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Sally Davis

Linda p

Linda Beltran

Elverna Bennett

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National Children's Study University of New Mexico and Valencia County Partnerships

Rob Annett, PhD

The National Children's Study (NCS) will examine the health and development of more than 100,000 children across the United States, following them from before birth until age 21. The study, authorized by Congress in the Children's Health Act of 2000, is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The University of New Mexico Health Sciences Center Department of Pediatrics and the New Mexico Prevention Research Center was selected as one of 22 new study centers by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) in the Fall of 2007 (see map on Page 3 for current centers). The UNM PRC and Valencia County partnership has committed to the recruitment and retention of 1,000 study participants from Valencia County. The UNM Study Center and Study Location Principal Investigator is Robert Annett, PhD, who together with co-investigators from Pediatrics (Drs. Sally Davis and Renate Savich), Family and Community Medicine (Drs. Kristine Tollestrup and Andy Rowland) and the College of Nursing (Dr. Beth Tigges) will form the team that leads the New Mexico component of the study.

The National Children's Study is extraordinarily unique in several ways:

- The Study takes a broad approach to "environment" and includes biological, physical, genetic, social and cultural influences that may affect children's health and development.
 - The Study is the first broad longitudinal study of children in the United States. It will follow children and families for 21 years and will shed
- new light on the factors that influence health and development as children grow.
 - Results will be made public as the Study progresses. Even though the Study will span more than 20 years, the world won't have to wait until after 2027 for results. Results from the early years of the study related to pregnancy and newborns will begin to be available in 2009-10 and will likely lead to new questions about the interplay between a child's health and the environment.
 - The Study involves partners from multiple government agencies, as well as from public organizations and private companies. Federal, state, and local agencies, universities, academic and professional societies, medical centers, communities, organizations, industries, companies, and other private groups all play vital roles in this partnership.
 - The Study uses state-of-the-art technology for participant enrollment and tracking, data collection and management, and communications. These technologies will help ensure accurate, reliable, and valid results for the 20 years of the Study.
 - The Study will answer critical questions on multiple issues about child health and development. Some example questions are:
 - o Can very early exposure to some allergens actually help children remain asthma-free?
 - o How do genes and the environment interact to promote or prevent violent behavior in teenagers?

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Child Health Initiative for Lifelong Eating and Exercise (CHILE) update

Courtney FitzGerald, MSSW



Child Health Initiative for Lifelong Eating & Exercise

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The Child Health Initiative for Lifelong Eating and Exercise (CHILE) is now underway at the Prevention Research Center. CHILE aims to develop, implement, and evaluate a multidisciplinary, trans-community obesity prevention program among American Indian and Hispanic children ages 3 to 5 enrolled in Head Start programs in rural New Mexico. Head Start is a federally funded preschool program for low-income families. The project, funded by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), is being implemented in sixteen Head Start centers in rural communities throughout the state. Half of the Head Start centers are receiving the CHILE intervention now and the second half will get the intervention beginning in Fall 2010.

During the next three years, the CHILE project team will conduct measurement at all sixteen participating Head Start sites. CHILE project staff will measure and weigh children at three points during each school year. CHILE will also measure children's activity level, ascertain how much time they spend watching television, and determine how much and what kinds of foods children are eating at Head Start and at home. These measures will allow the CHILE Project team to determine whether CHILE is effective at increasing children's physical activity, decreasing time spent watching television, increasing consumption of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and decreasing consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods.

The CHILE intervention includes six components:

- nutrition and physical activity-based curriculum/classroom intervention for Head Start children;
- professional development in-service training for Head Start teachers;
- regular training and support for Head Start cooks and food service staff;
- a home and Head Start-based program for families;
- inclusion of local health care providers as change agents and role models; and
- community grocery store program to increase the availability and promotion of healthier food options.

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National Children's Study: University of New Mexico and Valencia County Partnerships

- o Are lack of exercise and poor diet the only reasons why many children are overweight?
- o Do infections impact developmental progress, asthma, obesity, and heart disease?
- o How do city and neighborhood planning and construction encourage or discourage injuries?

