



Policies Affecting Our Food Environment

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About Us

- ✦ Independent research institution providing scientific expertise, partnership and resources to improve diet and physical activity behaviors among youth and their families to help grow a healthier next generation
- ✦ The Center is a Omaha based independent non-profit research organization providing research, evaluation and partnership in: childhood obesity prevention, food insecurity, and local food systems
- ✦ Connect with us on Facebook or Twitter: GretchenSwanson





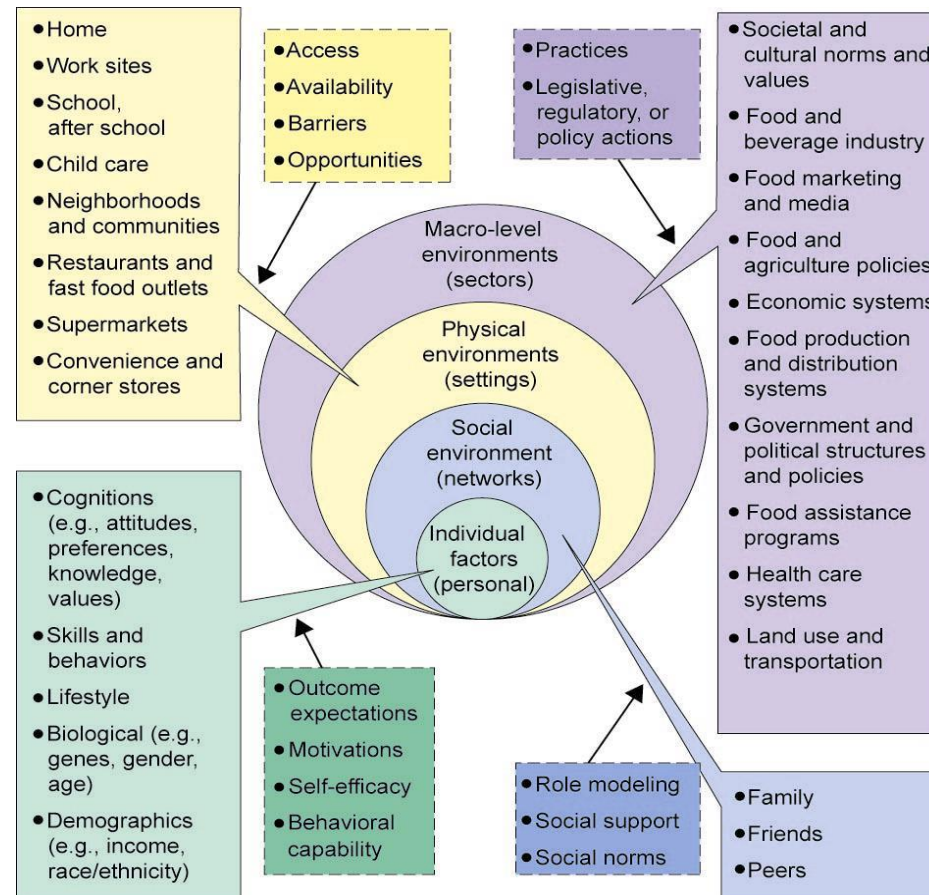
RESEARCH * PARTNERSHIP * EVALUATION

Outline

1. Introduction to the food environment
2. Coexistence of food insecurity and obesity
3. Unique challenges in rural communities
4. Real-world policy in action
5. Novel policy approaches

Introduction

Why does the food environment matter?



