



# NCCOR Member Call

April 15, 2026 | 2:00 p.m. ET

# Agenda

- Steering Committee updates
- Spotlight: Policy Priorities and Research Needs for Advancing Healthy Eating
  - Megan Lott, MPH, RDN, Healthy Eating Research
- Spotlight: Data, Trends, and Maps: One–Stop Portal for Data Visualizations
  - Deborah Galuska, PhD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Workgroup and communication updates
- Emerging opportunities for NCCOR
- Calendar reminders

# Steering Committee Updates

- June 10 Member Meeting
  - In-person at FHI 360 and hybrid
    - Time TBD
  - Theme: To explore the impact of Food is Medicine programs on at-risk populations, particularly children and pregnant women.
  - Confirmed speakers:
    - Shreela Sharma, PhD, RDN, LD, *UTHealth Houston, School of Public Health*
    - Allison Wu, MD, MPH, *Boston Children's Hospital*

# Steering Committee Updates

The SC approved a new workgroup: Rapid Infant Growth: Using Growth Charts for Longitudinal Assessment Among Children Under Age 2 Years

- Goal: Convene multidisciplinary experts in a virtual, one-day workshop to identify research gaps that, if filled, could help to clarify existing definitions and the appropriate use of measures such as weight-for-length versus BMI in infancy.
- Co-Leads: Aly Goodman, Lucy Kompaniyets, & Sam Pierce
- Co-Chairs: Dr. Charles Wood, *Duke University Department of Pediatrics*
- Meeting time: Second and fourth Wednesday from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. ET

To join the workgroup, please email Olivia at [ogiordanokean@fhi360.org](mailto:ogiordanokean@fhi360.org).

# Policy Priorities and Research Needs for Advancing Healthy Eating

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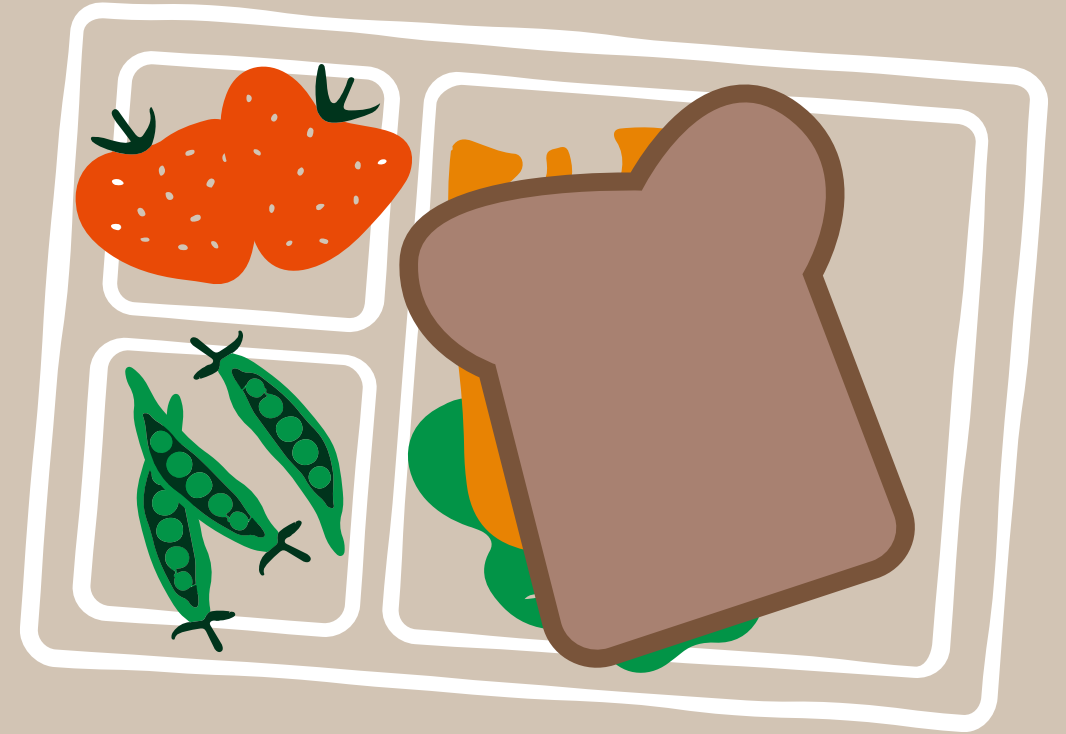
**Megan Lott, MPH**  
*Healthy Eating Research*

# Healthy Eating Research

## Policy Priorities and Research Needs for Advancing Healthy Eating

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A 2026-2027 Research Agenda for U.S. Children and Adolescents



# Purpose

This research agenda is intended to provide a blueprint for immediate (i.e., 12-18 month) research needs to inform strategies to improve access to healthy foods, diet quality, and healthy weights among children and families.

