

**HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH  
2008 RAPID-RESPONSE GRANTS**

Awards to 6 sites

Program Director: Mary Story, PhD, RD

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**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 low-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity.

**Determining the Efficacy and Effectiveness of a State-Sponsored Intervention Promoting Physical Activity and Nutrition in the Early Child Care Setting**

Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH

Principal Investigator: Karen Wosje, PhD

*This study is funded jointly by Active Living Research and Healthy Eating Research.*

This project seeks to determine the extent to which a successful state-sponsored program to improve the activity and nutrition environments of schools can be adapted successfully for child care centers. Investigators will evaluate the state-sponsored policy intervention that will begin in Montgomery County (Ohio) child care centers in April 2009. This natural experiment is timed such that investigators can evaluate the efficacy and effectiveness of the intervention in the pilot county, using a nearby, demographically-matched control county (slated for a later roll-out of the same intervention) for comparison. The target study population for this work will include 162 licensed full-time child care centers in Montgomery County and 209 licensed full-time centers in demographically similar Hamilton County. The main outcome to be assessed is the six-month change in an overall the Physical Activity and Nutrition Score that reflects 24 environment characteristics addressed by the intervention. The impact of key covariates, such as race, on intervention effectiveness and participation will also be explored. In addition, investigators will conduct qualitative one-on-one interviews with directors of non-participant centers serving primarily low-income clientele in Montgomery County to assess barriers to participation.

**Evaluating a Nutrition Information Policy in Chain Restaurants in Multnomah County, Ore.**

Multnomah County Health Department, Portland, OR

Principal Investigator: Myde Boles, PhD

Multnomah County passed a menu labeling policy that will go into effect January 1, 2009, as one of only five jurisdictions in the U.S. to have passed such a policy. The aims of this study are to: (1) examine changes in awareness of nutrition information, nutrition knowledge, use of nutrition information and caloric value of purchases; (2) examine changes in menu offerings in

restaurants; and (3) describe differences in outcomes by age, gender, education, race/ethnicity, restaurant type and restaurant location. Investigators will use a pre-post design with cross-sectional point-of-purchase surveys, restaurant environmental assessments and menu audits and restaurant health inspection reports. Stratified sampling will be used to enroll sufficient numbers of low-income residents and people of color to allow investigators to describe differences in outcomes by income and race/ethnicity.

### **Evaluating the New York City Calorie Labeling Regulation**

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York, NY

Principal Investigator: Tamara Dumanovsky, PhD

Co-Principal Investigator: Cathy Nonas, MS, RD

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene approved a regulation that requires that calorie information be posted on menu boards for restaurant chains with 15 or more stores nationally. The regulation is intended to increase prominence of calorie information at point-of-purchase to help consumers make healthier food choices, and may also encourage chains to reformulate menu items, offer healthier items and change promotional materials to emphasize healthier options. In this research, investigators will conduct a survey of customers at fast-food restaurants pre-post enforcement of calorie labeling regulations. Survey data will be used to assess: (1) changes in the percentage of customers that report seeing information and (2) changes in purchasing as a result of calorie information. Subgroup analyses, as appropriate, will include demographics, chain and calorie information posting mode. In addition, a complimentary analysis will examine pre-post differences in menu offerings at the top 25 fast-food chains.

### **Analyzing the Impact of the New York City Calorie Labeling Regulation**

New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, New York, NY

Principal Investigator: Tamara Dumanovsky, PhD

Co-Principal Investigator: Cathy Nonas, MS, RD

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) approved calorie labeling for restaurant chains with 15 or more stores nationally as part of the city's effort to combat obesity. This regulation requires that calories are posted on menu boards; it is intended to increase prominence of calorie information at point-of-purchase to help consumers make healthier food choices. This requirement may also encourage chains to reformulate menu items, offer healthier items and change promotional materials to emphasize healthier options. This research study will survey adult customers and collect receipts at a random sample of fast-food restaurants after enforcement of calorie labeling regulations. Results from this post-regulation survey will be compared with pre-regulation data collected in the spring of 2007. The target for each of the 275 locations is 50 participants for a total of 13,750 surveys and receipts; for the pre-regulation study, 1,865 surveys and receipts were collected. Survey data will be analyzed to assess changes pre-post regulation in: (1) mean calories purchased overall and by fast food chain, (2) percentage of customers reporting that they saw calorie information, and (3) percentage of customers reporting that calorie information affected their purchase. Subgroup analyses, as appropriate, will include demographics, chain and calorie information posting mode.

## **Studying the Influence of Calorie Labeling on the Food Choices of Families and Adolescents**

New York University School of Medicine, New York, NY  
Principal Investigator: Brian Elbel, PhD, MPH

In New York City, a new policy now being implemented mandates city-wide calorie labeling posted on the menu boards of all fast-food restaurants. In assessing this policy, this study has two specific aims: (1) to determine the influence of such calorie labeling on individual food choice and (2) to establish why this calorie labeling does or does not influence food choice. Data will be evaluated as part of a pre-post study design with a control city (Newark, NJ). Approximately one month before and after labeling was introduced, data were collected via an on-the-ground receipt collection and survey outside of fast-food restaurants, resulting in approximately 1,400 total responses. The primary outcome of interest in this research is the change in calories consumed; also important is the proportion of individuals in the sample who report that they observed and utilized the calorie labels. In addition to the common dissemination channels of academic papers and conferences, investigators will also reach out to policymakers in the more than 20 cities and states are actively considering or have passed this initiative into law.

## **Evaluating the Impact of a WIC Food Package Revision on Retailer Participation and Fruit/Vegetable Supply Characteristics in Northern Illinois**

University of Illinois at Chicago College of Nursing, Chicago, IL  
Principal Investigator: Shannon Zenk, PhD

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will implement a ground-breaking new policy by October 1, 2009 that adds a cash-value voucher for fruits and vegetables to the food packages provided in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (also known as WIC). This provides a rare opportunity to assess the effect of a major change in food assistance policy with the potential to reach minority children who are at highest risk for obesity. Building on baseline data collected by the study investigators in summer 2008 on WIC vendor locations and fruit and vegetable characteristics, this study will add two additional waves of data collection: one pre-policy (summer 2009) and one post-policy (summer 2010). Aims of this study include comparing pre- and post-policy implementation for changes in WIC vendor participation, attributes, spatial accessibility and fruit and vegetable characteristics (availability, selection, quality, price). Investigators will specifically assess whether changes in spatial accessibility of WIC vendors and fruit and vegetable characteristics at WIC vendors differ by neighborhood attributes. In addition, investigators will determine factors perceived by WIC vendors that influence change in WIC participation and fruit and vegetable characteristics. This study will assess all WIC vendors and neighborhoods in a seven-county area in Northern Illinois.