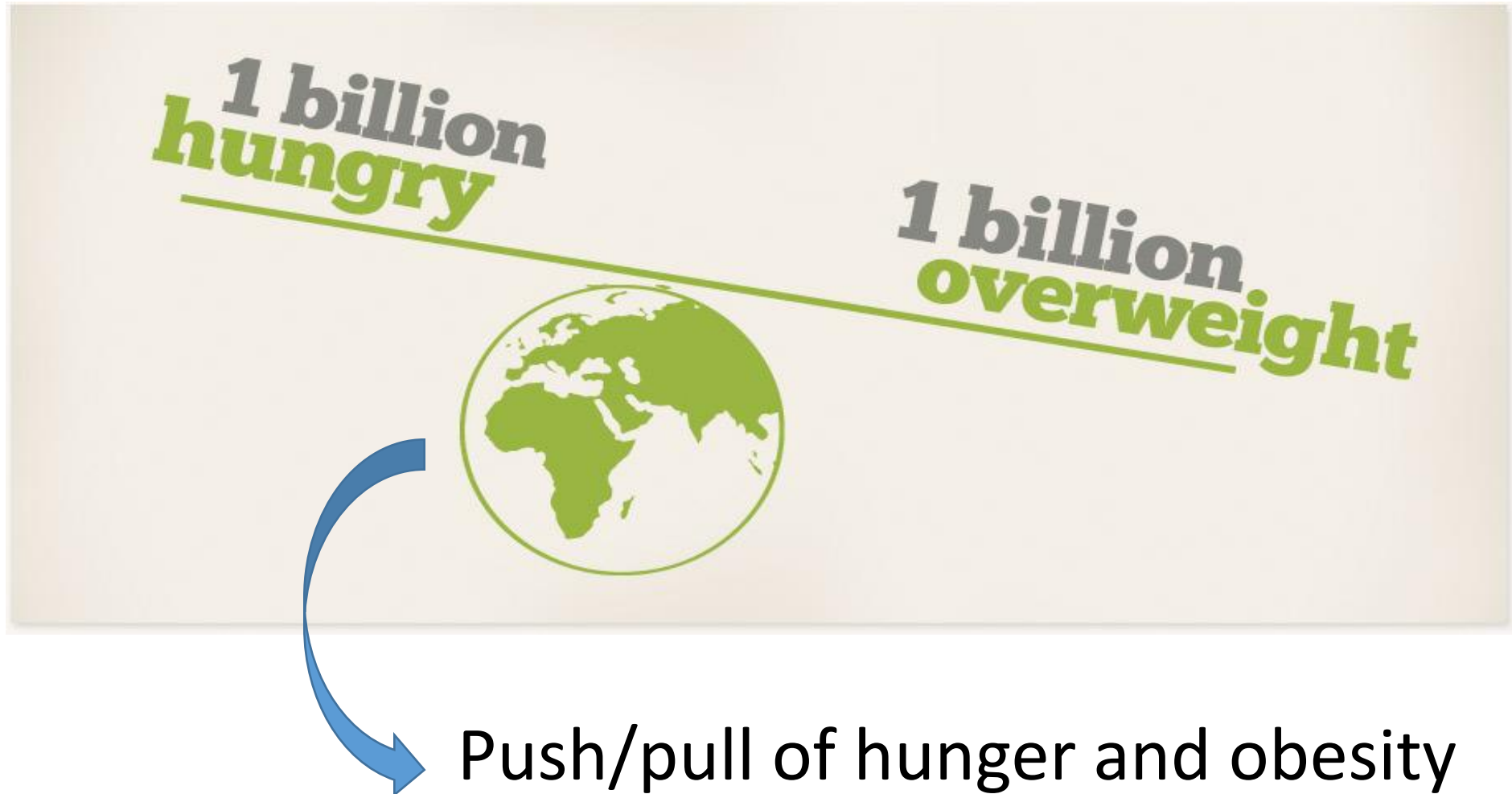
Introduction

Food Environment and Policy

- ✦ Policy approaches can alter affordability, quality, and access to food → shape food environment
- ✦ Addressing obesity as societal, rather than individual problem, could save 100's of billions of dollars in annual health care costs
- ✦ In addition to individual-level interventions, as a society, need to make healthy choice the default choice
- ✦ As we move up from environment to policy, we can have “p” and “P” policies working in conjunction
- ✦ Need to ensure policies address social determinants of health
 - ✦ Health equity and/or social justice lens



Coexistence of Food Insecurity and Obesity



Food Insecurity

Definitions

★ Food security—

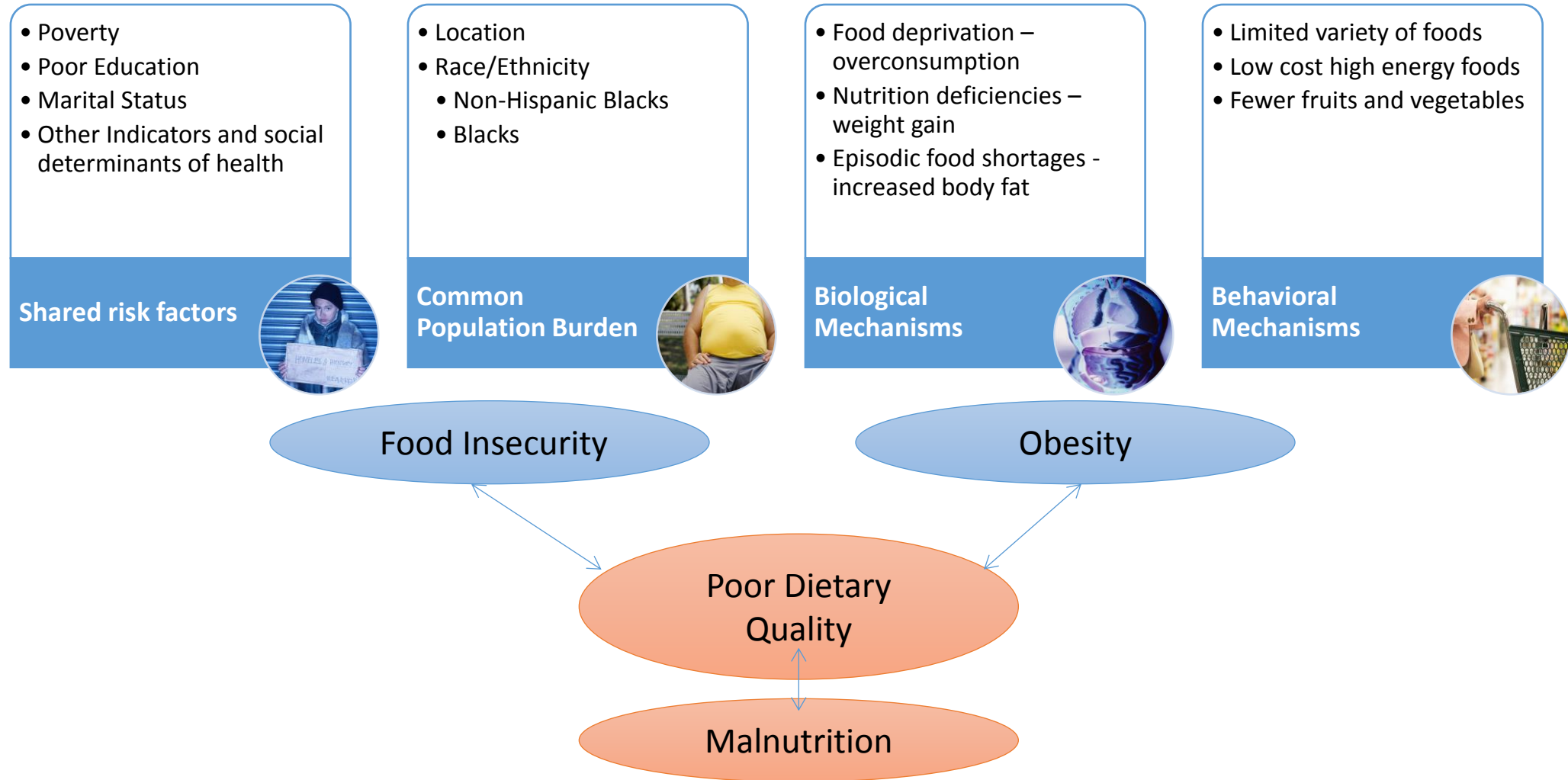
- Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life
 - Quantity – Enough food
 - Quality - Nutritionally adequate
 - Suitability – Culturally acceptable and ‘safe’
 - Psychological – Meets personal, psychological needs
 - Social – Acquired in socially acceptable manner