The Research Agenda presents:

- An overview of **priority policy issues** organized by life stage or federal nutrition program
- A set of **research priorities** aligned with three overarching themes that emerged across topic areas

The resulting research agenda reflects the collective expertise of leading researchers, advocates, and funders.



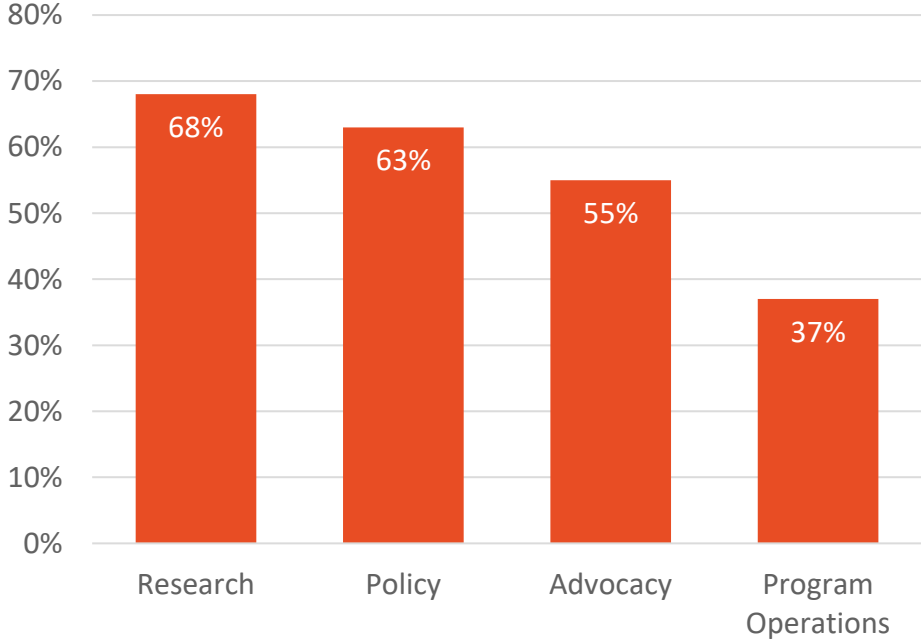
# Methods

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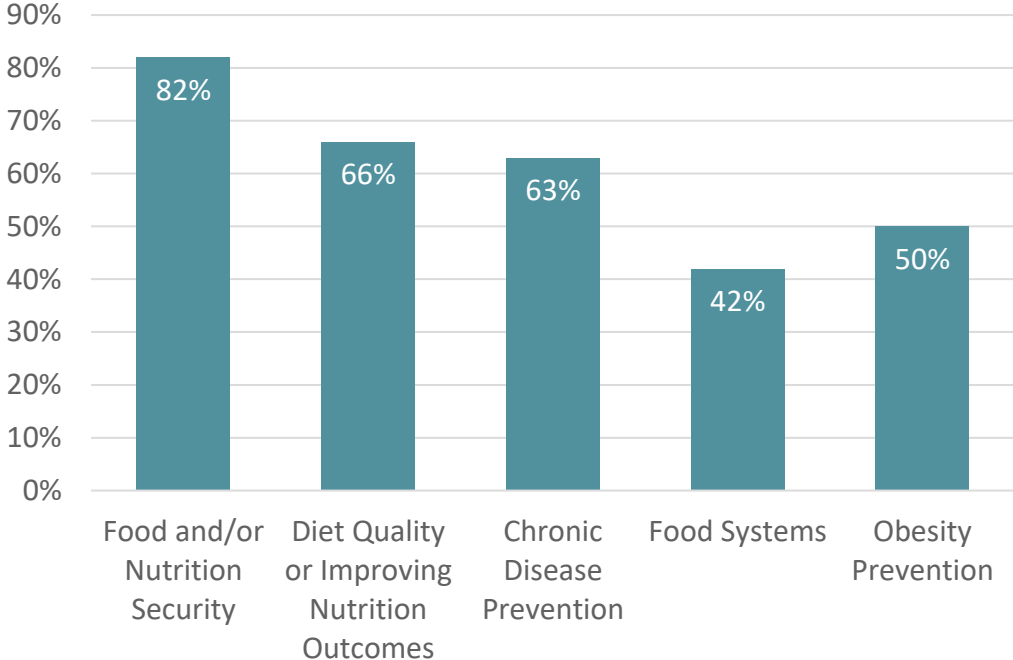
# The Survey Tapped a Deep Well of Expertise

Respondents represent a cross-section of leaders in research, advocacy, and policy.