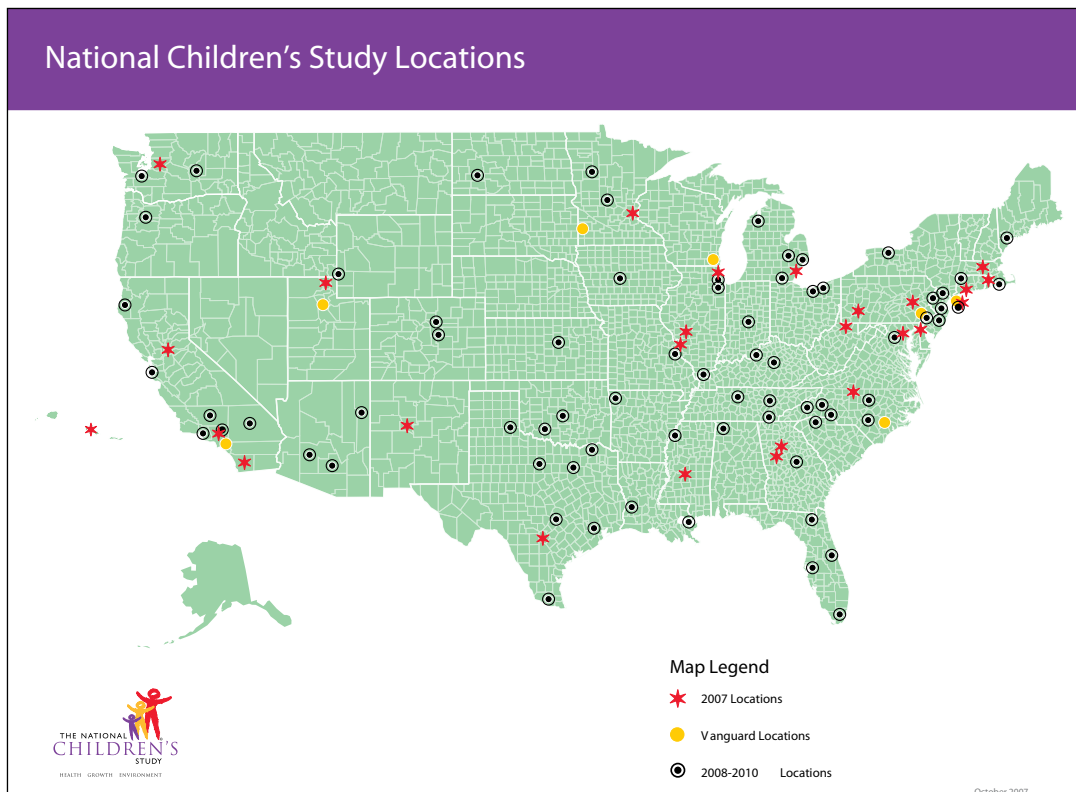
The overarching goal of the UNM Study Center will be to integrate the NCS study objectives into the recruitment and retention of individuals residing within Valencia County for the duration of the Study. The specific objectives of the UNM Study Center for the study are as follows:

- Develop enhanced community partnerships with stakeholders in Valencia County to further build community support for participation with the NCS. Take advantage of the existing expertise of the UNM Prevention Research Center (PRC) to build partnerships with stakeholders in Valencia County.
- Develop methodologies to sample and screen approximately 8,500 households within the selected communities within Valencia County.

- Enroll at least 65% of eligible Valencia County women during the first trimester of their pregnancy, or prior to their pregnancy, using a household sampling method, for a minimum of 1,280 women.
- Complete environmental sampling and data collection during the pregnancy, delivery, and post-delivery timeframe for 1,000 Valencia County women and their children.
- Provide follow-up environmental sampling and data collection for the 1,000 Valencia County children until they reach the age of 21 years.

The UNM team has already made a number of inroads in the process of outreach and engagement with the Valencia County community. We are thrilled and honored by how the National Children's Study has been received by the community and look forward to a long and exciting partnership in this program of research.

For more information, go to www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov



African Refugee Well-being Project

Jessica Goodkind, PhD

Refugees who resettle in the United States are people who have been forced to flee their home countries because of well-founded fear and/or persecution, and who are unable to remain in the country they fled to or return to their native country. Many New Mexicans may not realize that more than 1,800 refugees have been resettled in our state in the past seven years. Most of the refugees who have resettled in New Mexico since 2000 are Cuban, African (from Burundi, Cameroon, Congo, Liberia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Togo) and Middle Eastern (from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, and Syria). Refugees who arrive here have exhibited strength and perseverance to overcome significant adversity and trauma.



