

Public health professionals as policy entrepreneurs: The case of Act 1220

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An Act to: create, coordinate and improve

Arkansas' Legislative Act 1220 of 2003:

- Create – statewide Child Health Advisory Committee (CHAC)
- Coordinate – state efforts to combat childhood obesity
- Improve – the health of the next generation of Arkansans

Act 1220

- CHAC to make recommendations for public school nutrition, physical activity and related school environment standards
- Annual BMI assessment and confidential report to parents
- Restrict vending machine access in public elementary schools
- Establish school district-level Nutrition and Physical Activity Advisory Committees
- Public disclosure of competitive food and beverage contracts
- Employ Community Health Promotion Specialists to provide technical assistance to schools

Comprehensive v. Incremental Reform

- *“There is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things.”*

— Niccolo Machiavelli
The Prince (1532)

Research Questions

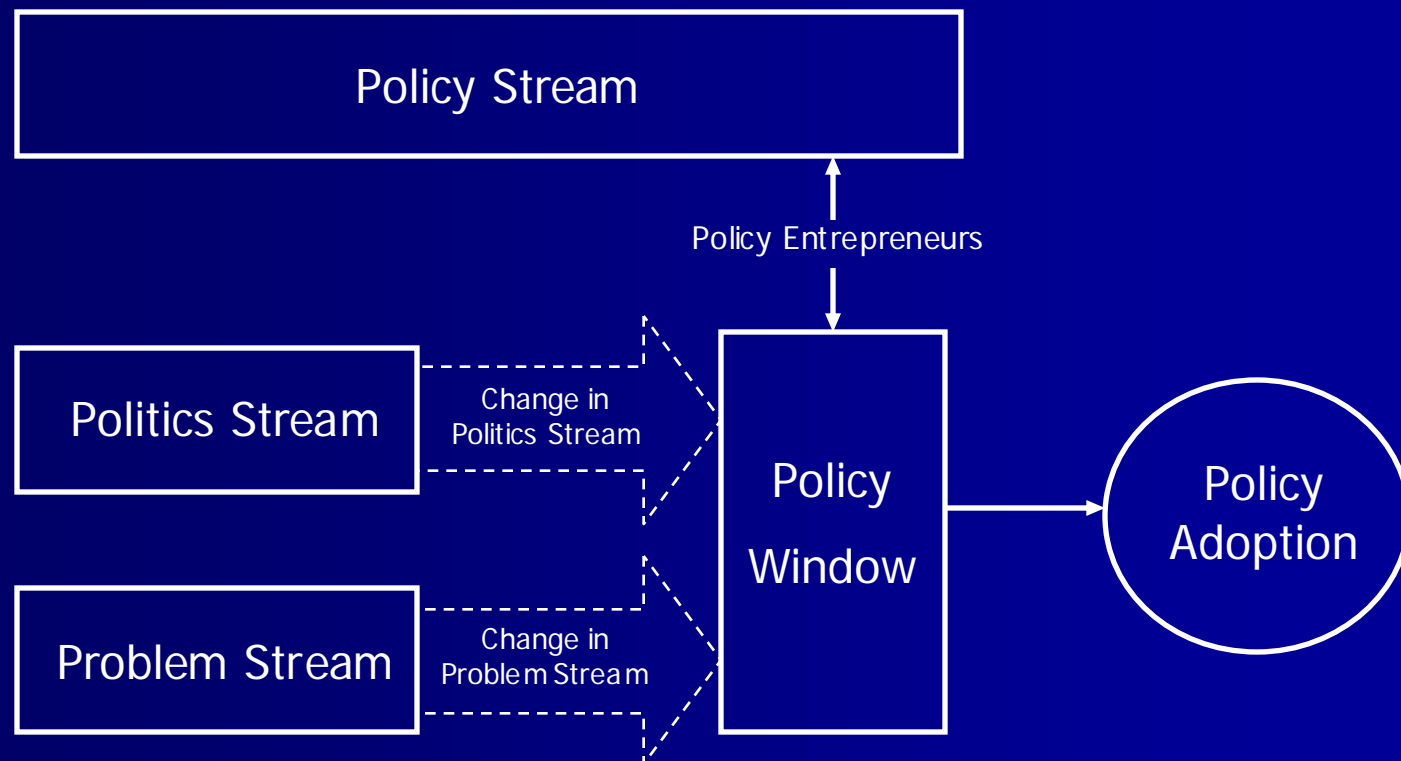
- What were the key events that led to Arkansas' bold policy initiative?
- Who garnered political attention for this issue and formulated legislation?
- What was the policy making process for Legislative Act 1220?

