID:* Annette, did you want to mention about the afterschool exercise program?

*WILSON:* Yes, and I wanted to say, too, one of the things that we have implemented in the afterschool programs that are actually in the schools are healthier options for snacks. So we have really made great changes there about the students have healthier options for snacks and not the unhealthy things that they had in years past.

And a brand new program that we are getting ready to kick off at one of our elementary schools – we are working with an athletic training facility in Jackson and they will be sending their trainers out two times a week to work with these students, not only on exercise, but also, we're gonna have a nutrition component. And once again, like we've said so many times, it's about lifestyle changes, and we also know that those children need positive role models. And so, we really feel like this will be one way to reach that group of students that maybe do not have a positive male role model in their home. We also have a lot of situations where we have shared spaces with the city for afterschool programs, and they send people to our facility and visa-versa. So I think, there again, as has been mentioned before, that partnership is key.

*HARTZELL:* This is Michelle. I just wanted to add to that. Another – one of the initiatives that we integrate, maybe not so much afterschool, but even before school is offering – we have a fruits and vegetable grant, and it was through the state. So some of our schools – it was five days a week, but with budget cuts, it's now three days a week – but these students are being exposed to and receiving fresh fruit and vegetables every day. And it's just not your normal fruit, they're exposing them to different varieties of fruits and vegetables, and the kids are actually enjoying them.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thank you for bringing that up. And I also wanted to just turn the conversation a little bit – it's great, all of the programs that you're doing, but also talk about, and Annette has talked about this a little bit – from a policy perspective, what specific policies you've adopted or are in the process of adopting within the city, county, or school districts to create healthier communities. And this also ties into another question that we've received from the audience that are asking about suggestions about how to either encourage or mandate teachers to incorporate physical activity with their curriculum and this could be either during an afterschool city-run program or during class, as well. So, if, Annette, you wanted to touch on that first?

*WILSON:* I will. In the state of Tennessee, like I said, we have a governor who's very proactive as far as health and wellness. And we have a law. It's 90 minutes of physical activity per week for all students K through 12. So every single student has to be up and physically moving 90 minutes a week. And we have many principals that are making the teachers be up and physically active with the students, whether it's walking throughout the building – and during the wintertime, that's what we have to do versus going outside. But, there's also a curriculum that we have implemented in the majority of our elementary schools and it's called Take Ten, and it is a way that the teachers can get the students up and physically active, but while also doing academics at the same time, and the teachers really, really have enjoyed this. So it's a way to still continue that education component, but you're getting the physical activity piece, so, they're meeting the mandate. But, I think that is – that's key. And as we've said so many times, you've got to have the buy-in from the top down, but also from the bottom up because teachers sometimes in the school setting, their demands are very tight. And they – as we're entering into our assessment testing time, they're very stretched. So this gives them an outlet. And we also know that students need that time to be physically active. So we have implemented those things, and our teachers are in compliance. I mean, they are enjoying it.

*SHARMA:* Okay. Great. And also, Sandy, if you wanted to talk about it from a city perspective, any city policies that have been passed or in process of passing for healthy eating and active living?

*McDIARMID:* Thank you, Lisa. Well, here in Jackson, we have drafted a Jackson Madison County Wellness Policy. And once again, this came with heavy support from our mayor from the top down. And he went out and preached this policy and gave the directive to our Community Health Action Team to, you know, develop a wellness policy that had walkability, physical exercise, environmental change here in Jackson. And he really promoted it. This was passed last month at our City Council meeting, and it is also on the agenda for a vote by the Jackson Madison County School System and the Madison County Commission.

*SHARMA:* Fantastic. And are copies of that policy available publicly yet or not yet?

*McDIARMID:* Not yet. It will probably be on our Web site shortly, but it is not yet.

*SHARMA:* Fantastic. Thank you. And, Jenny, did you want to touch upon the City of Savannah, or Michelle, as well?

