



Community Health Toolkit: Sample Editorial

The following imaginary guest editorial is intended as an example of incorporating the framing research into a standard media format, in the form of an op/ed. Please note that facts, references, and names included in this speech are for sample purposes only, not for citation.

People in our state believe that where you grow up shouldn't matter; everyone should be able to reach for the sky and be healthy and successful in life. The problem arises when the places we grow up in constrain our abilities early on. Our children's health and well-being is more and more the result of whether or not their communities have created an environment that supports and sustains physical activity and healthy eating. **[Uses a value of Fairness with the domain of children]**

When we evaluate this Food and Fitness Environment by the presence of such factors as walking and biking paths, parks and playgrounds, and access to healthy food in our schools and neighborhoods, we can see that there is quite a difference between towns in our state. This is the big picture that was missed in a recent Daily News editorial, which couldn't quite connect the dots to figure out why obesity is so prevalent in our state today. Pull back and look at the overall landscape of food and fitness opportunities afforded our children and you will get the picture. **[Introduces food and fitness environment]**

I'm a basketball coach in a middle school league, so I know about the importance of physical activity for children, and I travel from community to community as my kids play other teams. I can tell you that in some communities I visit, the streets aren't safe to bike or walk because zoning has made them impossible to navigate, or they need extensive repairs. While some communities have great parks and open spaces, others do not. Some communities are filled with fast food restaurants and corner markets selling pop, candy and snacks, but lack full-service grocery stores and farmer's

markets. When children lack these opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating, they become less fit and more likely to become overweight, leading to serious health problems later on, including diabetes and heart disease. **[Reinforces concept of food and fitness environment with credible messenger, in a causal way.]**

We've made some mistakes in community design that takes a toll on our children. But mistakes can be corrected. Zoning needs to be re-examined to make communities more walkable and drivable. We have to start funding parks and other recreational opportunities. We need to plan development wisely to increase the easy availability of healthy food options for children and their families. These changes will result in more physically active and well-nourished children in all communities in our state, who will then grow into healthy adults. These adults will be contributing to the vitality of our state for years to come, creating a brighter future for our state. The consequences of not addressing health inequity between our communities will indeed impair our state's future. On that count, the editorial was right. **[Includes solutions, and returns to value of fairness.]**