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Her interests focus on understanding the effect of community food environments on healthy eating behaviors and evaluating interventions that seek to increase access to healthy foods.

## Discussion Notes

Lack of access—to local food as well as to information about what is in food—represents a significant barrier to healthy eating. When there is poverty in a neighborhood, grocery stores relocate because they don't find operations in the area to be cost-effective; residents must then travel further to get food. Healthy restaurants may also limit their locations to wealthier neighborhoods. For refugee populations, there's an additional obstacle: it hard for non-English speakers to read labels at the grocery store and ask employees when the food was harvested. Forming support networks can allow communities to address these issues. Buying food in bulk for a group reduces costs. Efforts like Wholesome Wave Georgia (WWG) are also trying to help—each Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollar spent at a WWG partner market becomes two dollars for the shopper and the farmer.

Opportunities for exercise and the motivation to exercise may also be difficult to obtain. Encouraging employers to make fitness programs available to employees is an effective strategy; exercise boosts self-esteem and productivity.

## TAKE-HOME POINTS

Our physical and social surroundings, including built environments, influence the choices that we make about what we eat and our level of physical activity. Homes, schools, workplaces, restaurants, grocery stores, and neighborhoods are all examples of food and/or physical activity environments. These settings can all be changed to make it easier for people to make healthy choices.

Healthy foods are not equally available to all. Many low-income and underserved communities are less likely to have readily available, easily accessible, and affordable healthy food options.

Community members may be able to influence their food environments by advocating for healthier options and joining food policy committees or councils in the places where they live, learn, and work. Advocating for safe and walkable neighborhoods can also support obesity prevention.