

Texas Obesity Research Center

Mobilizing Community Based Organizations to Address Obesity: Our Communities, Our Solutions

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of the focus groups is to: 1) explore existing thought patterns and lived experiences about eating habits and daily activity of African American (AA) children at risk for childhood obesity, 2) acquire an in-depth explanation of participants' attitudes towards factors related to childhood obesity encompassing their social norms, dietary habits, and environmental influences, and 3) explore rationales for differences between children and parental perspectives of ideal health. **Method:** Using a Community Based Participatory Research (CPBR) framework, the HAUL research team, comprised of public health professionals, local policy makers, physicians, and community leaders, will facilitate 20 focus groups (10 among children and 10 among their parents) with community members accessing HAUL services. Focus group results will be used to develop a larger population based survey to further investigate obesity related risk factors. Use of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping will identify resources (parks, fitness centers, healthy food markets, health clinics, etc.) in the residential communities of the target population. **Results:** Anticipated results will identify individual, cultural and societal factors contributing to obesity. These results will guide the development of the "UT-HAUL Healthy Houston Initiative", a pilot program seeking to increase healthy decision making and access to wellness services among AAs. **Conclusions:** "UT-HAUL Healthy Houston Initiative" is the initial course of action in addressing societal factors, renowned for breeding social injustice commonplace in AA populations. Our goal is to expand the Urban League movement's efficacy by identifying data that will combat social injustices while strengthening the core of the communities we serve.

KEYWORDS: Childhood obesity, Culture, community based participatory research, focus groups, African Americans

