

# **Presentation to: Speaker's Task Force on Childhood Obesity**

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# About Us

A statewide, voluntary organization dedicated to enriching the professional and educational opportunities available to personnel in parks, recreation, aquatics, and related fields, so that they may better service the needs of their communities and or participants, and to advocating and promoting the benefits of parks and services to the general public.



# Mission

WPRA Provides professionals and agencies with leadership, engagement, advocacy and professional development opportunities to promote the benefits of park, recreation, environmental and cultural services throughout Wisconsin.

- Over 43 public agencies that are a part of cities, villages, towns, counties, school districts or the DNR
- Over 1,100 individual professionals
- 73 commercial members

Also serve Park and Recreation Boards and Commissions, University Students and Retirees





NATIONAL RECREATION  
AND PARK ASSOCIATION

Impacting Communities Through

1. Health and Wellness
2. Equity
3. Conservation

# Public Recreation Provides Access for All

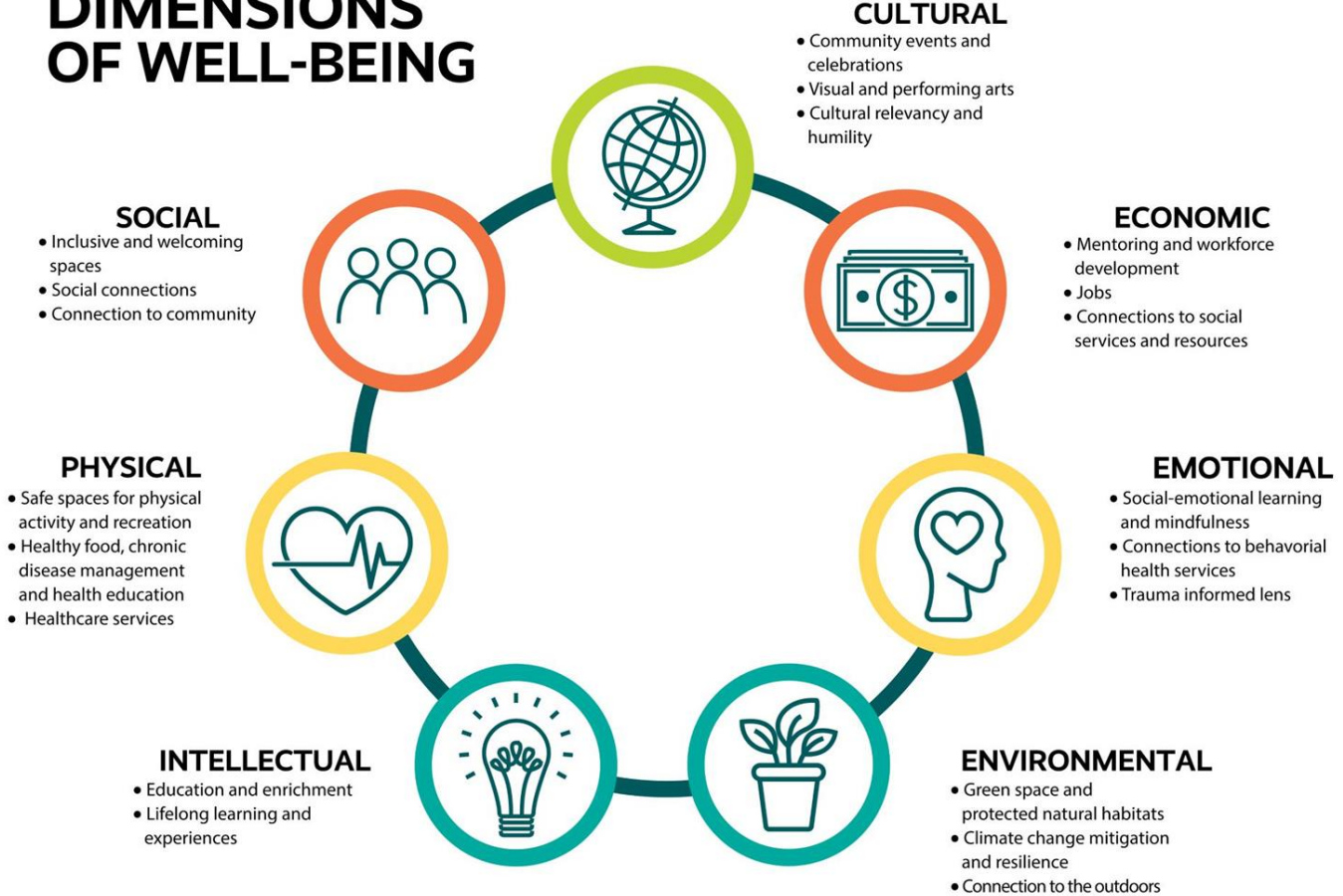
According to the National Recreation and Park Association, health equity “means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This must include removing barriers and obstacles to health such as poverty, addressing a lack of access to healthy food, providing safe environments which includes parks and recreation, and access to healthcare, good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing.”

