

# **Beyond Command:**

Law, Public Health and Effective Interventions to Control Obesity



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**Command**

**Norm**

**Internal Viewpoint**

**Epidemics have their own characteristics, one of which is that while they cause social upheaval they are also caused by it.**

Dorothy Porter, *Health, Civilization and the State*

**Issue:**

**Recommendation: Shift funding to prevention and public health and be competitive with clinical & bench science.**

**Rationale: Researchers have enormous investment in clinical research/interventions & bench science. Need significant investment to build capacity and shift institutional norms.**

*Author: Trust for America's Health/Smith*

**Issue:**

**Recommendation: Fund comprehensive, integrated interventions across the prevention spectrum that account for the normative mode of law.**

**Rationale: Legal interventions need to take into account how participants see the system and behave in it. If they don't, the law will require stronger sanctions.**

*Author: Smith*

**LIMPFL**

## Rapid Policy Assessment and Response

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**What is RPAP?**

Developed originally as a tool to fight HIV/AIDS among sex workers, injection drug users, and members of other marginalized populations at the city level, Rapid Policy Assessment and Response (RPAP) is an intervention that mobilizes local knowledge to tackle complex health problems and builds capacity to make interventions sustainable.

As a general approach to assessing policy and health, the RPAP is applicable to virtually any health issue, from asthma to health care access. This methodology focuses on health and policy implementation at the local level. It is designed to enable structural interventions—interventions that change the risk environment for the better, rather than merely assisting communities cope with an unchanged environment more effectively. It is meant to be used by people who do not have training or extensive experience in qualitative research or policy analysis.

Law and policy shape health program development and implementation, defining what can be done and how effective the efforts can be. Customarily, these structural factors had been measured by assessing black letter law, even though official policy statements often widely differ from actual street-level practice. The RPAP was originally developed to fill this gap. An interdisciplinary methodology, the RPAP provides a standardized way to conduct baseline assessments and time-series analyses, both to inform program design and to assess program impact.

This website was designed to provide information about the RPAP methodology, offer open access to the tools developed through its application, and invite inquiries and proposals for future RPAP projects. We welcome your [feedback](#).

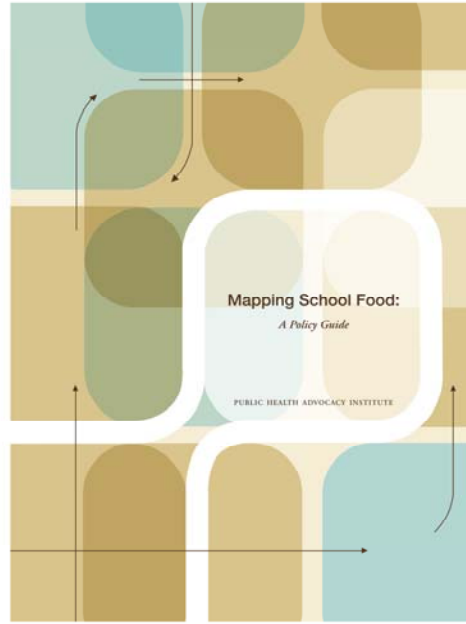
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**Issue:**

**Recommendation: Move federal meal programs, e.g. NSLP, out of USDA.**

**Rationale: Eliminate an obvious conflict. Allow nutrition programs to be handled in public health frameworks; distance from perception of nutrition as a consumer problem.**

*Author: Smith*

**Issue:**

**Recommendation: Oppose any preemptive law without exception.**

**Rationale: A solution *requires* local expertise and configuration of solutions. Public health advocates do not have the resources to make preemption work properly and the law in this area is complex and subject to change.**

*Author: Trust for America's Health/Smith*



**Issue:**

**Recommendation: Focus obesity prevention efforts primarily on eliminating disparities based on race/ethnicity.**

**Rationale: This is simply good public health; will reduce costs/burdens dramatically; structural interventions targeted on disparities will have population-wide benefits. Not doing so will simply make problems worse.**

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