Primary Areas of Work

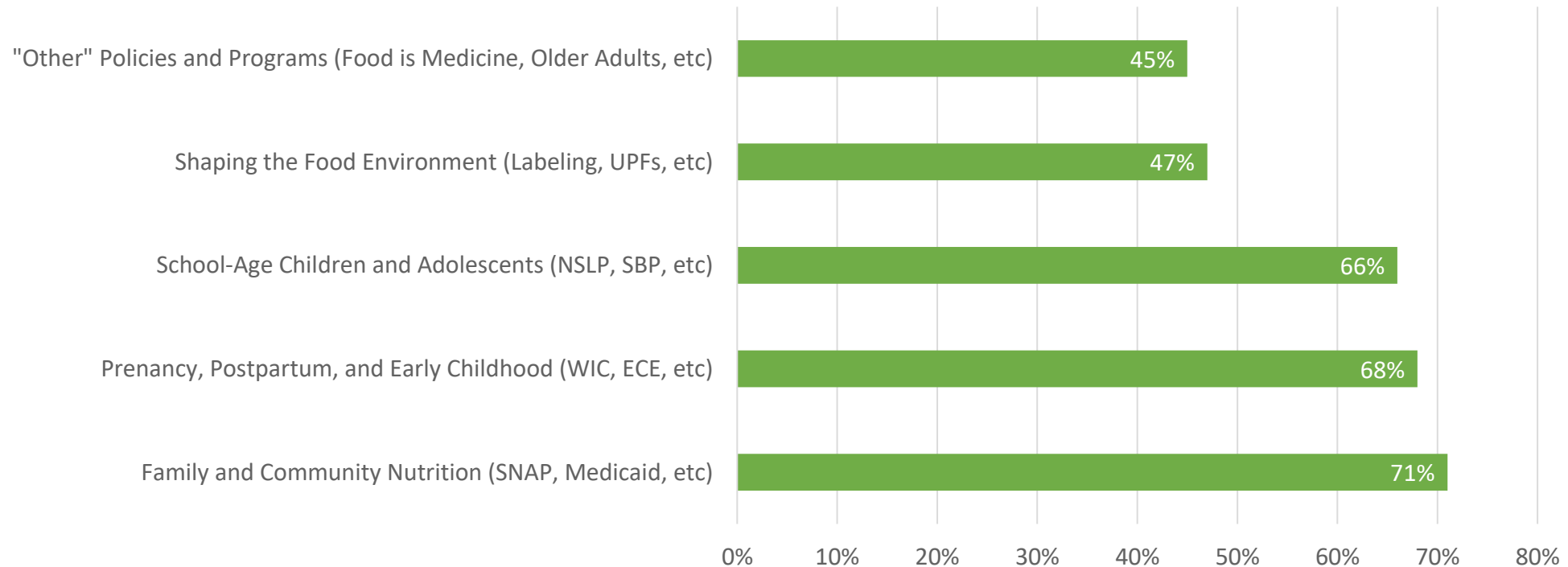


Lenses for Approaching Policy



# Experts Engaged Across the Full Spectrum of Child and Family Nutrition

The survey captured insights from leaders working on policies and programs from pregnancy through adolescence and beyond.



# Summary of Top Policy Priorities

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# Cross-Cutting Themes

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1.

## Impacts of cuts to SNAP and Medicaid

The most urgent priority is documenting the impact of unprecedented cuts and restrictions to SNAP, WIC, and Medicaid, which threaten to dismantle the foundation of food security.

2.

## Reductions in Data Collection Tools

With federal data sources under threat, there is a critical need for rapid-response evaluation of state-level policy changes and research that demonstrates the economic and health ROI of nutrition programs.

3.

## Structural Barriers to Program Access

Structural barriers to program access, including administrative burden, immigration-related eligibility restrictions, and rural access challenges were consistently identified as factors amplifying the effects of policy and funding shifts.

# Families and Communities

The survey revealed a singular, overwhelming concern: **monumental cuts and structural changes to SNAP** threaten to destabilize food access for millions of families, with severe ripple effects across all other nutrition programs

Defense  
against SNAP  
cuts

Work  
Requirements

Safety Net  
Integrity

Immigrant  
access



# State-Level Policy Priorities

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## The State-Level Threat: Intensifying Federal Attacks

- **State Funding Challenges:** States are preparing for a major **cost-sharing shift**, requiring a state match for SNAP administration
- **Restrictions on Food Choices:** Efforts to limit food choices through state-level SNAP purchase restrictions
- **Mandatory Employment and Training (E&T):** Acts as barrier rather than support
- **Navigation and Workforce:** Need for a trained workforce of **referral agents** to help families navigate increasingly complex and "confusing" work requirements



# Early Childhood

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Experts emphasized that programs serving pregnant people and young children are on the front lines, facing threats from funding cuts, administrative burdens, and hostile state-level policies.