Osman and Brenda Cooke from Liberia and Research Coordinator Ann Githinji

Although resettlement in the U.S. usually represents an important opportunity for refugees, they face numerous additional challenges, including large language and cultural differences, undesired changes to their way of life, poverty and daily economic concerns about survival in a new country, loss of community and social support, loss of meaningful social roles, and racism and discrimination.

The African Refugee Well-being Project (ARWP) is a community-based participatory research study designed to further our understanding of these resettlement stressors, prevent further distress, and promote the mental health and well-being of African refugees in New Mexico. Other important goals of the ARWP include creating mechanisms for increased understanding across cultures, improving undergraduates' educational opportunities, and building mutually beneficial relationships between UNM and the communities in which it is situated.

The ARWP involves an innovative 6-month program that brings together UNM undergraduate students who make a two-semester course commitment and African refugee families to engage in mutual learning and the mobilization of community resources.

The project has two components. The first component is Learning Circles that occur twice weekly at Cesar Chavez Community Center. Each meeting is two hours and involves refugee participants and undergraduates. Learning circles begin with cultural exchange, which provides a forum for refugees and undergraduates to learn from each other through discussions aided by interpreters. Next, one-on-one learning occurs as undergraduates and refugee participants work in pairs. Refugee participants choose their areas of learning such as speaking, reading, writing English or learning to complete job applications. Child and adolescent Learning Circles include homework help, tutoring, and other fun learning activities.

The second component is Advocacy that is based on the Community Advocacy model, which has been successfully applied to domestic violence survivors, juvenile offenders, and refugees. The undergraduate students spend an additional two to four hours weekly (outside of the Learning Circles) advocating for and transferring advocacy skills to their refugee family to mobilize community resources based on unmet needs identified by the family.

It is important to note that the learning and advocacy are two inextricable parts of one holistic program. The program is centered on the Learning Circles, which provide participants with opportunities to discuss their advocacy efforts, share ideas and resources, and get assistance from the interpreters. Besides emphasizing what refugees need to learn to survive in the U.S., the program also focuses on mutual



UNM student Stephanie Gallegos and Fredance Nibakiza from Burundi

learning, whereby refugees both learn from and teach Americans. Through this process, refugees' culture, experiences, and knowledge are valued and utilized in the promotion of their well-being. By design, the program has the potential to incorporate the strengths and needs of refugees while addressing multiple aspects of the empowerment process: 1) building skills and knowledge for critical thinking and action (e.g., English

Continued - from Page 4:

African Refugee Well-being Project

proficiency, advocacy skills); 2) changing attitudes and beliefs (e.g., value of own culture and knowledge, self-efficacy); 3) validation through collective experiences; and 4) securing real increases in resources and power through action and systems-based advocacy.

The study employs a within-group longitudinal design with five quantitative data collection points over a period of 12 months. Refugees also participate in two open-ended qualitative interviews.

The ARWP began in November 2004, after Dr. Jessica Goodkind, Principal Investigator for ARWP, returned to Albuquerque to join the faculty at the UNM Prevention Research Center. She had previously developed and implemented the advocacy and learning model with Hmong refugees in Michigan, and found that participants' quality of life, access to resources, English proficiency, and knowledge for the U.S. citizenship test increased and their levels of psychological distress decreased over the course of the 6-month intervention. Qualitative data supported these findings and revealed that refugees also experienced improved social support, felt that their culture and knowledge were valued, and gained self-efficacy.



Lovetee and Agnes Paijebo from Liberia and UNM student Kristina Schwerts

Together, Dr. Goodkind, Ann Githinji, Research Coordinator for ARWP, and Dee Ivy, Community Coordinator for ARWP, have worked together to interview African refugees in New Mexico and adapt the model to the interests and needs of this population. The first implementation of the 6-month program occurred November 2006-May 2007, and involved 19 undergraduates and 25 refugee participants. The second implementation of the program began in November 2007, with 19 undergraduates and 43 refugee participants. ARWP has been funded by numerous sources, including the UNM School of Medicine Research Allocation Committee, the UNM Department of Pediatrics Research Committee, Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program, and St. Joseph Community Health Services. ARWP also involves partnerships with the UNM Departments of Psychology, Anthropology, Africana Studies, and Research Service Learning Program.