★ Food insecurity-

- Limited or *uncertain* ability to acquire or consume an adequate quality or sufficient quantity of food in socially acceptable ways



Coexistence of Food Insecurity and Obesity

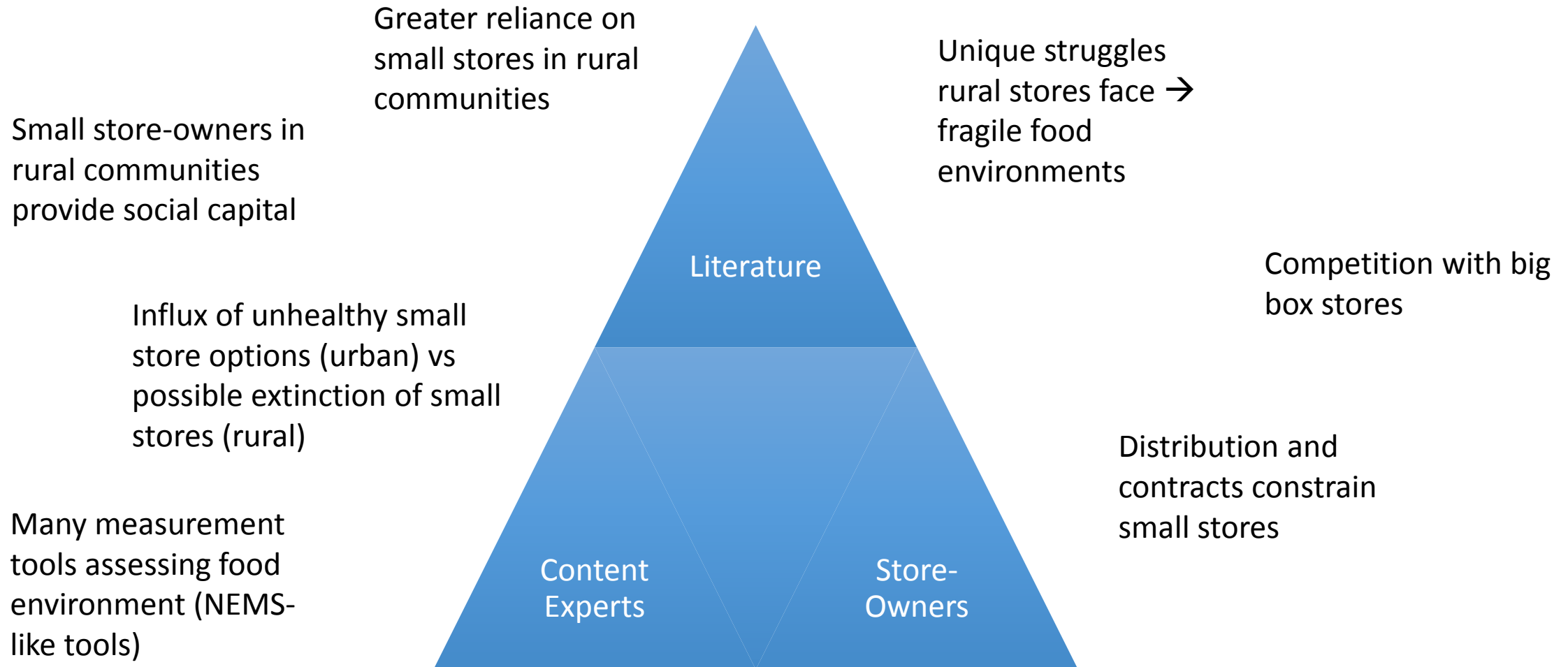


Rural Food Access

- ★ Unique challenges faced in rural communities
 - Aging and dwindling population impacts corner/local stores: customers and potential staff
 - Lack of transportation and distance to nearest food outlet
 - Declining customer base → increase in food store closures
 - Poor quality of produce related to distribution infrastructure
 - Lack of available small business capital

