

**HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH  
SPECIAL SOLICITATION ROUND 2**

**New Connections Grants Awarded through the Healthy Eating Research Program**

Awards to 4 sites on 9-1-2008, totaling \$400,000

Healthy Eating Research Program Director: Mary Story, PhD, RD

New Connections Program Director: Debra Joy Perez, PhD

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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. New Connections grants awarded through the Healthy Eating Research program are for early-career investigators from historically disadvantaged and underrepresented communities who bring special experience and expertise regarding the racial and ethnic minority and low-income populations and communities targeted by the Healthy Eating Research program.

**Evaluating the Impact of Competitive Food and Beverage Policies on Body and Weight Patterns Among California Children and Adolescents**

San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA

Principal Investigator: Emma V. Sanchez-Vaznaugh, ScD, MPH

Capitalizing on a natural experiment and existing data, this project will investigate the impact of competitive food and beverage policies on child and adolescent weight status. This work specifically includes the evaluation the impact of competitive food and beverage policies adopted by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) on patterns in BMI and racial/ethnic disparities in BMI, as well as assessment of the impact of the LAUSD policies compared to the California-wide policies on these outcomes. The population to be studied in this research includes children and adolescents in fifth, seventh and ninth grades who attended LAUSD public schools and other California public schools between 2001 and 2007.

**Assessing an Obesity Audit Tool and Determining Whether School Policies and Environments Predict Relative Weight Outcomes**

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Principal Investigator: Kelley E. Borradaile, PhD

The purpose of this study is to assess the reliability and validity of a brief, low-cost school environment audit tool, which is currently administered to all Pennsylvania Keystone Healthy Zone public schools. In addition, this research will also determine whether school policies and environments predict relative weight outcomes. The first phase of this work will consist of

psychometric analyses (test-retest reliability, internal consistency, validity) of the audit tool, and the second phase will consist of multi-level (schools nested within districts) cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses of the relationship between health indicators and relative weight status.

### **Researching the Food Environment of YMCA After-School Programs on Chicago's South Side**

University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Principal Investigator: Dawnavan S. Davis, PhD, MS

This study will examine the food environments among YMCA after-school programs that primarily serve African-American children on Chicago's South side, as well as factors impacting the implementation of such after-school programs and snack offerings within these programs. Specifically, the aims of this work are to use qualitative and quantitative methods to: (a) identify the potential organizational, environmental, and individual factors contributing to and/or hindering implementation of the YMCA Activate America initiative and its modification of the after-school program food environment, (b) identify factors influencing the provision of healthy snacks in these programs, (c) obtain a better understanding of the after-school program food environment during snack time, and (d) obtain a better understanding of current dietary patterns among children attending these programs.

### **Evaluating Nutrition Policies and Practices in U.S. Secondary Schools**

University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN

Principal Investigator: Marilyn Nanney, PhD, MPH, RD

This aim of this work is to evaluate disparities in school-level nutrition policies and practices across the U.S. More specifically, the objective of this research is to (a) determine the prevalence of school-level nutrition policies and practices in a large sample of schools across multiple states stratified by school-level socioeconomic status, geographic location, and racial/ethnic composition, and (b) to identify associations between school-level nutrition policies and practices and these school-level characteristics. This policy analysis study will combine existing School Health Profiles survey data (2008) from secondary school principals and school level demographic data.