## Top Areas of Focus

**WIC:** 71%

**Early Care & Education (ECE) Programs:** 67%

**Breastfeeding Promotion:** 48%

# Early Childhood: Most pressing policy issues

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## 1: Strengthening and Fully Funding WIC

**Issue:** Ensuring WIC is fully funded and its science-based food package is protected from political interference

**Issue:** Defending remote/virtual services (Modern WIC Act), which are critical for access but rely on temporary waivers or are set to expire

## 2: The Ripple Effect of Safety Net Cuts

**Issue:** Dismantling of Medicaid and SNAP (via HR 1) will have direct, negative impacts on WIC adjunctive eligibility and families' overall food security

## 3: State-Level 'Chilling Effects' Impacting Enrollment

**Issue:** State legislation requiring immigration status checks (e.g., Idaho, Louisiana) creates a 'chilling effect,' deterring eligible families from seeking crucial support out of fear

“Threats to ongoing data collection around Food Security, PRAMS data collection, NHANES, etc. are significant obstacles for ongoing national policy efforts.”

# School-age Children

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Experts see school meals as increasingly critical as other family supports are cut. However, these programs face their own threats from repealed nutrition standards, budget pressures, and the proliferation of ultra-processed foods.

## Top Areas of Focus

- National School Lunch Program: 74%
- Summer Feeding Programs: 74%
- Food Procurement Policies in Schools: 68%

# Most pressing policy issues

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## 1: Eroding Nutrition Standards & Quality

**Issue:** Potential for new Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) to be influenced by MAHA (Medical and Health Association) promoting saturated fat. Congressional actions like the Whole Milk for Health Kids Act undermine science-based standards.

**Issue:** The extensive presence of ultra-processed, non-nutritious foods in schools

## 2: The Domino Effect of SNAP Cuts

**Issue:** The viability of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is at risk as changes to SNAP and Medicaid undercut direct certification and eligibility.

## 3: Economic Strain

**Issue:** Increasing food costs and the expectation that school food authorities be self-supporting forces the purchasing of lower-quality, cheaper foods.

“The viability of school food authorities to work within increasing costs of food...and the looming issue of how Reconciliation changes to SNAP and Medicaid will undercut eligibility and CEP.”

# Reshaping the Food Environment

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Experts across all life stages identified the need for policies that counter the unhealthy food environment, with a strong focus on ultra-processed foods (UPFs) and industry practices.

## Top Areas of Focus

- UPFs or Food Additive Restrictions: 67%
- Food Marketing: 67%
- Food Supply: 67%

# Re-shaping the Food Environment

## Key Federal Policy Issues

- Developing a federal regulatory definition for UPFs
- Implementing a mandatory, clear front-of-package (FOP) labelling system
- Strengthening GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) reform and post-market chemical safety
- Pursuing mandatory sodium reduction targets

## Key State & Local Policy Issues

- Bills banning specific additives and UPFs from schools and the general food supply
- Momentum for sugary-sweetened beverage (SSB) taxes
- Implementation of healthy food procurement policies in public institutions

# The Research Agenda

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2026-2027

# The 2026-2027 Rapid-Response Research Themes

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## Evaluation of Federal Nutrition Programs and Other Policies

Prioritize rapid-response research that quantifies the health and economic consequences of proposed cuts and restrictions to SNAP, WIC, and school meals, as well as new opportunities to evaluate innovative policy approaches.

## Data Collection and Surveillance

This includes restoring core surveillances data and modeling state-level impacts.

## Enhancing Evidence for Decision Making

Generate rigorous evidence on the ROI of nutrition interventions—from healthy school meals to breastfeeding support—to demonstrate their value not just for health, but for economic output and long-term medical cost savings.

“We desperately need funding to support rapid response evaluations of the varied policy changes that are taking place.”

# Most Pressing Research Gaps: SNAP

## Impacts of SNAP Cuts

- Federal funding cuts
- Expanded work requirements
- Changes to eligibility & access

## Impacts of increased administrative and benefit cost sharing

- Error rates
- State cost shift

## Impacts of SNAP Food Restriction Waivers

- Program participation
- Food purchases
- Stigma
- Food & Nutrition Security
- Health Outcomes

## Effects of state policy responses to increased cost sharing

- **New state revenue strategies**
- New/additional enrollment barriers
- Cuts to other programs

## Impacts of SNAP & Medicaid Cuts on:

- WIC
- CACFP
- School meals
- other safety net programs

# Most Pressing Research Gaps: Early Childhood

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## WIC

- Impacts of funding cuts (HR1)
- Remote vs in-person services
- Immigration policy impacts
- New DGAs

## CACFP

- New DGAs
- Impacts of changes to reimbursement rates/tiers
- focus on UPF

# Most Pressing Research Gaps: School Meals

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Impacts of 2025-  
2030 DGAs on  
Nutrition  
Standards

## Impacts of UPF Regulations

- Different definitions
- Scratch cooking
- Kitchen infrastructure and equipment

## Healthy School Meals for All

- Direct certification eligibility
- CEP

Summer  
Program  
Evaluation

# Most Pressing Research Gaps: Food Environment

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**UPF  
Policies**

**GRAS  
Reform**

**Front Of  
Pack  
Labeling**

**Sodium  
Reduction  
Targets**

# Data Collection and Surveillance

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## The Most Urgent Research Need: Restore Foundational Data

Restore the USDA Household Food Security Survey, which has been discontinued. Without this gold-standard tool, the ability to quantify the impact of federal SNAP cuts and track hunger is severely weakened.



