

PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS & UPDATES

TEXAS RESEARCH-TO-POLICY COLLABORATION PROJECT

December 2024



Wishing you and yours health, happiness, and prosperity in the coming New Year!



Upcoming: TX RPC Project Lunch & Learn Presentation



Food is Medicine Programs in Texas

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

11:15 AM- 12:30 PM CT

House Member's Lounge

This Lunch & Learn presentation will focus on the importance of Food is Medicine Programs in Texas, including:

- discussing the increasing need for expanded preventive health initiatives
- sharing preliminary findings and lessons learned from the "Food is the Best Medicine" initiative in Central Texas and its benefits for Texans

Register Today!

2025 Texas Legislative Bill Tracker

Since the 2013 session, the Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living has hosted a legislative bill tracker that identifies proposed bills related to child and adolescent health and to research taking place at the Center and the expertise of our faculty.

Each legislative biennium, Center students and staff identify related bills as new bills are filed and the status of each bill as the session progresses. Each category of the legislative tracker is accompanied by relevant resources.



School-based Health



Family and Child Health



Nutrition and Food Access



Physical Activity



Healthcare



Environmental Health



Tobacco/E-Cigs

**Go to
Bill Tracker**



The [2025 Legislative Bill Tracker](#) is segmented into 7 general categories and 18 subcategories.

Upcoming Webinar

Disparities, Opportunities, and Action for Active Living Promotion in Austin/Travis County, Texas

December 18, 2024

12:00 PM- 1:00 PM CT

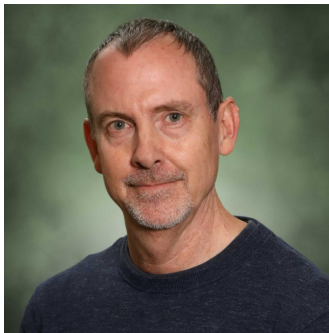
Register for the
Webinar Today!

This webinar will present findings from the Travis County Physical Activity Landscape Assessment, a rapid community assessment aimed at identifying needs and opportunities for physical activity promotion in Travis County.

We will spotlight selected initiatives taking place in Austin/Travis County aimed at promoting and supporting active living.

Participants will learn more about socio-geo-demographic disparities in leisure-time physical activity engagement, barriers that prevent underserved community groups from engaging in physical activity, and innovative initiatives for active living promotion taking place in Austin/Travis County.

We will also share information about an opportunity to join us with the newly formed Austin/Travis County Active Living Collaborative.



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Stephanie Helfman, MSPH
Manager, Chronic Disease &
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Austin Public Health



Jill Habegger-Cain
Health Promotion Coordinator,
Austin Parks & Recreation
Department

TX RPC Project Health Policy Resources: 2 New Reports Coming Soon!

Two reports related to tobacco use, **Vaping Among Youth** and **Effects of Tobacco Use on Health**, will be published soon.

Read our previously published
resources on our website.

TX RPC Project Researcher Publications

Featured Publications

[Hunger and housing: Economic disparities in current and daily tobacco use among high school students in the United States in 2021](#)

Economic conditions are strong and consistent factors of tobacco use in adults. Less research about how U.S. adolescents are impacted by these factors has been done.

- Homelessness and food insecurity are economic inequities experienced by many U.S. youth.
- This study investigated the effects of 1) homelessness and 2) food insecurity (during the COVID-19 pandemic) on tobacco use patterns among U.S. high school students.
 - **1.8%** of high school students experienced **homelessness** and **25%** experienced **food insecurity** in Spring 2021.
- High school students who experienced homelessness or food insecurity were more likely to report current use and daily use of tobacco products.
- Programs focused on alleviating economic disparities could have a potential downstream impact on preventing and reducing tobacco use in adolescents.

[Implementation of Healthy Heart Ambassador to improve blood pressure control at community health centers in Texas](#)

Hypertension is one of the most prevalent preventable chronic conditions in the U.S., affecting **119.9 million** individuals, and healthcare expenditures related to hypertension are estimated to cost the U.S. **131 billion dollars** annually.

- Non-physician team members, including dietitians, patient navigators, medical assistants, and pharmacists, can play a pivotal role in helping patients improve hypertension control.
- This study described the process of training non-physician team members from 9 Texas community health centers in the Healthy Heart Ambassador Blood Pressure Self-Monitoring (HHA) Program.
- Health centers reported barriers to implementing the HHA programs included **capacity, technology infrastructure, motivation, and funding**.
- Non-physician team members need ongoing training and technical support to overcome barriers to delivering the HHA program.

National

[Systematic review and meta-analysis of combined cognitive-behavioral therapy and physical activity and exercise interventions for pediatric chronic disease](#)

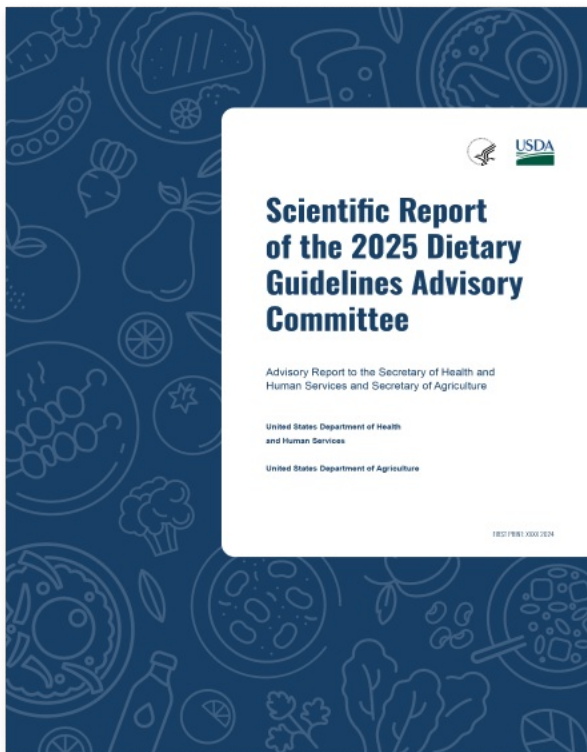
Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025

The [Scientific Report of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee](#) is now available online.

4 overarching guidelines in the 2020-2025 edition:

- Follow a healthy dietary pattern at every life stage.
- Customize and enjoy nutrient-dense food and beverage choices to reflect personal preferences, cultural traditions, and budgetary considerations.
- Focus on meeting food group needs with nutrient-dense foods and beverages, and stay within calorie limits.

- Limit foods and beverages higher in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium, and limit alcoholic beverages.



Read More about the Latest Dietary Guidelines!

Resource Corner

The TX RPC Project develops accessible and accurate public health policy-related resources from field experts. Links to specific resource categories on our website can be found below:

[TX RPC Project Health Policy Resources](#)

[Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living Webinar Series](#)

[TX RPC Project Newsletters Archive](#)

[Texas Legislative Bill Tracker](#)

[Texas Child Health Status Reports and Toolkits](#)

Request information on a public health topic.

About

The [Texas Research-to-Policy Collaboration \(TX RPC\) Project](#) is a nonpartisan network that aims to bridge research and policy by supporting partnerships between child health researchers and legislators.

If you and your legislative office are interested in collaborating with our team to receive data-driven information at state, district, and local levels, please reach out to TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

Contact Our Team

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For more information about the TX RPC Project, please email: TXRPCNetwork@uth.tmc.edu.

This email was written and designed by Dr. Yuzi Zhang and Kirsten Handler.

 **UTHealth Houston**
School of Public Health



Texas Research-to-Policy
— Collaboration Project —

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