Elevating Health Equity Through Parks and Recreation - A Framework for Action, 2021

Local public park and recreation departments can serve as Community Wellness Hubs. Community Wellness Hubs are trusted gathering places that connect every member of the community to essential programs, services and spaces that advance health equity, improve health outcomes, and enhance quality of life.

FIGURE 3

# SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF WELL-BEING



# The Role of Park & Recreation Programs in Youth Health & Wellness

- Park and recreation programs have emerged as an effective tool in addressing this problem by promoting physical activity, healthy habits, and overall wellness among children.



# Health Promotion & Resources

- Park & Recreation organizations should include health, wellness, or similar wording in their messaging.
- Health and Wellness initiatives have to come from the top down – need leadership support to be successful.
- Integrate Health and Wellness into strategic planning initiatives

## **Wisconsin Examples:**

1. WPRA has included Health and Wellness in their Vision and Values
2. Milwaukee Recreation Strategic Planning & Outdoor Recreation Facilities Master Plan
3. Madison School & Community Recreation has included Health and Wellness in their Mission and their Key Strategies



# Youth Physical Activities

- Structured Sports and activities – enjoyable and health & fitness
- Access to facilities – playgrounds, sports fields, walking, biking paths, options to encourage outdoor play & exercise, reducing sedentary behavior

## **Wisconsin Examples:**

1. Aquatics
2. Sports Leagues & Instructional Classes
3. Youth Fitness
4. Dance & Gymnastics
5. Toddler Playgroups
6. Fitness in the Park
7. Community Bike Rides
8. Family Classes
9. Summer Playground Programs
10. Before & Afterschool Activities

# Youth Nutrition Education

- Park & Rec programs incorporate nutrition education in their youth programming
- From specific cooking classes, to just lessons at a summer day camp, park & rec can be the local leader on youth nutrition and education.

## **Wisconsin Examples:**

1. Healthy Cooking Classes for Kids & Families
2. Nutrition Education in Summer Playground Program
3. Summer Meals Program
4. Before & Afterschool Healthy Snack Program

# Community & Social Supports

- Participation in park and recreation programs enables children to interact with peers, fostering social connections.
- Positive social experiences can motivate them to engage in group activities and lead more active lives.
- Programs can also encourage parental involvement and provide opportunities for families to engage together.

## **Wisconsin Examples:**

1. Milwaukee Recreation Twilight Centers and Late Night Leagues
2. Family Special Events that promote Health and Wellness

# Healthy Snack Policy

- Create best practices and guidelines for what type of vending machine services should be placed in community spaces.
- Examples from Chicago, San Diego, Washington State, CDC State Facilities, Indiana
- Example Beverages – no soda machines, water, non-fat, 1% fat milk, 100% fruit/vegetable juice, fruit-based drinks containing at least 50% juice, no added sweeteners, sports drinks less than or equal to 100 calories
- Example Food – not more than 250 calories, no more than 35% calories from fat, not more than 360 mg of sodium per serving
- Use the “Go, Slow, Whoa” signage and stickers

# No Smoking Policy

- No smoking on property or in parking lots, outdoor common spaces, etc.
- Use consistent messaging and signage