## Critical Research Gaps for 2026-2027

- NHANES
- Maternal and infant health data collection systems (e.g., PRAMS)
- OTHERS?

# Enhancing Evidence for Decision Making

<b>Economic and ROI</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Impacts on food and nutrition security</li><li>• Economic outcomes</li><li>• Health care cost savings</li></ul>
<b>Healthy Equity Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Benefits to the broader community and specific population groups</li><li>• Populations of particular interest to policymakers</li></ul>
<b>Outcomes of common interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Co-benefits of policies that align with values and goals of decision-makers</li><li>• Leverage policies of interest to build support for complementary nutrition policies</li></ul>
<b>Communication and Dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Effective strategies for translating and disseminating research findings in new ways that resonate with decision-makers</li></ul>

# Download the full Research Agenda TODAY

<https://healthyeatingresearch.org/research/building-a-national-research-agenda/>

## Policy Priorities and Research Needs for Advancing Healthy Eating

A 2026-2027 Research Agenda for  
U.S. Children and Adolescents

Healthy  
Eating  
Research

March 2026

### INTRODUCTION

The current food and nutrition system has made it difficult for many children and families in the U.S. to access affordable and healthy foods, thereby contributing to poor diet quality, food insecurity, and diet-related conditions, such as obesity. In addition, Americans of all ages and income levels do not meet dietary recommendations, consuming too few fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy products and too many ultraprocessed foods, refined grains, saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars.



# Data, Trends, and Maps: One–Stop Portal for Data Visualizations

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Deborah Galuska, PhD  
CDC



# **Data, Trends, and Maps: One-Stop Portal for Data Visualizations**

Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity

# What is Data, Trends and Maps (DTM)?

# DNPAO Data, Trends, and Maps

This interactive database provides national, state, and county-level data about the health status and behaviors of Americans as well as environmental or policy supports. Categories include breastfeeding, fruits and vegetables, physical activity, sugar drinks, media use, and obesity/weight. Visitors can examine data by demographics such as sex and race/ethnicity. The data come from multiple sources.

*For the best experience, view site on a larger screen, such as a desktop computer or laptop.*

## KEY POINTS

- Explore health topic indicators at the national, state, and local levels
- Compare health topics across states
- Build custom visualizations for your reports

US View

State View

Local View

State Comparisons

Custom Graphs

This view lists indicators for a specific health topic at the US level. After selecting a health topic, click “See More” on a desired indicator card to see an enlarged graphic, trends over time, and a regional breakdown.

Copy Link 


## Step 1 (Required)

Health Topic

Obesity / Weight Statu 


## Step 2

Data Type


All Data Types 

## Step 3

Year

Most Recent 

Demographic Group

All Groups 

## SETTINGS

Show Distributions 

# What data are in DTM?

# DTM Data

- 68 indicators
- 14 datasets
- National, state, and local
- Diet, physical activity, breastfeeding and obesity