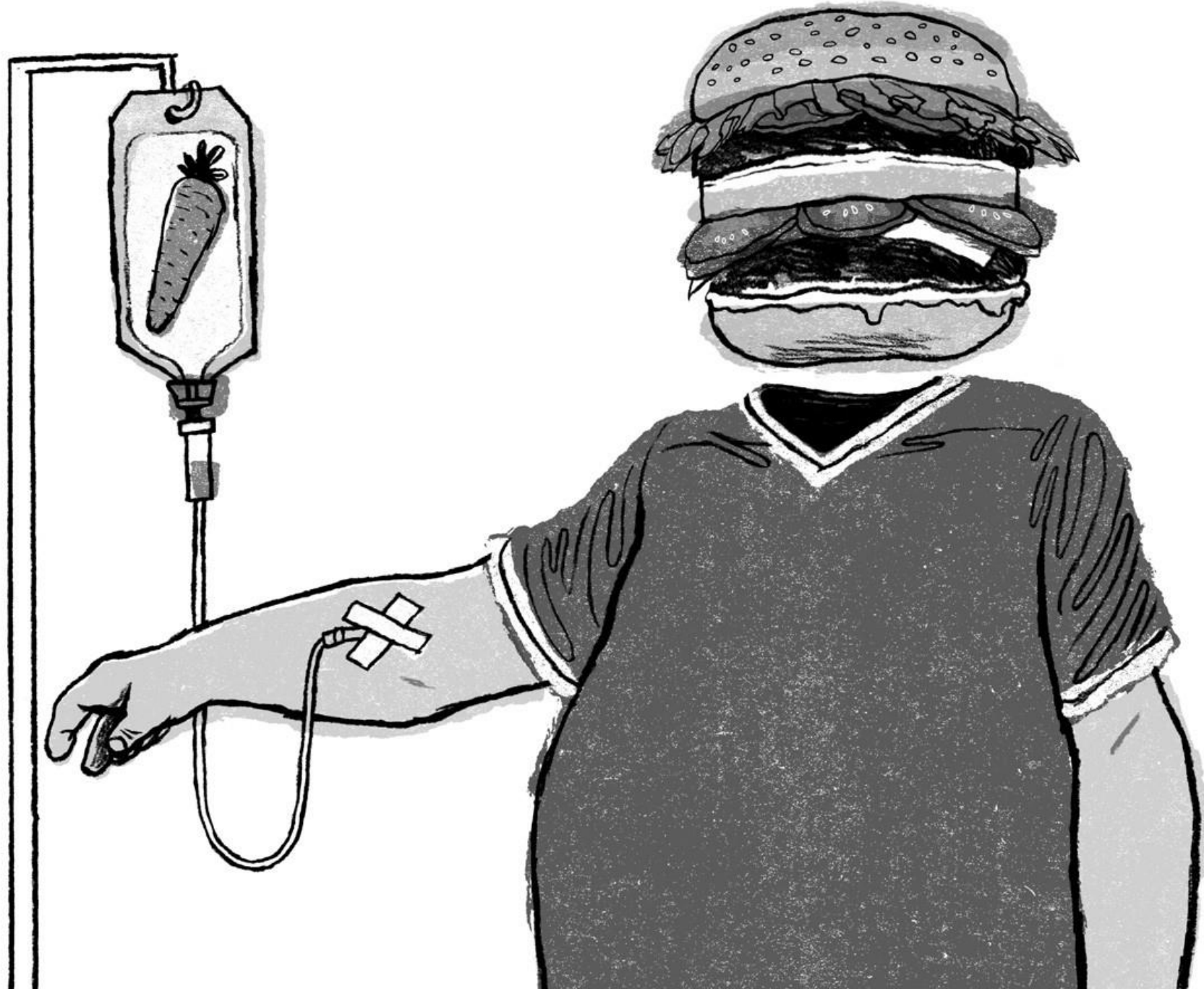


Rural Food Access

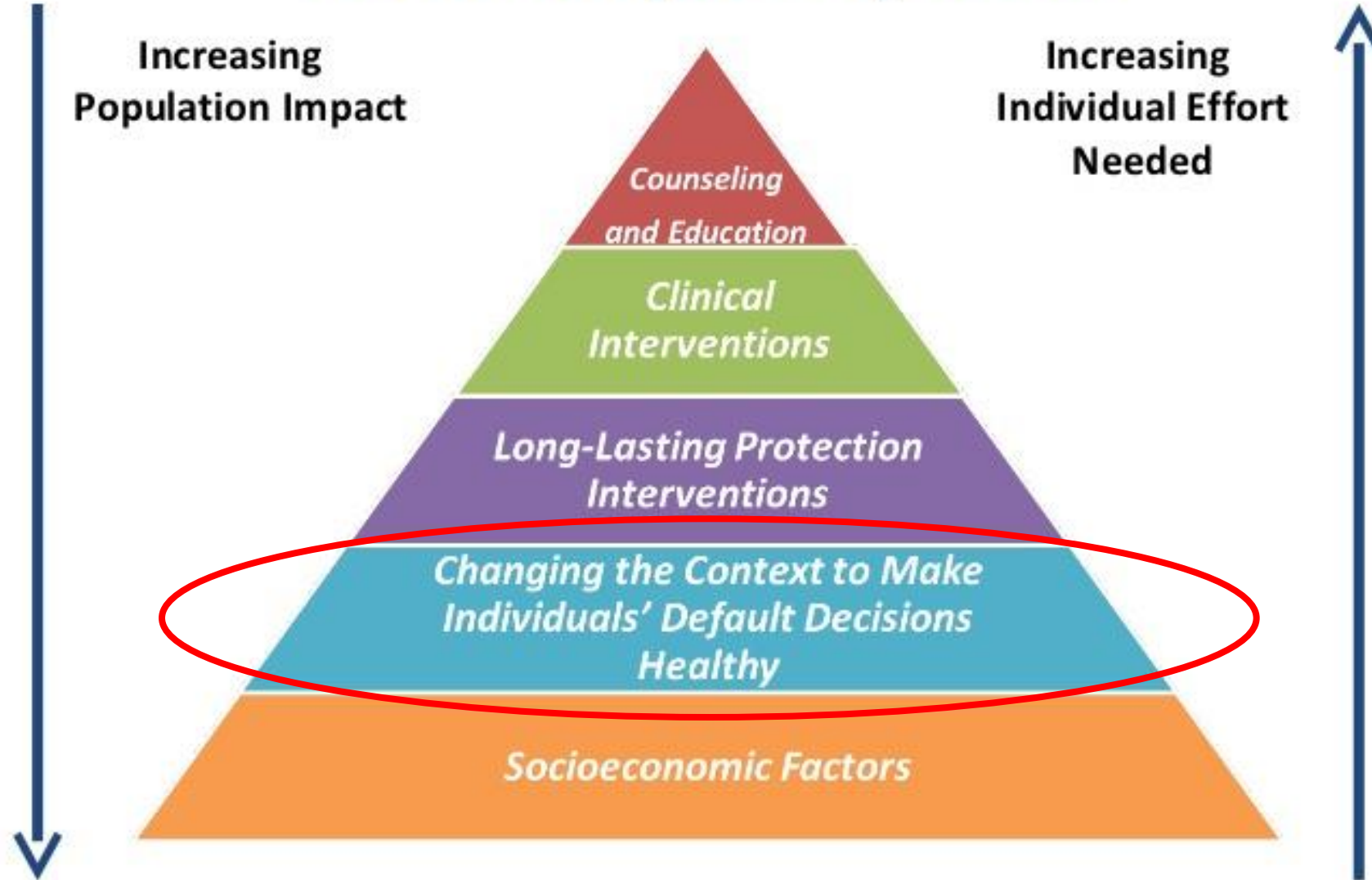


What can we do?

How can policy
change the food
environment?



Health Impact Pyramid



Breadth of Policy Approaches

Typical Policy Levers

Taxing and
spending on
specific
programs

Direct regulation
of persons,
professionals,
and businesses



The power to
alter: The built,
socio-economic,
and
informational
environments

Deregulation
when laws act as
a barrier to
health



Healthy Food Incentive Programs

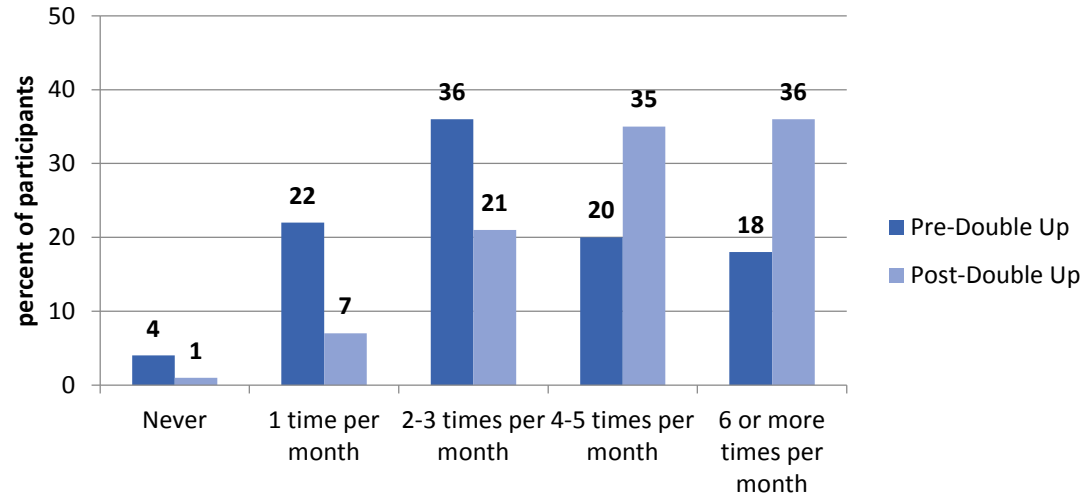
- ✧ USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) Grant Program: funds projects to increase purchase of FVs among low-income SNAP consumers by providing incentives at point of purchase
- ✧ To date, USDA has awarded around \$65 million in FINI grants to local, state, and national organizations
- ✧ Healthy Food Incentive Programs include programs like Double Up Food Bucks which double a SNAP participant's \$ to spend on FVs
 - ✧ Supports local food systems and economies
 - ✧ Targets low-income and underserved communities
 - ✧ In farmers markets and now grocery stores



