

A paved walking and biking trail winds through a lush green park. The path is light-colored and curves through a dense canopy of green trees. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the grass and path. In the background, a playground structure is visible through the trees.

# The Health Care and Economic Benefits of Walking and Biking Trails

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# Health Care Costs

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- In 2016, national health expenditures totaled \$3.35 trillion
- Average of \$10,345 for every man, woman, and child
- Costs are projected to increase by 5.8% from 2015 to 2025
- About 5 percent of the population — those most frail or ill — accounts for nearly half the spending in a given year.
- By 2025, government health care programs will account for 47% of health care spending



# Health Care Costs (2013)

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\$101.4 billion: Diabetes

\$88.1 billion: Ischemic heart disease

\$86.7 billion: Low back and neck pain

\$83.9 billion: High blood pressure

\$71.1 billion: Depression

32%: Hospital care

20%: Physicians and other clinicians

10%: Prescription drugs from  
pharmacies



# Health and Physical Activity

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- Less than half of all U.S. adults, and 30% of high school students get the recommended daily amount of physical activity
- Regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do for their health
  - Help individuals control weight
  - Reduces risk of cardiovascular disease
  - Reduce risk for type 2 diabetes and metabolic syndrome
  - Reduces risk of some cancers
  - Strengthen bones and muscles
  - Improves mental health and mood



# Physical Activity and Health Care Costs

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- Lack of physical activity is associated with higher health care costs and utilization.
- Those who work out at least three times per week are:
  - More productive at work
  - Miss fewer workdays
- Translating to:
  - Lost income
  - Lost opportunities for advancement
  - Higher health care expenditures



# Physical Activity and Health Care Costs

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- Employees with metabolic syndrome who exercised enough cost \$2,770 in total health care annually, compared to \$3,855 for workers with metabolic syndrome who didn't exercise enough
- Pharmacy costs alone were twice as much
- 11.1% of aggregate health care expenditures were associated with inadequate physical activity



# Physical Activity and Income

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- Men who work out regularly can expect to make 6% more than their sedentary counterparts, on average
- Women who work out regularly make 10% more, on average



# Physical Activity and Health Status

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- For example:
  - Physical activity can decrease blood glucose control and prevent or delay type 2 diabetes
  - Combining physical activity and modest weight can lower type 2 diabetes risk by up to 58% in high-risk populations
  - 40% reduction in heart attack and stroke between the highest and lowest exercise groups for women engaging in physical activity

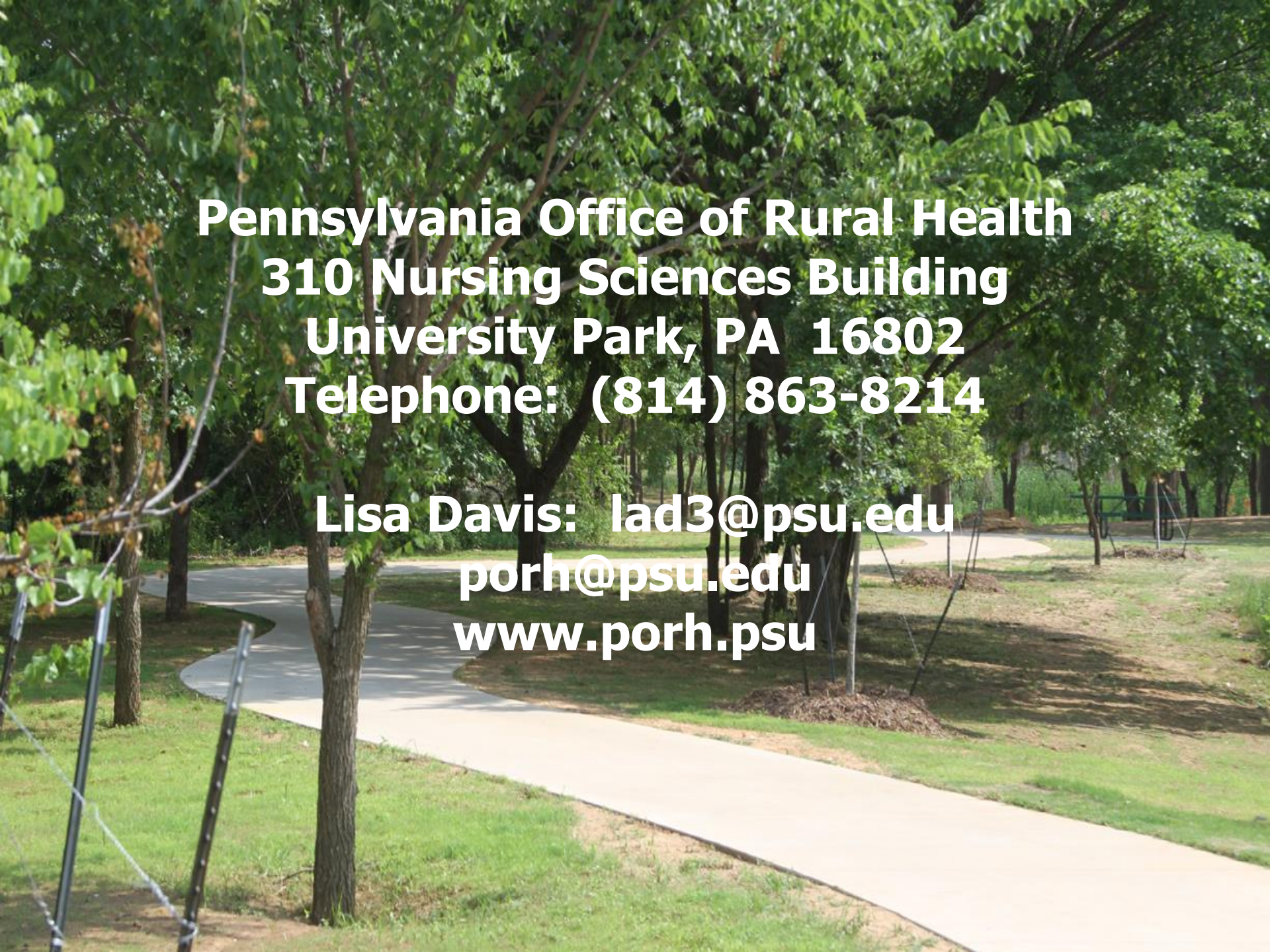




# Benefits for Residents

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- Physical activity increased among individuals in communities with new or improved projects or policies combining pedestrian or cycling paths with land use and design components
- Combinations of activity-supportive built environments were associated with:
  - Higher levels of transportation-related physical activity
  - Recreational physical activity
  - Total walking



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