# Data on Obesity



Toddlers

Children

Adolescents

Adults

# Data on Behaviors

## Breastfeeding

- Initiation
- Duration
- Exclusivity

## Diet

- Fruit and vegetable consumption
- Sugary drinks

## Physical activity

- Meeting recommendations
- Physical education
- Active transport

# Data on Policy and Environment

## Breastfeeding

- Hospital
- Childcare

## Diet

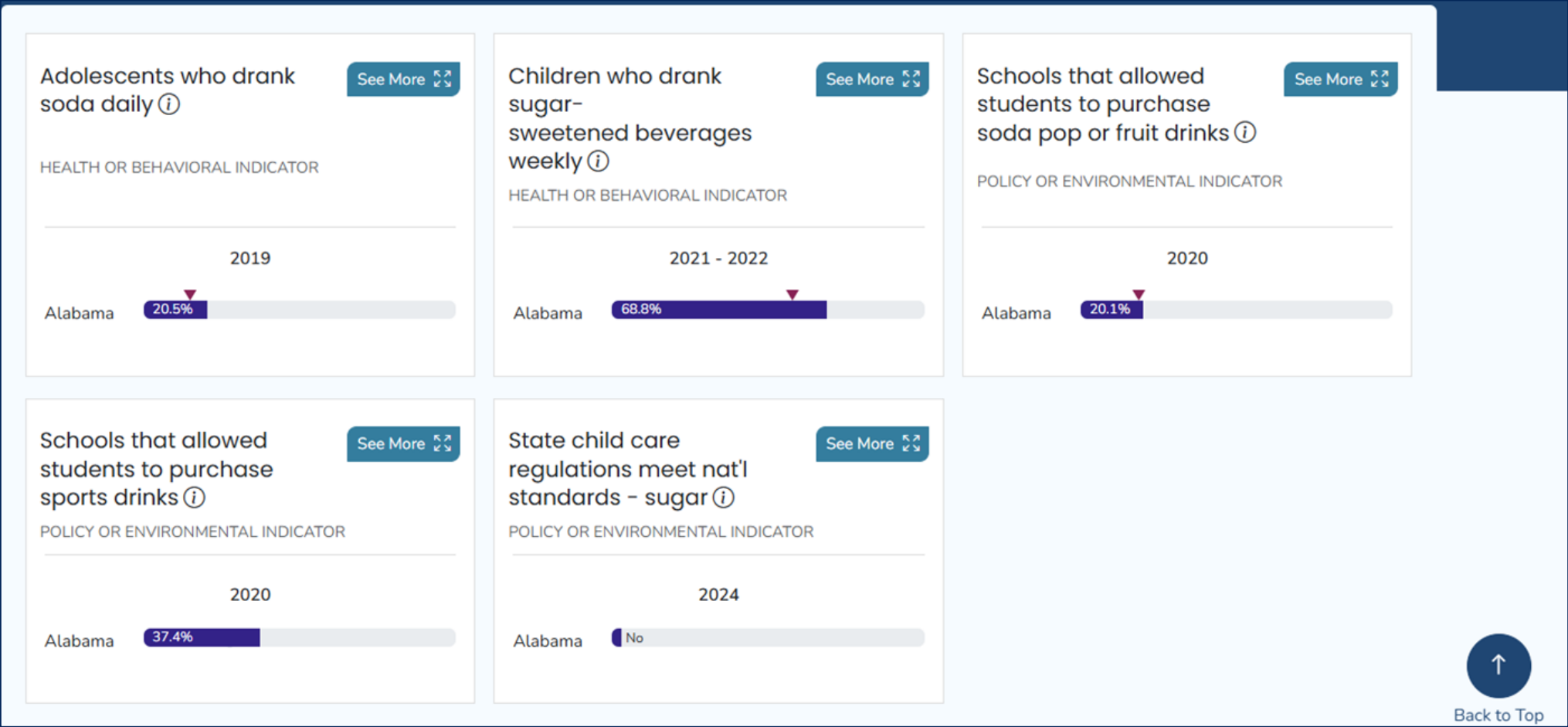
- Childcare
- Schools
- Community

## Physical activity

- Childcare
- Schools
- Community

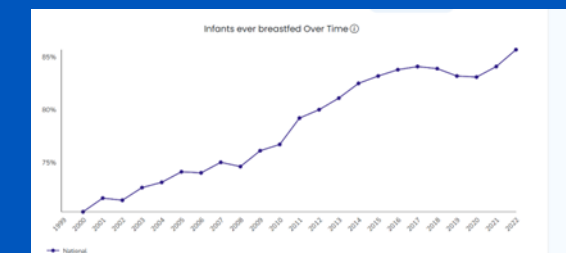
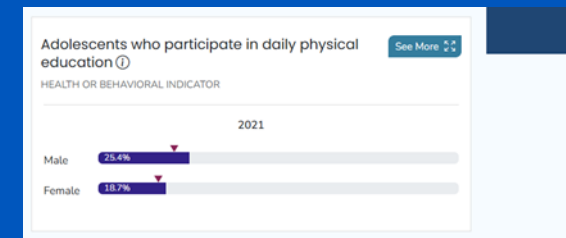
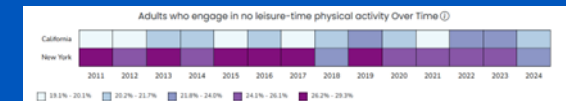
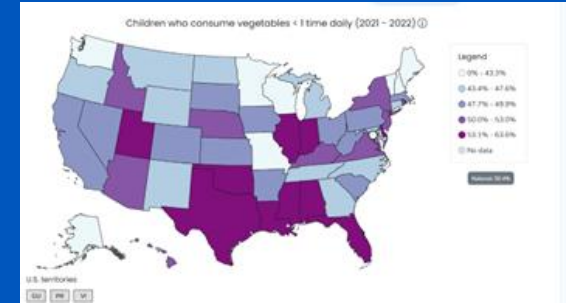
# What are some features of DTM?

