Public Health and Transportation are Inextricably Linked.

Transportation is a social determinant of health (SDOH), one of the key variables that significantly affects the quality and length of a person's life based on the systems in place (or not) where he/she lives. Low-income communities and communities of color suffer disproportionately from some transportation policies.

Better Transportation Policy Means...

1. Access to Opportunities and Paths Out of Poverty
   - Higher-paying jobs from neighborhoods where the housing is less expensive
   - College, training programs, internships, & language classes
   - Social services, child care, grocery stores, medical appointments, and substance use disorder treatment and recovery supports

2. Increased Physical Activity
   - Communities with better public transit systems and walkable, bikeable neighborhoods are healthier with lower rates of chronic diseases.
   - Complete Streets policies make walking and biking safer and more inviting.
   - Children from low-income families in urban areas especially depend on safe sidewalks and intersections to get to school and after-school activities and jobs.

Households without cars depend heavily on transit, pedestrian, and bicycle infrastructure.

The Role of Transportation in Promoting Physical Activity and Overall Health

- People who live in neighborhoods with sidewalks are more likely to be active.
- Traffic-calming efforts like speed bumps and medians reduce the number of automobile crashes that cause pedestrian injuries.
- Public transit users take more steps per day than people who rely on cars.
3. **Age-Friendly Communities**
   - Access to transportation is often what decides if people can stay in their homes as they age.
   - Social isolation is often the first step in declining health for older adults, so access to transportation is a key ingredient for health and independence.

If a community is livable for an 80-year-old, it's also more livable for a family with an 8-month-old and an 8-year-old.

4. **Improved Air Quality**
   - Reduced vehicle emissions improves air quality and reduces problems with asthma and other respiratory conditions.
   - Asthma is the leading cause of missed school, especially for Black, Latino, and low-income students.
   - Kids of color are more likely to live in communities with poor air quality and more likely to suffer from asthma compared to their white peers.

5. **Reduced Injuries and Fatalities from Crashes**
   - Better designed intersections and complete streets reduce the number of crashes between drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians.
   - Pedestrians and cyclists in low-income communities and communities of color are disproportionately injured and killed in crashes.

Reliable public transit is essential for people to take care of their physical, social, and emotional needs.

Lower speed limits reduce fatalities and the severity of injuries in all types of crashes.

T4MA Members, Partners, and Stakeholders Engaged in Public Health

- Boston Public Health Commission
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- WalkBoston
- Berkshire Regional Planning Commission
- Massachusetts Public Health Association
- Springfield Partners for Community Action

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