Policy Streams Model

- A lens for evaluating the policymaking process when ambiguity is present
- How do issues gain the attention of policymakers?
- Convergence of three streams:
 - Policy
 - Politics
 - Problem

Kingdon, JW. *Agendas, alternatives, and public policies*. 2nd ed. New York: Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers Inc.; 1995.

Policy Streams Model



Adapted from: Felix HC. Progress in Community Health Partnerships. 2007.

Methods

- Qualitative methods (review of public records, semi-structured interviews)
 - Interviews from 23 key informants in 2004
 - Secondary documents provided greater detail and context
- Responses related to analysis framework components identified

Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

2003

Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

2003

Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

2003

Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

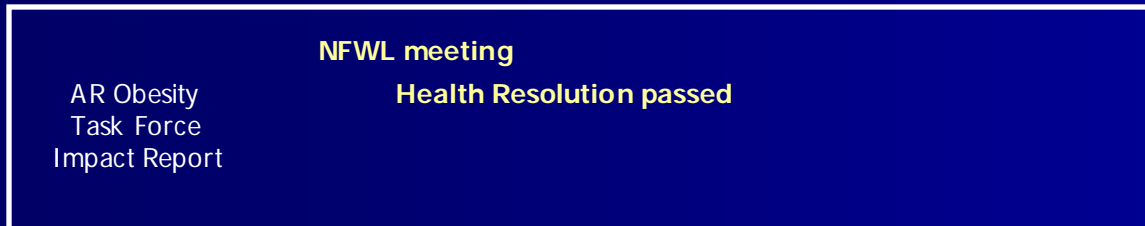
2003

Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

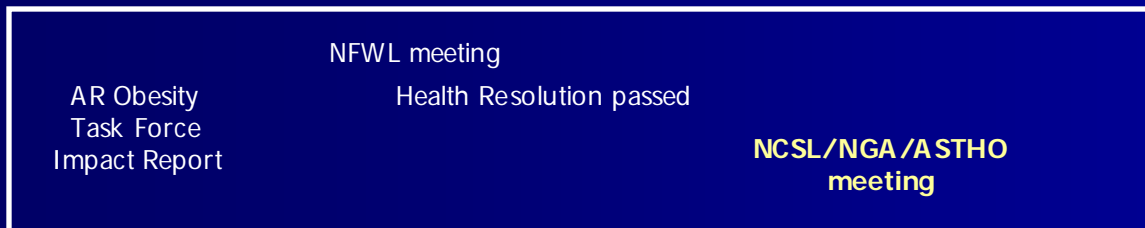
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

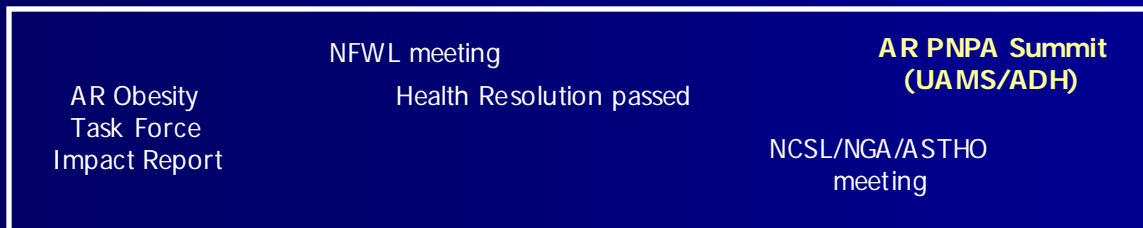
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