*PAYNE:* Sure. This is Jenny. I'll give you a summary of what the city has done. First of all, the city as an organization supports the health and wellness of its employees by providing a 50 percent gym membership subsidy. They do hold us very accountable. If you don't go a certain number of times a month, you get a warning and will end up paying full price for your gym membership if you don't go a certain number of times a month. But, I think it's great and proactive, and it, in the end, actually does drop our – we're self insured, so it actually does drop our healthcare cost.

Additionally, we – Healthy Savannah as a coalition was successful in getting city council to modify our vending policy in public parks. For the longest time, the City of Savannah did not allow in this historic city, hot dog vendors or different, you know, whatever vendors to sell food in public spaces. Well, Healthy Savannah was able to show our city council the benefits of allowing farmers markets. And right now, we have one huge farmers market that happens in Forsythe Park, which is one of the largest public parks in the City of Savannah. That is a policy change that Healthy Savannah brought about. Additionally, the City of Savannah is working toward a traffic calming policy to make our streets safer, which directly results in, you know, increasing the walkability of our neighborhoods and making people feel safe. Our Metropolitan Planning Organization as a whole has adopted a Complete Streets policy, and the City of Savannah is a part of that Metropolitan Planning Organization. What's kind of some up and coming policies? We think that Healthy Savannah will advocate for a 100 percent smoke-free workplace and public space policy. That should be coming up some time this year. And additionally, we think that a policy governing community gardens will be shepherded through city council by Healthy Savannah.

*McDIARMID:* This is Sandy, and that's something I'd like to add to from here in Jackson. We have a farmer's market that is centrally located to low-income areas of the town, and it is

operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. And we also last summer instituted a network of community gardens. What the city had was a number of vacant lots and open land areas, especially in the inner city. And they turned them over and made them available to the community free of charge as community garden spaces that people could grow their own fruits and vegetables.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thanks so much, Sandy. And also, Michelle, did you want to briefly talk about some of the policies in the school district in the City of Savannah?

*HARTZELL:* Sure. Some of the policies – obviously, the Local Wellness Policy, that was a federal mandate – so the Local Wellness Policy, with that, we're in the process of right now with partnering with Alliance for a Healthier Generation. So we're going to use – if you look on their Web site – module six, which talks about the different areas and components of health and wellness for the schools. We also passed a moderate tobacco-free policy, which, you know, you think, oh, tobacco-free, schools should be. But believe it or not, there were still incidences where there was smoking on the grounds and things. So Healthy Savannah helped us with that, as well as revising our vending policy. Not saying it's exactly where we want to be, but I think if I can give one piece of advice, it would be small steps and baby steps, and celebrate any success no matter how small it is. So just updating our vending machines and so our new vending policy, and that also helped with our Food and Nutrition Department, so the competition there. And there was a concern that vending profits would be down, but there was a down maybe the first year, but as we put water and juice, we're finding that the profits aren't that bad. And I'll have better data at the end of this school year once we do a comparison of some of our pilot schools, as well. So Healthy Savannah was instrumental in helping with getting the vending policy passed. It took about six months.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thank you so much. Now we're just going...

*WILSON:* Lisa? Lisa.

*SHARMA:* Oh, sure. Annette, was that you?

*WILSON:* I'm sorry. Well, I just wanted to also say that Jackson is signed on with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation system-wide across our system. But, we also – of course, every school system has to have the wellness policy. But I will say that our school superintendent took the initiative – because the mandate said we had to control vending in the K through 8 environment, but she took the initiative to make the choice to make the vending in the high schools healthier. And this was our first year to have that policy adopted. And like Michelle said, at first, we saw the revenue drop, but we're seeing it start to level out. And also, the first step was we made the change to healthier vending in our central office. As Dr. Zambito says, “if we're gonna talk the talk, we're gonna walk the walk.” And so, she definitely leads by example. But, I think that that is key. As you start making those changes, baby steps is what you have to do, and as she said, celebrate those successes.

*SHARMA:* Absolutely. Well, thank you so much for that. And now, we're just gonna take a brief moment just to open up the line for questions, if the operator wants to come on and just give instructions for that.

*OPERATOR:* The lines are now open for questions. If you would like to ask a question, you may do so by pressing star and then one on your telephone keypad. That's star and then one. We'll pause for just a moment for the Q&A roster.