# See all data from one topic at the same time



# Display data multiple ways

- Maps
- Heat Maps
- Bar Graphs
- Trends
- Tables



# Build your own graph

Step 1

Visualization Goal

Visualize a relationship between indicators



Step 2



**Scatter Plot**



Display the relationship between two indicators

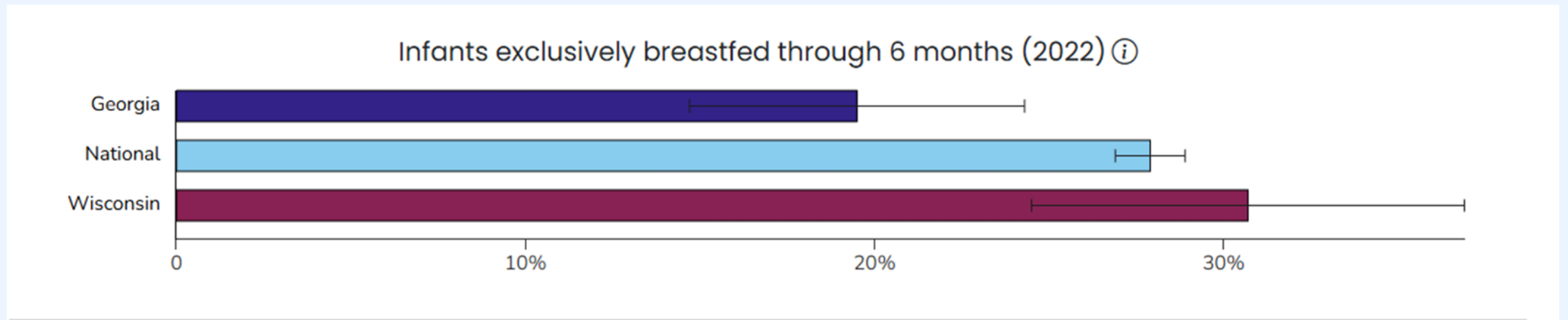


**Bivariate Map**



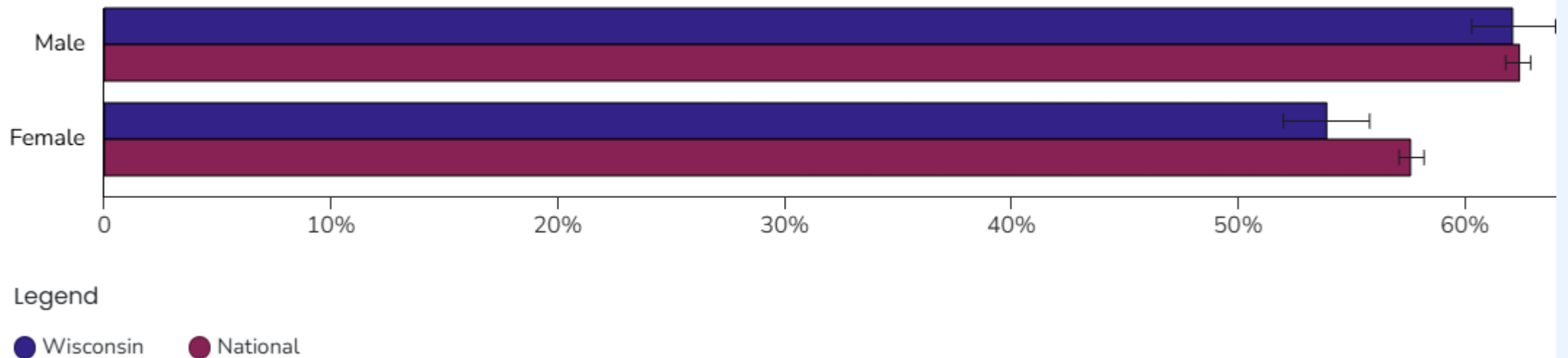
Display geographical locations that are colored by two variables

# Compare data between select states



# Compare subgroups

## Adults meeting federal aerobic physical activity guidelines



# Disseminate information multiple ways

- ✓ Download visuals to use in presentations and reports
- ✓ Imbed link to a particular graphic in social media or a website
- ✓ Download data for individual analysis

# How can NCCOR members use DTM?

# DTM uses



Research



Program planning  
and evaluation



Presentations



Providing information  
to decision makers

**How do I learn more  
about DTM?**

# DNPAO Data, Trends, and Maps

[www.dnpao-dtm.cdc.gov](http://www.dnpao-dtm.cdc.gov)

For more information, contact CDC  
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)  
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 <https://www.cdc.gov/>  
Follow us on social **@CDCgov**

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



# Workgroup and Communication Updates

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**Meher Din**

*NCCOR Coordinating Center*

# Workgroup Updates

- **Obesity-Related Policy Research in the U.S. (OPUS) Learning Network:** The next meeting of the OPUS Learning Network will be on Thursday, April 23 where grantees will be discussing how to measure community engagement. The group will be hosting a roundtable at HER and has submitted a full session proposal to APHA.
- **Research Gaps in Treatment of Pediatric Obesity with Obesity Medications:** The workgroup and workshop co-chairs have finalized their review of workshop outputs. Materials have now been sent to all workshop attendees for their review, after which, the whitepaper draft will be compiled.