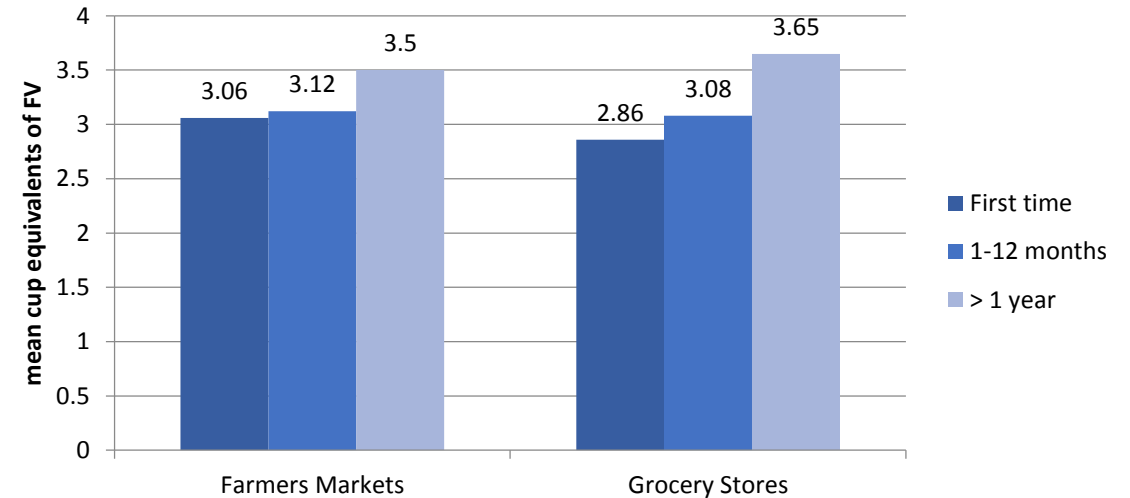
Double Up Food Bucks

Impact Highlights

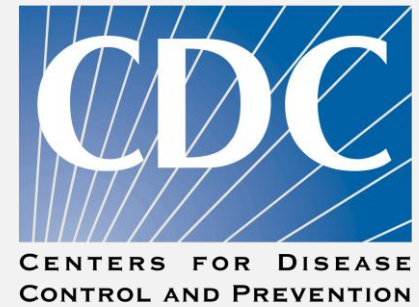
FV purchasing frequency pre/post Double Up participation, farmers market consumers



Fruit and vegetable consumption patterns of Double Up participants



1422 Grants in Nebraska



State and Local Public Health Actions to Prevent Obesity, Diabetes, and Heart Disease and Stroke

Support environmental and system approaches to promote health, support and reinforce healthful behaviors, and build support for lifestyle improvements...

Implement nutrition and beverage standards including sodium standards in public institutions, worksites, etc

Strengthen food access in retail venues through increased availability improved pricing, placement, and promotion