*SHARMA:* Great. Just, I wanted to put out one more question, Sandy, that came in through the email questions. Does your farmers market accept electronic benefit cards from food stamp clients?

*McDIARMID:* Yes, we do.

*SHARMA:* Okay. And, Jenny, does the Savannah market, as well?

*PAYNE:* Yes, we do. Actually, we were able to get a grant that doubles your value for the use of food stamps in the Forsythe Farmers' Market.

*SHARMA:* Fantastic.

*OPERATOR:* Okay. We do have a question from the line of Mary Ellen Doyle with the Maine Department of Education. Your line is live.

*DOYLE:* Hi. This has been really, really informative and helpful. I work with the Coordinated School Health Program here at the Maine Department of Education, and I know somebody – one of the speakers said that they initiated a Coordinated School Health Program in their city. I can't recall who that was. But, I had a question about how they're funding that and how it operates, if they have a designated lead in each school or how that works, if someone could give me a brief overview.

*WILSON:* Yes, this is Annette from Jackson, Tennessee. And in 2007, our governor put into the budget a \$15 million appropriation designated for a Coordinated School Health Program to be system-wide across the state. And what that does is funds, of course, the support staff at the state level, but in each school system, it will pay for a salary for a school health coordinator and an assistant and the supplies that you need to implement the program. And so, it has been funded by the state for the last two years. And as everyone knows, with budget cuts, it's been up in the air. But, he actually has put it back into the budget proposal for this next budget year. But across the state of Tennessee, it is funded by the state.

*DOYLE:* That's wonderful. Thank you. Did that have anything to do with the work of a man, his last name might be McKoon, if I'm remembering correctly?

*WILSON:* Well, are you thinking maybe Dr. Pat Cooper from McComb, Mississippi?

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*DOYLE:* Yes.

*WILSON:* Well, actually, he helped with that, but I will have to say that our leader was Connie Givens. She has worked diligently across the state of Tennessee to promote not only coordinated school health, but school nursing and she has worked very, very closely with Dr. Pat Cooper. And I will tell you, Jackson is bringing Dr. Pat Cooper here in April for our Wellness Awareness Month to speak to the residents of Jackson and Madison County. He's instrumental, I think many, many people used him – but we use the CDC model for Coordinated School Health, and we also have signed on with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation. And they have a tool, which is a very, very similar to the CDC's information, as well.

*DOYLE:* Wonderful. Thank you very much.

*WILSON:* Thank you.

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Darcie Decker with Youth and Family Services. Your line is live.

*DECKER:* Hi. I thank you, too, for this great information sharing. I do have a question regarding community gardens. Was there water available for these community gardens? How was the water managed? Was there a leader over the community gardens? And was there protection of the gardens so that vandals wouldn't interrupt the food of those gardens?

*McDIARMID:* This is Sandy from Jackson, Tennessee, and let me answer that. A community committee was formed called the Jackson Community Gardens Organization. And they were the ones who initially brought this proposal to the mayor. And at most of the sites, just virtually every one, there is water available from adjacent hydrants. Our local energy authority was invited to come on board and become a part of the Jackson Community Gardens Committee, and they provide cutoff valves at the hydrants that can be operated by the community garden's captain. Each one has a volunteer captain that kind of oversees the gardens and takes care of the watering. As far as vandalism, we haven't noticed, you know, anybody stealing food or vegetables out of it. For the most part, they're self regulating in that it's the people in the communities that are working these gardens and growing the produce. And vandals are less likely to go out and vandalize grandmother's garden plot. So we haven't had much of a problem with that yet.

*DECKER:* Thank you very much.

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Daylyn Finnegan with the Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center. Your line is live.

*SCHAEFER:* Hello. This is Nancy Schaefer and Daylyn. We're both here, and we have a question for you. Can you hear us?

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*SHARMA:* Yeah, we can hear you.