The ARWP provides UNM undergraduate students a unique opportunity to understand more about refugees and the challenges they face, to help make a difference in some of their lives, and to participate in innovative community-based participatory research. Students are able to engage in some learning in which they apply their academic skills and knowledge to benefit their community and work towards social change. ARWP has also created a mechanism through which UNM can direct its resources toward improving the well-being of African refugees and the larger Albuquerque community.

Photos by © Dale Frederick



Continued from Page 2: CHILE Update

CHILE presentations at Head Start Family Nights began in October 2007, and include information about child development, take home activities and games for parents to play with their children, and door prizes. The team has also begun working with Head Start cooks and food service staff, with owners and managers at community grocery stores, and with Head Start teachers and teacher assistants.

CHILE also forged a partnership with the YWCA's *Cariño* program, which provides training to early childhood teachers through New Mexico's Office of Child

Development. Through this partnership, teachers who attend CHILE professional development workshops will receive credit toward their individual required hours for maintaining state licensure.

This project is managed by Beverly Diamond and four new, full-time employees joined the CHILE project in 2007. Courtney FitzGerald, MSSW, Meghan Erdman, MS, Bridgid Junot, MPH, and Christopher Cushing, MS will lend their expertise and dedication to advancing the project.



Research Informing Policy: Pueblo Communities Investigate Alcohol Industry Practices

Linda J. Peñaloza, PhD & Susan DeFrancesco, JD, MPH

In November 2007, Linda Peñaloza and Susan DeFrancesco were awarded a **Con Alma Health Foundation Target Grant** for a new research study entitled: *Research Informing Policy: Pueblo Communities Investigate Alcohol Industry Practices*. The grant activities will take place in 2008.

Excessive alcohol consumption causes devastating medical and social effects in native communities. Working with the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Circle of Life Behavioral Health Network and Pueblo members, UNM PRC researchers will collect data documenting the supply, distribution, and promotion of alcohol by alcohol beverage makers and distributors in the areas in and around the Pueblos. These data will be analyzed and summarized and presented to tribal communities. Based on those data, community members will formulate policy changes to address alcohol industry practices and advocate for those changes to improve the health status of the Pueblo tribal members.

This research project is an innovative, community-based approach to improving the health status of Native Americans. It specifically addresses alcohol-related death and disability among Pueblo members, focusing on building community capacity to address the alcohol industry's notorious practices related to the supply and promotion of alcohol to Native Americans.

Prior studies reveal that Native Americans in New Mexico suffer disproportionate rates of alcohol-related death and disability. According to the New Mexico Department of Health's Disparities Report Card, the alcohol-related death rate per 100,000 population, averaged for the years 2003-2005, was 106.6 for American Indians compared to 62.8 for Hispanics, 45.3 for Whites, 35.4 for African Americans, and 20.3 for Asian/Pacific Islanders.¹ Unlike the other races/ethnicities residing in New Mexico, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis is ranked among the top five leading causes of death for American Indians.² Alcohol is also a primary risk factor for injuries and Native Americans in New Mexico have disproportionately high injury rates. The age-adjusted unintentional (accidental) injury rate averaged over the years 2002-2004, was 93.6 per 100,000 for American Indians/Alaskan Natives, 62.2 for Hispanics, 50.8 for Whites, 50.0 for Blacks, and 10.5

for Asians/Pacific Islanders.³ Data averaged for the years 2003-2005 reveal that American Indians also had the highest homicide rates compared to other races/ethnicities in New Mexico, and the highest youth suicide rates.⁴

Today, there is evidence of a deliberate attempt by the alcohol industry to over-supply and over-promote alcohol to Native Americans. Alcohol beverage makers and distributors use attractive, provocative images of historic and cultural Native American icons to sell their products and sponsor community organizations and events in exchange for promotion of their products.⁵ This project examines current practices and activities of alcohol beverage makers and distributors in the areas in and around the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos.

UNM PRC and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Circle of Life Behavioral Health Network have three primary objectives in undertaking this collaborative project: (1) to collect data documenting the supply, distribution, and promotion of alcohol in areas in and around the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos (2) to formulate a policy agenda and implementation strategies that address the supply and promotion of alcohol to the Pueblo communities based on the data collected (3) to engage Pueblo community members in an advocacy effort to implement policy change.

