UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH
2009 RAPID-RESPONSE ROUND 2 GRANTS
Awards to four sites
Program Director: Mary Story, PhD, RD

SUMMARY

Program Purpose:
Healthy Eating Research is a national program that supports research on environmental and policy strategies to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity.

Providing Analysis and Recommendations for Safeguards on the Next Generation of TV Food Marketing Focused on Children and Youth

Center for Digital Democracy, Washington, DC
Principal Investigator: Jeffrey Chester, MSW
Co-Principal Investigator: Kathryn Montgomery, PhD

Powerful new forms of interactive television (ITV) advertising are being deployed in the US, reaching over 50 million homes by early 2010. Fast-food companies are among those marketers in the forefront of harnessing TV's potential to deliver personalized and more engaging commercial messages. The introduction of ITV advertising in the US coincides with three upcoming federal regulatory initiatives focused on children and television that could lead to new policies protecting young people from harmful forms of food and beverage marketing. This project will provide an accessible and well-documented analysis and recommendations concerning the implications of next-generation TV advertising for children and youth, including an examination of the best means of safeguarding young viewers from harmful food and beverage marketing. The resulting white paper will help the public health community assess a range of potential regulatory and related safeguards.

Assessing Changes in Regulations at Chicago Child-Care Facilities to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Childrens Memorial Hospital, Chicago, IL
Principal Investigator: Adam Becker, PhD, MPH
Co-Principal Investigator: Maryann Mason, PhD
This study is funded jointly by Active Living Research and Healthy Eating Research.

In the fall of 2009, the Chicago Board of Health will adopt changes to child-care regulations intended to improve nutrition standards, establish minimum time requirements for physical activity and set maximum time requirements for screentime. During a two-year voluntary phase-in period child-care providers will receive education and training to facilitate compliance. This study will evaluate the effects of child-care regulation changes on child-care practices and

examine how center characteristics influence compliance. Researchers will use a two-group, non-randomized design with two waves of data collection to study the impact of voluntary regulation compliance and a qualitative "case-study" approach to investigate factors that facilitate and constrain compliance. Study results will provide implementation guidance as the policy becomes mandatory within the two-year framework.

Assessing the Long-Term Impact of Labeling Menus with Information on Calories and Nutrition
Seattle-King County Department of Public Health, Seattle, WA
Principal Investigator: James Krieger, MD, MPH
Co-Principal Investigator: Brian Saelens, PhD

The impact of menu labeling is unclear. A menu labeling law (beginning 1/1/09) in Seattle-King County, WA provides an opportunity to evaluate policy effectiveness. The Seattle-King County policy is different from regulations elsewhere in two important ways. First, not only do restaurants need to have calorie labels, they have to provide information on saturated fat, sodium and carbohydrates as well. Second, restaurants have choices about how to display nutrition information. Specifically, calories may be on menus/menu boards or displayed by other means, such as posters that customers will see while waiting in line, while other nutrition information may be displayed elsewhere, such as on a pamphlet at the point of purchase. This research team has already collected fall 2008 (pre) and spring 2009 (near post) data. This new project will collect data 1.5 years post-implementation in spring 2010 to assess long-term impact of the menu labeling policy on the percent of the population that is aware of nutrition labels, the nutrient composition of purchased meals and the number of healthier items on menus. This project will be the longest follow-up on menu labeling to date. Data sources will include point of purchase receipts and customer survey, population survey (BRFSS), restaurant nutrition environment, restaurant inspection and menu audits in both Seattle-King County and San Diego, CA (a comparison county without the regulation).

Program Practices: An Investigation of Physical Activity and Healthy Eating Standards and Practices on Out-of-School-Time Programs
Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
Principal Investigator: Georgia Hall, PhD
Co-Principla Invesigator: Jean Wiecha, PhD
This study is funded jointly by Active Living Research and Healthy Eating Research.

In the US, 6.5 million children attend out-of-school time (OST) programs annually, participating in roughly three hours per day of activities typically including homework, snack and gross motor play. The specific aims of this study are to: (1) build capacity for obesity prevention in OST by infusing rigorous science-based guidelines into the National Afterschool Association standards for physical activity and healthy eating; (2) identify current physical activity and eating standards and program practices used in a targeted national sample of OST programs; (3) identify significant associations between best practices and program characteristics, components and social contextual variables; (4) disseminate information on effective implementation of standards; and (5) lay the groundwork for a subsequent project to re-assess the program cohort and develop a toolkit to help all OST programs implement the recommended standards for physical activity and healthy eating. This is a mixed-methods study

using quantitative and qualitative methods. Data will be collected in ten regions of the US, representing a mix of geographic locations, urban/suburban/rural communities, school district sizes and variety of OST programs. The survey sample will include 80-100 programs within each region (500+ total) and exemplary program observations at 30 of these programs.