*SCHAEFER:* Okay, great. What we were curious about is, we know that the wellness and nutrition committees were mandated to have a policy, but we have found within our work that they're not mandated to follow it. So we're wondering if there was anything built into anybody's structure to help enforce that these policies are being followed or to help them with that – because I think you could have your wellness committees and groups and they might think everything is all going well, but they may not actually see what's actually happening. There are no boots on the ground, kind of, to witness that, all of a sudden, the cafeteria decided to make the brownies four times as big and they're now 500 calories and that kind of stuff and other issues. Thank you.

*HARTZELL:* This is Michelle. I can answer that. I share that same concern because you have an unfunded mandate, like many are. But what you have to do is find a way to implement. So that is why we decided to use the Alliance for a Healthier Generation framework because we are required – in our policy, we put that, you know, each year, a report has to be given to our board, as well as there's supposed to be a state person accountable and we have to provide a copy of a report to the state, so in order for us to do that, we have to be able to collect data somehow. So, for us, that's why we chose a framework.

There are a couple frameworks out there. We chose the Alliance for a Healthier Generation because it was so much aligned with the CDC's Coordinated School Health Program, and that's one way that made it a lot easier for my school and school wellness teams to be able to utilize, because a lot of it's online. They can go right online for the documentation and the surveys and a lot of the information and the feedback is generated electronically back to you. So, it's also another way to keep documentation of the accountability of the program. We, too, were experiencing that exact same thing. But we also have a nutrition, food and nutrition department, as well as a registered dietician. So they really closely monitor and they do follow the guidelines. So from the food component side, I don't think we're having as many issues as the implementation side, but that is definitely a valid concern.

*WILSON:* And this is Annette from Jackson. And I will say that as far as in Jackson, our food service director has done an excellent job, and actually, that department is who monitors our vending and is sure that we're in compliance with that, as well as staying very proactive with recipes and the food that is served in the cafeterias. As far as the physical activity mandate for us, our schools have to report back to me on a quarterly basis of what they are doing and that the students are in compliance with the 90 minutes of physical activity. And then, that report is generated from this office that goes back to the state, as well, so that we are staying in compliance with that mandate.

*OPERATOR:* Okay. Our next question comes from the line of Linda Puoplo with the City of White Plains. Your line is live.

*PUOPLO:* Hi. Actually, the question's from Bhavana Pahwa from City of White Plains.

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*PAHWA:* My question was, with all the emphasis on physical activity and nutrition, are you also providing any kind of easier access to medical care to address the medical needs of people in the community who may not have access to medical care, diabetes or wellness checks and things like that?

*WILSON:* This is Annette in Jackson. And I'm very excited because this year, we have our first school-based health clinic that is located in one of our schools. We partnered with one of the local hospitals here in Jackson and we have a clinic with a full time nurse practitioner and a nurse and office staff. And this clinic is open for all students, all staff and faculty and immediate family to access this facility. We can do acute care in this facility as well as well child exams, sports physicals. So that is a first step for us. We can accept all insurances, and also, if a student is uninsured, they will work with them. No one is turned away from this clinic. And we hope to grow this. We hope to have more clinics to open. But, that's been a huge success because many of our students did not have a medical home and it was very difficult for them to get to medical attention as they needed it. And at this time, we are not offering any transportation. The parents have to get the students there. But I will say, this clinic sits on a campus where there is a school basically right next door. So for the students in those two buildings, they can be seen in that facility without a parent present if the parent has given permission and signed off on the release. So it's really worked well. I know a lot of schools are getting into school-based clinics, and I can say it's been a very positive move that we've made for our system.

*HARTZELL:* This is Michelle. For us, one of the things that we have again is about partnerships. And we have a great partnership with the Department of Health. And they wanted to come out and give the flu vaccine to our students, so we coordinated a memorandum of agreements and they came out and immunized, you know, our students right at the school site. So I think, again, you probably heard it, but the key is, you know, the partnership again there.

