

Government Purchasing to Improve Public Health: Theory Practice and Evidence

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Increasing concern about obesity and other nutrition-related health problems spurred governments to develop more robust and targeted approaches to foster healthier diet at a population level (Fulponi, 2009; Kersh & Morone, 2002). Government routinely uses its regulatory power to alter activities and behaviors that influence public health, for example the New York City ban on the use of trans fats in restaurants (Unnevehr & Jagmanaitis, 2008). Yet, in some scenarios, government may more effectively promote positive change through other means, including its purchasing or procurement authority. Emerging efforts using government purchasing power to stimulate demand for healthier products provides a pathway to healthier food purchasing. In this paper, we describe a causal diagram that outlines this process from the initial stage of developing a healthier solicitation to final stage of achieving outcomes.

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