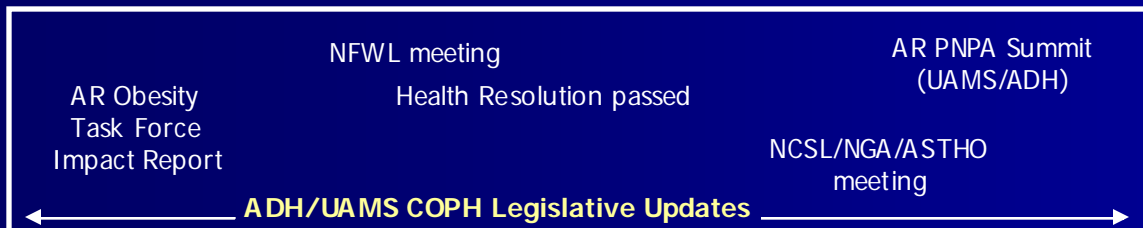
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

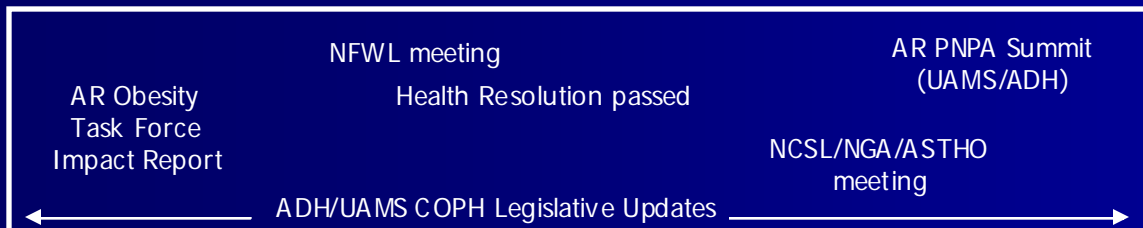
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

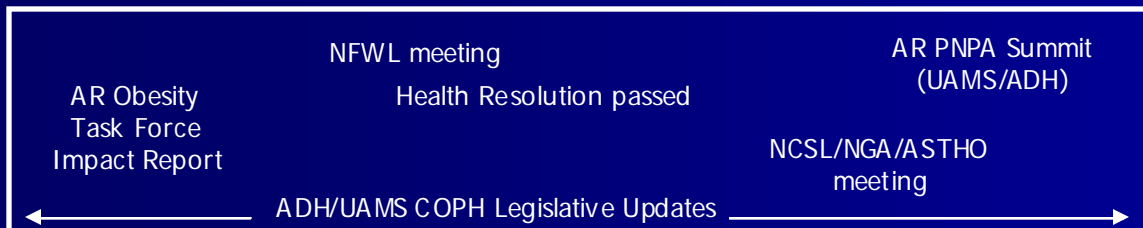
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

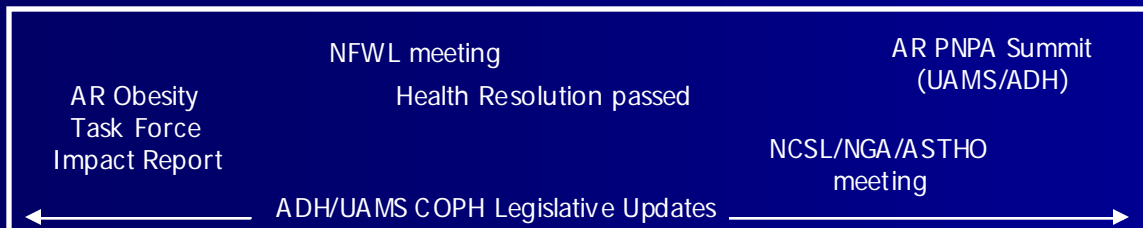
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Results

Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream

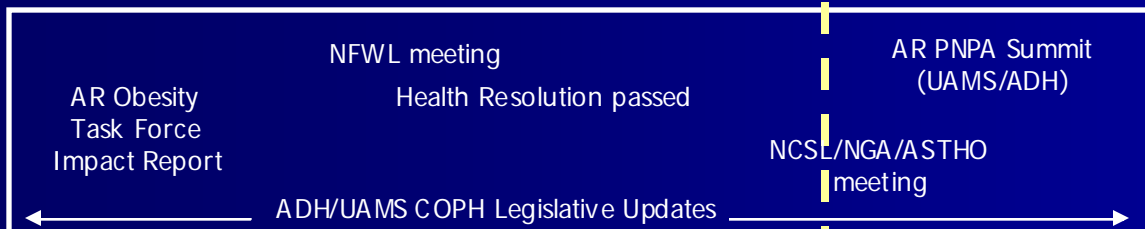


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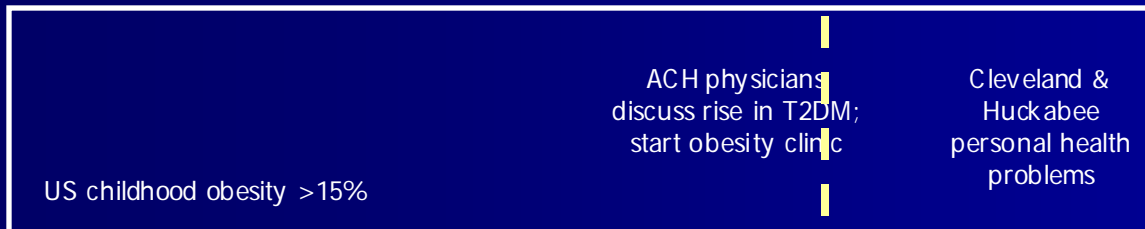
Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



Window opened due to changes in Streams

2000

2001

2002

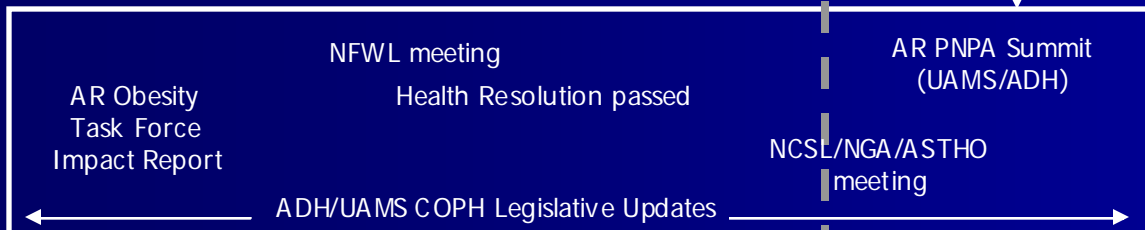
2003

Results

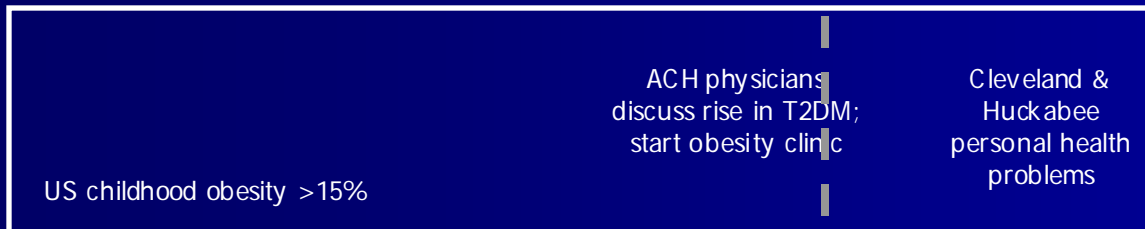
Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