*PAYNE:* And I would – this is Jenny from Savannah. I'd like to add onto what Michelle said. I think the underlying theme for Savannah, one of them I think is – unlike Tennessee, we do not have any state funding dedicated to prevention. Actually, one thing that Healthy Savannah is lobbying for actively at the state level is for our state delegation to pass an additional dollar tax on tobacco products. That would be used for prevention and cessation. So we don't – we're still fighting those types of battles. The underlying theme there is, even though we don't have money, we do it anyways. And an example of that is – I think, nationally, it's a problem. Nationally, doctors aren't really reimbursed or aren't paid for the time that they spend with patients talking about prevention and talking about, you know, here's an, you know, an overweight child. Well, you know, there's no real motivation for me to sit there and talk to this child and that child's parent because I'm not going to get--I'm not going to be, you know, paid for that work. Well, part of the Healthy Savannah Coalition is our two major hospitals in Savannah and a lot of great physicians. So even though they're not getting paid to do it, they make it a point to spend time with children to educate them when they see these types of cases come into their offices.

*PAHWA:* Thank you.

*SHARMA:* I think we have time for one more question.

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Angie Kim with City of Tacoma. Your line is live.

*KIM:* My question's been answered, so thank you.

*OPERATOR:* Our next question comes from the line of Ifeoma Ezepue with the City of Cleveland. Your line is live.

*EZEPUE:* Yes, it is. Hello?

*SHARMA:* Hello?

*EZEPUE:* Oh, hi. I have a question about if anybody has had any success with establishing farm-to-school programs in an urban school district.

*WILSON:* This is Annette from Jackson. And I will say, in – I think I can say yes that we have, but the way that that has happened, we have a local produce stand here in Jackson that buys – we buy most of our produce from them, and we have encouraged them to buy their produce local. So in one way, yes, I think, but that is the route that we're going. And so, I will say that we are using a lot of local produce that has been grown here in the Jackson West Tennessee area.

*SHARMA:* Thanks so much, Annette, and thank you to everyone for your great questions. We're actually going to start closing up now. But I did want to highlight a few resources for everyone, one of which is the National League of Cities has created an action kit for Combating Childhood Obesity, which has some great resources in it for all municipal leaders. It has a broad range of strategies that cities can use to promote physical activity, healthy eating and access to healthy foods. It also has numerous city examples, facts and additional resources. And that action kit can be found on the NLC Web site, which is [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef). And another resource that I wanted to highlight, as well, is the Leadership for Healthy Communities Action Strategies Toolkit, which is a comprehensive resource that contains policy approaches and resources for state and local policymakers to improve children's health. And that is also available on the NLC Web site. So again, I just wanted to say thank you to all of our speakers - Annette, Sandy, Jenny and Michelle. You did a great job. And to everyone listening, thank you for your participation today and your excellent questions.

*HARTZELL:* Lisa, may I add one thing? This is Michelle from Savannah. Somebody had a question earlier just about some quick classroom integrations. There are just two quick resources I thought about. There is one that's called – it's free – it's called ABCs for Fitness. So just key in ABC for Fitness. And any classroom teacher, they're just like the energizers. So they're quick

activities that any classroom teacher can utilize to get the kids up and moving within the classroom environment and get the oxygen flowing again. Again, that's ABC for Fitness, and you can download it for free.

*SHARMA:* Great. Thanks, Michelle.

*McDIARMID:* Lisa, this is Sandy from Jackson. And for those who had questions or were interested in community gardens, there is an American Community Garden Association, and you can reach their Web site at [www.communitygarden.org](http://www.communitygarden.org).

*SHARMA:* Fantastic. Thank you. Great. So just wanted to say thank you again to all the speakers and for those resources, as well. And then, just to close, I wanted to highlight our next monthly audioconference that NLC's Institute for Youth Education and Families will be running. It's scheduled for Thursday, March 25th and will begin at 2:30 PM Eastern time, 11:30 AM Pacific time. And the topic is "Using Out-of-School Time Programs for Older Youth to Improve College Access and Workforce Development." This audioconference will have speakers that include national experts and city leaders who will talk about the unique role that municipal leaders can play in supporting out of school time programs that are aimed at ensuring older youth have access to institutions of higher education and are prepared to enter the workforce. And you can register online for that audioconference at [www.nlc.org/iyef](http://www.nlc.org/iyef). So again, this is Lisa Sharma, and on behalf of the National League of Cities and the Institute for Youth Education and Families, we thank you so much for joining us today and best of luck in your work.