The following primary outcomes are anticipated:

- 1) a research-based, documented description of alcohol industry supply, promotion, and distribution practices in and around the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos;
- 2) the education of community members as to the actions of the alcohol industry;
- 3) a policy agenda and implementation strategies developed by Pueblo community members to address the actions of the alcohol industry;
- 4) Pueblo members and partners working with the UNM PRC and the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc. Healthier Communities Program/Coalition to advocate for policy change.

Collaboration with Research Communities

The research communities reside in the service population of the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council, Inc., a non-profit consortium of Tribal Governments of the Northern New Mexico Indian Pueblos of Taos, Picuris, Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Pojoaque, and Tesuque. There are approximately 9,000 members of the Pueblo tribes. All of the eight northern Pueblos are located north of Santa Fe in north central New Mexico, in the counties of Taos, Rio Arriba, and Santa Fe.

At present, alcohol is sold freely in the eight Pueblos, in the Pueblo casinos, and in the areas bordering the Pueblos. The Circle of Life Behavioral Health Network is well aware of the health and injury-related problems associated with alcohol use among Pueblo members. In fact, its community-based programs have included the prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse and dependence. But Pueblo Prevention Specialists are also cognizant of the limited effectiveness of prevention strategies that focus solely on changing individual behavior and that are not supplemented by efforts to change the environment in which the behavior occurs. Strategies that promote the prevention and treatment of alcohol abuse, especially those programs targeted to youth, can be undermined by an environment that over-promotes and over-supplies alcohol (also often targeted to youth).

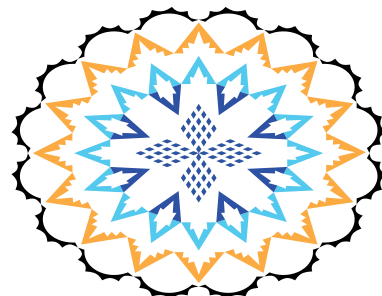
Related to the objectives of this project and as part of its health promotion work, the Circle of Life Behavioral Health Network has compiled an inventory of numerous products, including tobacco and alcohol, available for sale in and around the Pueblos that use Native American imagery in their advertising. The Program has taught media literacy courses to Pueblo youth to help them understand and resist the power of such advertising.

The Circle of Life Behavioral Health Network will work with UNM PRC researchers as an equal partner in all applicable and appropriate aspects of this project. Program Prevention Specialists will participate in determining which kinds of data to collect, how and where to collect them, and the appropriate tools for

collection. They will also assist with summarizing the data for presentation to Pueblo members and help facilitate meetings to be held with community members at which policy solutions will be discussed and formulated. ◆

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- ⁵ Teret, SP, Michaelis A. Litigating for Native American Health: The liability of alcoholic beverage makers and distributors. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 26:246-259, 2005; Alaniz M, Wilkes, C. Pro-drinking messages and message environments for young adults: The case of alcohol industry advertising in African American, Latino, and Native American communities. *Journal of Public Health Policy* 19:447-71, 1998.



New Mexico Department of Health: Update on Collaborations and Partnerships

Linda J. Peñaloza, PhD

Under the leadership of Dr. Linda Penaloza, Principal Investigator, a team of talented and dedicated staff work to provide resources and expertise to the NM Department of Health on five separate contracts. The following is an update on each of these collaborations through the first half of fiscal year 2008.

Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Evaluation

The NM PRC work with the tobacco program goes back many years, and has included many fascinating projects and challenges. The team working on this project is named the Health Evaluation and Research Team, or HEART, and consists of Dr. Peñaloza, Eric Chrisp (Program Manager), Mary Dillon, Jackie Morgan, Judith Rinehart, Elverna Bennett, Susan DeFrancesco, Peg Allen, Tom Noland, Jacque Garcia and Karen Lopez. This fall, HEART wrote a detailed summary of youth tobacco coalitions in the state (the report may be found on the PRC website). In addition, the team is completing a case study of the tobacco-related health disparities planning work conducted over the past two years, conducting a case study of the University of New Mexico Hospital and Health Sciences Center's new Smoke-free Campus initiative, and conducting in-depth studies of new spit tobacco initiatives and adult tobacco coalitions around the state. The team also developed a web-based database for the statewide Synar study, which will allow the Synar contractors to enter their tobacco merchant education and assessment data.

Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey

The NM PRC has conducted the Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (YRRS) since 2003. This year's team consists of Dr. Peñaloza, Mary Dillon (Program Manager), Judith Rinehart, Peg Allen, Tom Noland, Jacque Garcia, Eric Chrisp, Karen Lopez and Leslie Trickey. In the fall of 2007, we conducted the YRRS was conducted in 111 high schools around the state, collecting results from nearly 12,000 students. Results will be compiled and written into a widely disseminated report later in 2008.

Comprehensive Cancer Evaluation

In the summer of 2007, the NM PRC printed and distributed the New Mexico Cancer Plan 2007-2011. This Plan is the work of the New Mexico Cancer Council, and includes the most up-to-date data and strategic planning for the state's Cancer programs. The team consists of Linda Peñaloza, Pam Sedillo (Program Coordinator), and

Chris Hollis. In November, 2007, the team developed and helped facilitate a half-day retreat of the New Mexico Cancer Council to develop priorities for the 2008 cancer activities. Additionally, the team will conduct an evaluation and summary report of Cancer Council activities related to the new Plan, and is helping the Comprehensive Cancer program at the DOH to design and print a new Sun Safety brochure, which we will then have translated into Spanish.

Healthier Weight Program Evaluation

The Healthier Weight Evaluation team, consisting of Dr. Peñaloza, Pam Sedillo (Program Coordinator), and Jackie Morgan has been working with the DOH Physical Activity and Nutrition for Healthier Weight (PAN4HW) staff to develop and evaluate a pilot physical activity and nutrition intervention in Grants, NM. This pilot intervention, led by Future Foundations, is focused on reducing portion sizes and increasing physical activity levels for adolescents and their families. Additionally, the team is developing tools for collecting information from the Healthier Weight Council about their activities related to The New Mexico Plan to Promote Healthier Weight (2006-2015). The team has also developed a resource directory for the Council, and has transferred this into a web-based database that Council members may easily update as needed.

Injury Prevention

The Injury Prevention team consists of Dr. Peñaloza, Susan DeFrancesco (Program Manager), Peg Allen, Judith Rinehart and Karen Lopez. Working with the DOH's Office of Injury Prevention (OIP), the team has developed a strategic plan for the statewide Injury Prevention Coalition, plus provides technical assistance to the OIP and the coalition, as well as technical assistance to coalitions addressing falls prevention for the elderly, healthy aging, and sexual and domestic violence prevention.

The partnerships that the NM PRC continues to maintain with the various divisions and offices of the New Mexico DOH have been beneficial and exciting. We look forward to many years of close collaboration in these programs as well as those programs not yet developed. ◆

Questions? Contact Dr. Linda Peñaloza at (505) 272-4462, or LPenaloza@salud.unm.edu.

HIP (Health Improvement Project): Preventing Type 2 Diabetes among Youth through School-Based Health Centers

Alberta Kong, MD, MPH and Christine Hollis, MPH, MPS


To address the emerging epidemic of type 2 diabetes in New Mexican youth, 52 high school students enrolled in a creative pilot intervention to prevent type 2 diabetes. Innovative aspects of this intervention study include: reaching youth through school-based health centers (SBHCs); use of motivational interviewing techniques by SBHC health care providers; and, technical support of the intervention site provider through telemedicine sessions. SBHCs offer a one-stop, easily accessible, age-sensitive way to diagnose and treat adolescent health needs, especially for children with no access to other health care, and are seen as ideal for improving adolescent health. This program is a partnership of the UNM Department of Pediatrics, the PRC, Envision New Mexico and two SBHCs (Albuquerque High School and Belen High School).