Policy Entrepreneurs

Window opened due to changes in Streams

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2001

2002

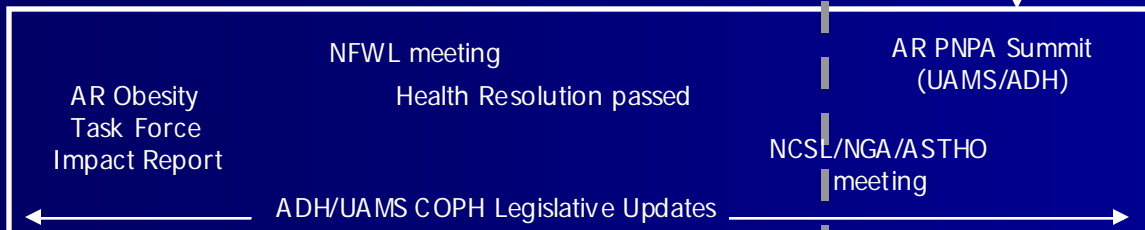
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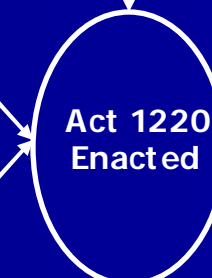
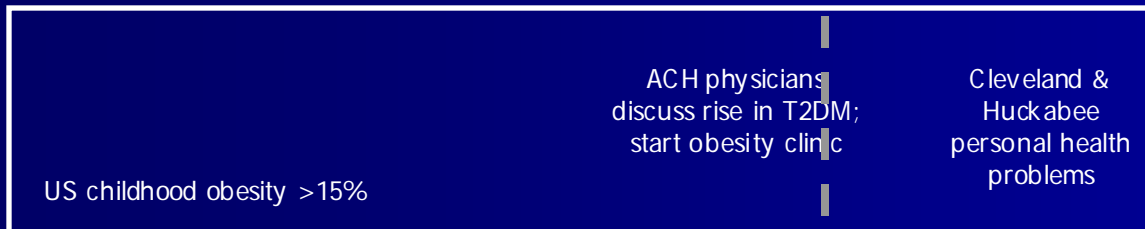
Policy Stream



Politics Stream



Problem Stream



2000

2001

2002

2003

Discussion

- What were the key events that led to Arkansas' bold policy initiative?
 - “I went to a National Women in Government Conference and all across the wall was plastered: Little Rock, Arkansas, #1 in the nation for childhood obesity. That really woke me up and that was one reason that I spoke out and said this is something we needed to do.”
 - “The initial idea came from a series of public health meetings where I heard presentations made by the Health Department on both smoking and obesity.”
 - “Speaker Cleveland had some personal health problems than made him recognize even more the seriousness of these issues and that we needed to do something about it.”