1422 Grants in Nebraska

Baseline and Post Assessments

Cafeteria and vending machine observations

Staff and leader interviews

Employee Surveys

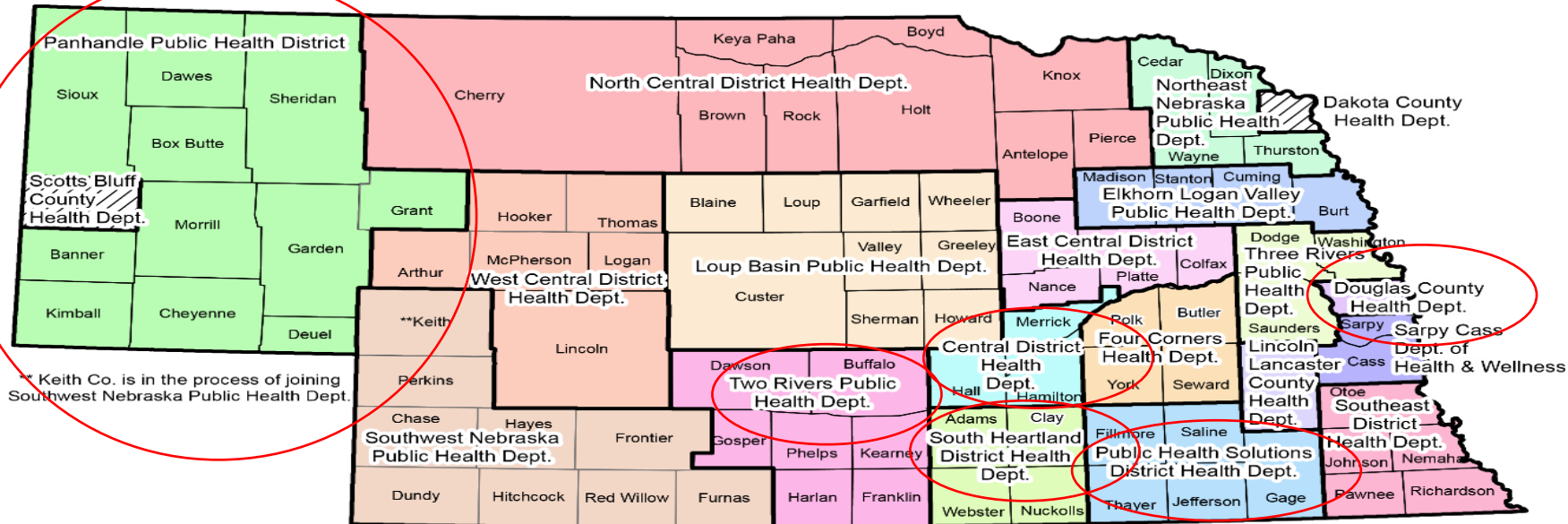
Interventions

Nutrition standards in hospitals and public institutions

Healthy Food Retail Recognition Program




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~~* Keith Co. is in the process of joining Southwest Nebraska Public Health Dept.~~

Legend

 Local Health Departments that do not Qualify for LB 692* Funding

0 50 100 Miles

*LB 692 passed during the 2001 Legislative Session and provides funds to qualifying local public health departments.

Source: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

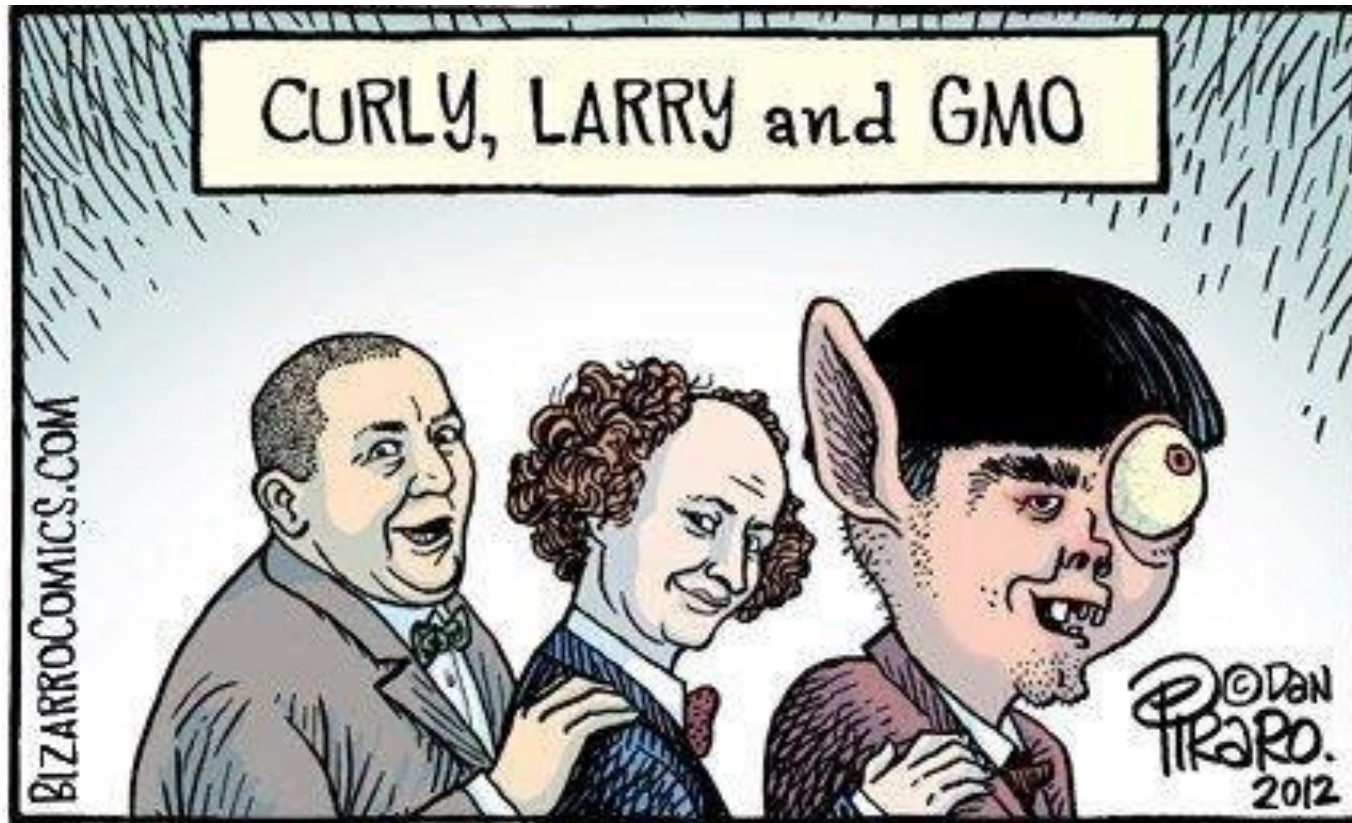
Map updated by:
Public Health GIS Analyst
DHHS GIS 2/15