Dr. Alberta Kong, the creator and principal investigator of this study, titled *Type 2 Diabetes Prevention in Adolescent School-Based Health Centers*, has been an adolescent health provider since 1997 in school-based health centers. She notes that obesity has become epidemic among U.S. children and adolescents. One adverse consequence of obesity is the increased incidence of metabolic syndrome (MetSyn), which includes insulin resistance, a pre-diabetic condition, among adolescents. This condition was historically something seen only in adults. People with MetSyn are at increased risk for developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. In New Mexico, currently 60% of the adult population is overweight or obese, and rates of being overweight have greatly increased for adolescents in both genders. For these reasons, prevention of overweight and obesity—especially among young people—is a public health priority. It is possible, through lifestyle modification and weight control, to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes among adolescents, as studies show that reducing dietary sugar and fat and increasing exercise are crucial to managing obesity and diabetes. The challenge, which this project addresses, is to translate these research findings into clinical practice.

This intervention study is comparing two groups of adolescents at risk for type 2 diabetes. The control group is being treated by a SBHC provider in the usual manner, while the intervention group of students works with a SBHC provider who receives motivational interviewing (MI) coaching to help with the use of MI techniques to motivate behavioral change in the participating students.

MI is a client-centered counseling approach which enhances a patient's internal motivation to change behavior by exploring and resolving his/her ambivalence. In addition to MI coaching, the intervention provider also receives case study consultation through Envision New Mexico's ECHO program, which uses telemedicine and internet technology to connect the state's rural providers with UNM medical specialists (adolescent medicine specialist, motivational interviewing specialist and pediatric specialists in endocrinology, cardiology, gastroenterology, nephrology, psychiatry, and nutrition) and provides them with best practice management through problem-based learning.

Approximately 25 students in each school are currently participating in the study, also known as HIP (Health Improvement Project). Each student meets at least once a month with their SBHC health provider for about 20 minutes to discuss their overall health, as well as their behaviors with regard to four key Envision program lifestyle messages: "Be physically active at least 60 minutes a day," "Cut back on screen time (TV and video games) to no more than 2 hours a day," "Eat 5 helpings of fruits and vegetables a day," and "Drink water when thirsty. Cut down on sodas and juice drinks; no more than 6-8 oz. a day."

Evaluation includes comparison of several physiological and anthropometric measures, taken at baseline (October 2007) and to be done again at follow-up in April 2008. These measures include body mass index, body composition, blood tests for glucose, lipid and insulin levels, diet and physical activity. Data collected may provide evidence of the utility of motivational interviewing and telemedicine support in bringing about behavior change. The information gained from this research will be useful in developing clinical programs, especially those found in school-based health centers, and public health messages that target diabetes prevention in adolescents. 

For more information, contact:

Alberta Kong, MD, MPH
Department of Pediatrics
Division of Adolescent Medicine
Center for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
akong@salud.unm.edu
(505) 272-4462



New Faculty and Staff:



Alberta S. Kong, MD, MPH

Dr. Kong is Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of New Mexico. She is the recipient of the UNM Clinical and Translational Science Center Competitive Research Career Development Award, for her research on “ECHO Model as Means of Delivery of Envision’s Management of Overweight Adolescents in School-Based Health Centers.” This study is comparing two methods of provider training (standard lecture-based didactic teaching versus problem-based learning via telecommunication) on outcomes of adolescents for type 2 diabetes. She moved to Albuquerque from Tucson, Arizona, in 1994 for her internship and residency, and received a Masters of Public Health with distinction from the University of New Mexico in 2002.



Robert D. Annett, PhD

Dr. Annett is Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of New Mexico. His PhD is in Pediatric Psychology from the University of California, San Francisco. He is Principal Investigator for the “National Children’s Study – Valencia County, New Mexico” (see lead article of this newsletter for details). He has been involved in numerous child health issues, specifically asthma management and the ability of adolescents to provide a voluntary assent to participate in asthma-related research. He has been a part of the UNM Health Sciences Center community since 1989.

Peg Allen is an Associate Scientist working on statewide evaluation of the tobacco prevention programs supported by the New Mexico Department of Health Tobacco Use and Prevention Program, the Fall 2007 New Mexico Youth Risk and Resiliency Survey and evaluation of Public Education Department special initiatives.