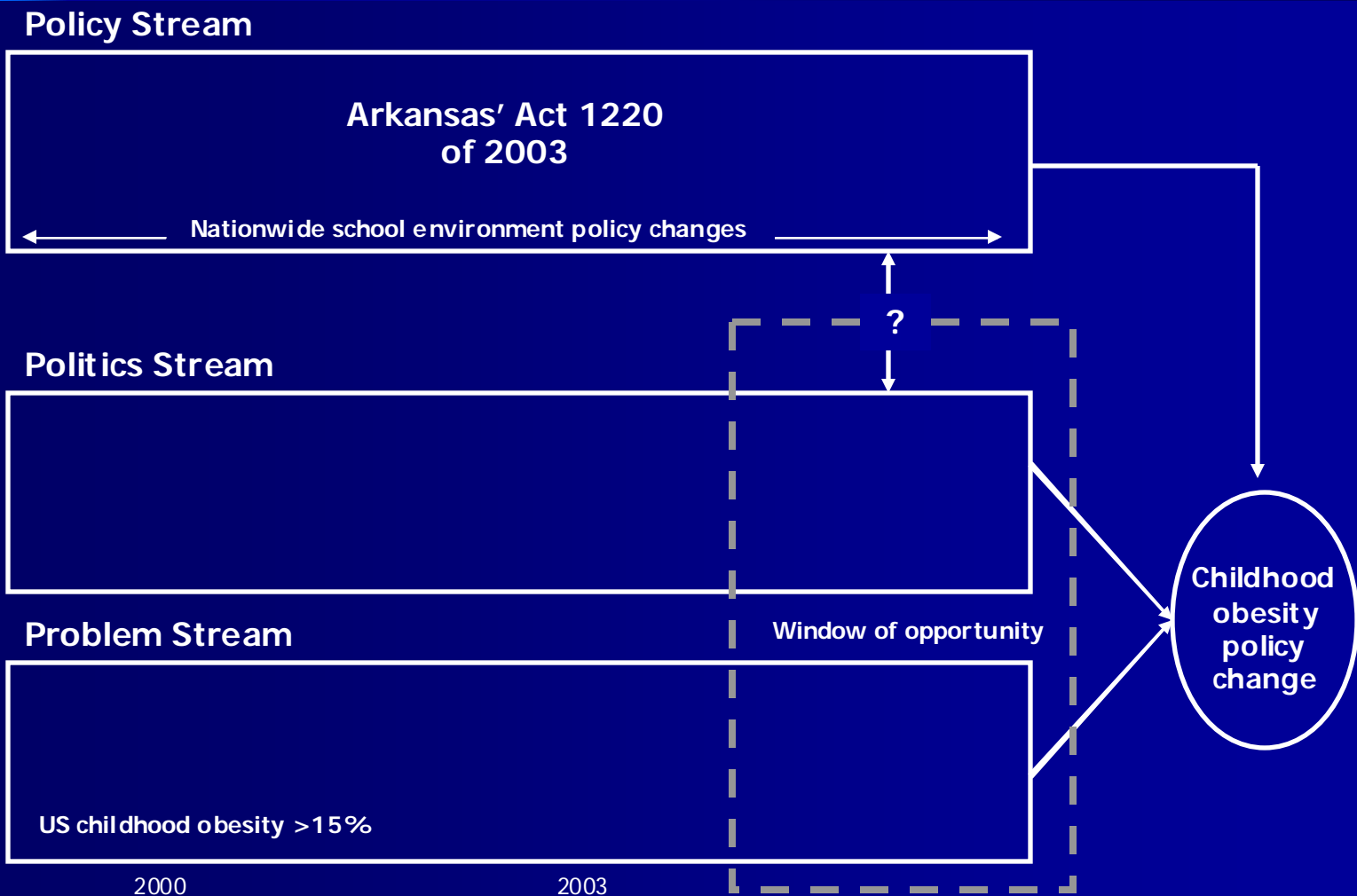
Discussion

- Who garnered political attention for this issue and formulated legislation?
 - “*The actual idea was Speaker Cleveland’s.*”
 - “*During the [PNPA] Summit groups were to determine what could be done about the obesity epidemic in each of several areas; one was schools.*”
 - “*The Health Department was asked by Speaker Cleveland and others to take the lead in drafting potential legislation .*”

Discussion

- What was the policy making process for Legislative Act 1220?
 - *“Concurrent with [the health crisis], the legislature was tasked with balancing the Medicaid budget. So I think [Speaker Cleveland] had a personal experience, professional interest, and a legislative responsibility that came together.”*
 - *“It just happened to be that the legislators were interested in hearing about ways to improve child health and were willing to stick their neck out with a bill that was really different from anything that had been done in the rest of the United States.”*

Looking ahead



<http://www.uams.edu/coph/reports/#Obesity>