

Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) to Inform Alcohol and Sugary Beverage Policy Action in San Francisco (SF)

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SF Health Improvement Partnership (SFHIP) includes 2 working groups of diverse community stakeholders focused on implementing health promotion programs and policies to reduce health disparities related to alcohol retail sales and sugary beverage (SB) consumption, respectively. Regulatory and tax policies are often controversial; industry campaigns opposing these types of policies often target minority communities. We used CBPR methods to understand vulnerable community perspectives on policies on off-sale alcohol sales and SB consumption. A team of university, public health department, and community representatives conducted and analyzed data from 18 focus groups, 325 surveys, and key informant interviews focusing on low income, minority residents. Themes emerged for each subject area; some examples included cost, poverty, safety, education, and a disconnection from government. Study results were disseminated to local policymakers. Engaging affected communities in discussions about the harmful health effects of SBs and the range of policy options provided a context for successfully enacting ordinances requiring health risk warnings on SB advertisements and prohibiting city agencies from buying SBs, and installing water filling stations in low income neighborhoods. Similarly, the process strengthened alliances among alcohol policy partners, including the SF Police Department, Department of Public Health, and grassroots community organizers. These projects demonstrate the value of CBPR for advancing community-informed, evidence-based policies to reduce health disparities.