Peg Allen, BSN, MPH, CHES

Peg returns to the PRC after six years with the Department of Internal Medicine during which she coordinated CDC Prevention Research Center-funded and UNM-funded cancer and arthritis survey studies led by Dr. Carla Herman, helped test effectiveness of a diabetes prevention lifestyle intervention in an NIH-funded study led by Dr. Carla Herman and helped launch a geriatrics program pairing medical students with inspiring seniors. She worked at the PRC from 1995 to 2001. From 1995-1999, with Dr. Sally Davis’ leadership and guidance, Peg coordinated the PRC’s participation in a multi-center qualitative youth tobacco studies using focus group and individual interview methods. In partnership with the New Mexico Department of Health and the Public Education Department, Peg coordinated additional tobacco-related and coordinated school health projects led by Dr. Sally Davis from 1999-2001. Before coming to the PRC, Peg worked with the New Mexico Department of Health in statewide school health and tobacco use prevention programs. She earned her Master’s in Public Health from the University of Michigan School of Public Health.

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Bridgid Junot, MPH is a recent graduate of the Master's in Public Health Program at the University of New Mexico. She has experience working as a research assistant at the UNM Center of Development and Disability and led a qualitative research project in access to health care. During her studies at UNM, Bridgid completed an internship with the Department of Health Tobacco Use Prevention and Control (TUPAC) Program and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) Fellowship. Bridgid is from Melbourne, Australia and moved to New Mexico as a student-athlete in 2002. Bridgid was a member of the UNM track and field team and was the winner of three Mountain West Conference Championship titles as a pole vaulter. Bridgid enjoys swimming in the ocean and skiing. Bridgid is working as an HS Associate Scientist 1 on the CHILE project.



Bridgid Junot, MPH

Christopher Cushing, MS, studied psychology and sociology as an undergraduate at the University of Kansas, and most recently earned a Master of Science Degree in Clinical Psychology from Missouri State University. During his early career, Mr. Cushing worked primarily with children and adolescents, in both clinical and research settings. He has been involved in a number of studies examining health behaviors, risk and protective mechanisms, and coping style, in children and families. His academic interests revolve around the application of behavioral/environmental interventions to mitigate health problems, especially problems resulting from disproportionate risk factors such as lack of education, lack of resources, or scarcity of academic inquiry. He is full-time with the CHILE project at the Prevention Research Center. His duties with the CHILE project largely revolve around research design, measurement, and data analysis. In his personal life, Mr. Cushing enjoys cycling, reading, and remaining current on U.S. and world politics.



Christopher Cushing, MS

Announcement:

Lakhana Peou, MSW, is a Senior Program Manager at the PRC. She is responsible for oversight of the clinical portion of the Center's Acoma Canoncito Laguna Teen Centers. This means that day-to-day she manages 9 grants, assures that services are delivered, supervises a professional team of physical and mental health care providers and support staff, monitors for quality control, maintains relationships and communication with tribes and schools, plans new initiatives and finds funding for those initiatives.

On November 13, 2007, Lakhana was awarded a UNM Department of Pediatrics "ABOVE AND BEYOND" Staff Award, because she goes far beyond her job responsibilities. According to PRC Director Sally Davis, "Lakhana is a strong leader with a huge heart. She reaches out to kids in trouble with caring and competence. She just doesn't give up, no matter how challenging the situation is. She is truly deserving of the honor and recognition represented by this award."



Lakhana Peou, MSW



on the web:

THE CONNECTION

<http://hsc.unm.edu/chpdp>

The Connection is a production of the newsletter workgroup:

Sally M. Davis, PhD

Linda J. Peñaloza, PhD

Linda Beltran, MS

Elverna M. Bennett, BA

The Connection is a quarterly newsletter that features programs, provides updates, reports on program activities and announces upcoming events for the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center and the Community Advisory Council. Direct inquiries and correspondence to Linda J. Peñaloza by mail or by phone.

Division of Prevention and Population Sciences
Prevention Research Center
MSC 11 6145
1 University of New Mexico
Albuquerque, NM 87131
Office Telephone: 505-272-4462

The University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) is one of 33 Prevention Research Centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to develop and carry out scientifically-based, innovative chronic disease prevention research to improve the health of Americans. The mission of the UNM PRC is to address the health promotion and disease prevention needs of New Mexicans through participatory science-based research and through collaboration, training, dissemination, and evaluation activities. The UNM PRC has a long history of partnering with communities in New Mexico and the Southwest. The UNM PRC has a Community Advisory Council (CAC), whose members serve in an advisory and advocacy capacity, and represent the public health interests and concerns of New Mexico communities. Through collaboration and communication, these two entities work together to carry out the goals of the Center.

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