- ✧ Over four years, potential to reach 900,012 Nebraskans
- ✧ 48% of state population across 33 counties in 6 local public health regions
- ✧ Impacts in rural and urban communities
- ✧ High exposure for the Center across Nebraska

Novel Policy Approaches

GMO Labeling



- ✧ GMOs mainly commodity crops, contribute to obesity
- ✧ Non-GMO crops support local food systems (nutrient density)
- ✧ Science behind GMO safety unclear
- ✧ Many countries do require GMO labeling (e.g., Australia)



Novel Policy Approaches

Proposed Industry Standards

- ✧ Voluntary regulations for industry targeting food marketing to children
 - Marketing foods and drinks is multi billion dollar industry (e.g., character licensing, advertisements across multiple media types)
 - Children targeted with sugary breakfast cereals, fast food, SSBs
- ✧ Balance between making impactful public health changes and self-promotion from industry
- ✧ Need for transparency, meaningful objectives and benchmarks, accountability, objective evaluation, and oversight



Novel Policy Approaches

Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Tax

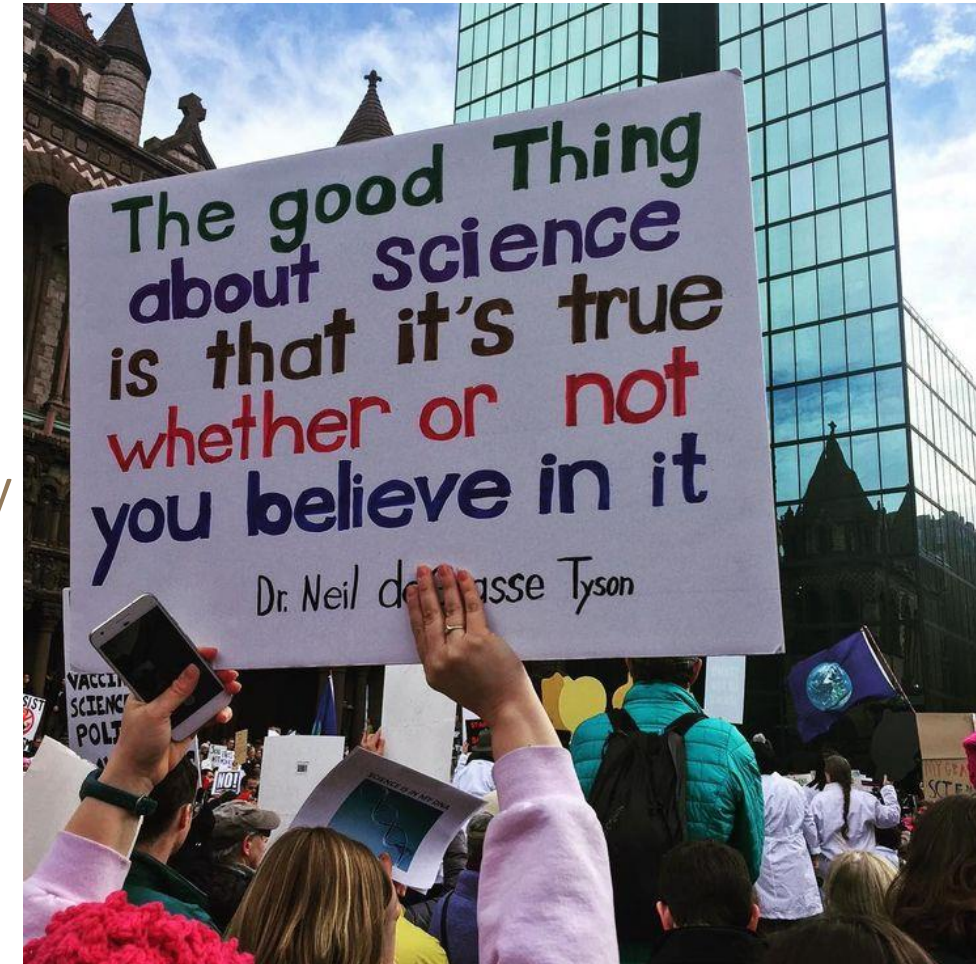
- ★ SSB intake predicts greater energy intake, higher BMI, poorer health outcomes

Proponents	Opponents
Price → food purchasing behaviors	Disproportionately affects lower-income individuals
Tax generates funds for further public health promotion	Weak evidence supporting negative health impact of SSB
More healthful beverages can be substituted	Calories replaced with other beverages or foods



Conclusions

- ★ Policy approaches can positively impact the food environment
- ★ How to take action:
 - Stay updated on issues
 - Identify relevant legislation being discussed in committees
 - Support for programs that increase food access and opportunities in underserved communities
 - Connect with professional organizations, determine advocacy or endorsement
 - Form larger coalitions – write letters, develop one pagers, speak with representatives
 - Utilize technical assistance through campaigns/organizations
 - Identify town hall meetings in your state/community
 - Provide testimony before congress (state or local)
 - Provide comments on proposed rules





Contact and Questions

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