

**HEALTHY EATING RESEARCH****2009 NEW CONNECTIONS****New Connections Grants Awarded through the Healthy Eating Research Program**

Awards to 2 sites on 11-1-2009, totaling \$200,000

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

New Connections Program Director: Debra Joy Pérez, 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.

**Examining the Effect of Providing Lower Income Black Adolescents with Caloric Information on their Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Purchases**

Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD

Principal Investigator: Sara Bleich, Ph.D.

No prior interventions have focused exclusively on reducing purchases of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) in real-world settings among black adolescents. Providing easily understandable caloric information may be a low-cost, sustainable strategy for lowering overall caloric intake. In this study, investigators will examine the effects of a store-based, environmental intervention targeting black adolescents in Baltimore City which provides caloric information regarding SSBs. In this project, corner stores will be randomly assigned to a treatment condition: (1) control, (2) provision of calorie information, (3) provision of calorie information relative to total recommended daily intake, and (4) provision of calorie information relative to physical activity equivalents. Investigators will evaluate the extent to which treatment conditions differentially impact the volume of SSB purchases.

**Examining Food Marketing and Promotion to Children in the Retail Food Store Environment**

University of Illinois, Champaign, IL

Principal Investigator: Diana Grigsby-Toussaint, Ph.D., M.P.H.

Food marketing and advertising may be important determinants of childhood obesity. However, empirical attention has focused on television as a vehicle of marketing to children in the home,

with limited attention to the broader nutrition environment in which families are embedded. This study will address this gap in the literature by evaluating food marketing targeted to young children in community retail food stores. Specific research questions include: (1) Are there differences in how food is marketed to young children in the retail food store environment based on neighborhood socioeconomic position? (2) Is there an association between neighborhood levels of food marketing and childhood obesity? (3) Can interventions and public health policy for food marketing in retail food stores be informed by the perceptions of family, store owners and public health decision makers in communities? This study will employ a cross-sectional mixed method approach using spatial mapping, surveys of food stores and semi-structured interviews.