# Workgroup Updates

- **Sport and Youth Well-Being:** This workgroup is continuing to complete their environmental scan, including refining their definition of “quality” youth sports programs, compiling relevant literature, and preparing for expert interviews.
- **Rapid Infant Growth:** This workgroup held its first meeting and is beginning to gather a summary of evidence on infant growth standards, identify key questions to address through workshop presentations and discussion, and identify experts to invite to participate in the workshop.

# Communications Updates

## Conference Updates

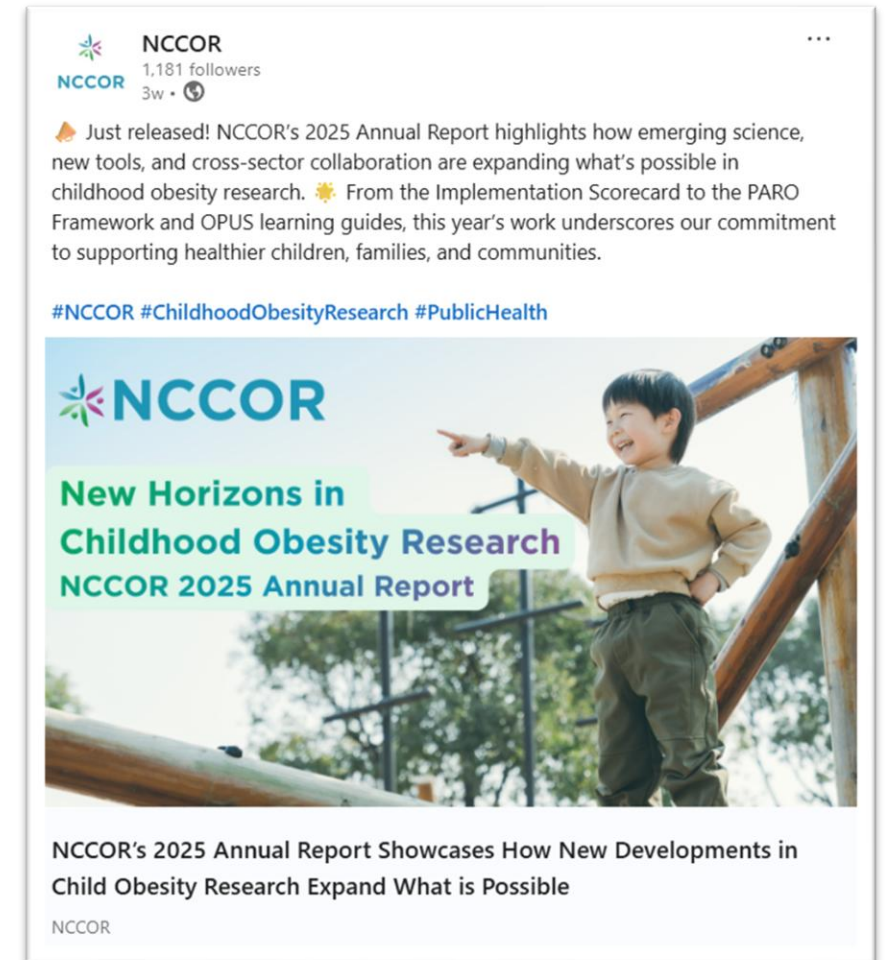
- The PARO Workgroup will present a poster at the Society for Prevention Research meeting titled “The PARO Framework as a Tool to Advance Physical Activity Research.”
- Amanda, Jill, and members of the OPUS Learning Network will host a Research Roundtable at HER on April 22, “Advancing Whole-of-Systems Obesity Prevention Research: Methods and Partnerships.”



Healthy  
Eating  
Research

# Annual Report Promotion

- We're seeing a great response to the 2025 Annual Report. Our recent LinkedIn article generated high audience interest, generating 271 impressions and a 6% engagement rate, exceeding industry benchmarks.





# Emerging Opportunities for NCCOR

# Calendar Reminders

## Member Calls

- May 20
- July 15
- August 19

## Member Meetings

- June 10
- September 16

Do you want to present your work to NCCOR members? Let us know at [rgrimsland@fhi360.org](mailto:rgrimsland@fhi360.org)!



# Questions?