

# CPHN Quarterly

The Center for Public Health Nutrition was funded in 2002 by vitamin anti-trust settlement money from the Washington State Attorney General's Office. CPHN is housed within the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and administered through the Nutritional Sciences Program in the Department of Epidemiology.

## Director

Adam Drewnowski

## Associate Director

Donna B. Johnson

## Technical Advisor

Barbara Bruemmer

## Program Manager

Caroline M. Tittel

## Communications Specialist

Lynne T. Smith

## Fiscal Specialist

Menrit Francis

## Research Assistant

Jaclyn Burm

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## Our Mission

To advance public health approaches to improve nutrition and physical activity through environmental and policy change.

- Build partnerships and collaborations with practitioners, government agencies and communities
- Provide technical assistance in the translation of research into policy and practice
- Shape obesity and chronic disease prevention and reduction efforts

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## Contact Us

University of Washington  
306 Raitt Hall  
Box 353410  
Seattle, WA 98195

Tel: 206-616-1569  
Fax: 206-616-7964  
URL: www.cphn.org

## The Future of CPHN

The Center has just over a year left of its initial funding from the vitamin anti-trust settlement money secured by the Office of the Washington State Attorney General. In late



December 2003, CPHN faculty and staff retreated to reflect on progress and successes to date. Representatives from the School of Public Health and other partners joined us to discuss regional, state, and local needs that the Center can address as well as opportunities for ongoing collaboration and partnership.

One outcome of the meeting was the re-crafting of the mission statement. We are currently seeking additional funding to continue to support the efforts of the Center.

## About this issue

The Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting will be held on April 5-6<sup>th</sup> at the Hilton Conference Center in SeaTac. As a complement to this meeting, this issue of *CPHN Quarterly* focuses on what the Center is doing to promote and support the Plan.

## Nutrition & Physical Activity State Plan

The Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Annual Meeting will highlight and share successful approaches and progress towards meeting the plan's objectives:



### Nutrition

- Increase access to health promoting foods
- Reduce hunger and food insecurity
- Increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their infants and toddlers

### Physical Activity

- Increase the number of people who have access to free or low cost recreational opportunities for physical activity
- Increase the number of physical activity opportunities available to children
- Increase the number of Active Community Environments

A website that shares information and updates on a quarterly basis about what organizations and communities are doing to make it easier to choose healthful foods and to be physically active in Washington will be unveiled at the April 5-6 meeting. The website will be [www.wapartnersinaction.org](http://www.wapartnersinaction.org).

## Access to Health Promoting Foods & Physical Activity Opportunities for Children

### Safe Table Forum on School Nutrition & Physical Activity

The Health Policy Analysis Program (HPAP) and CPHN partnered to present a Safe Table Forum on school nutrition and physical activity in November 2003. This forum provided information on issues and concerns regarding childhood obesity, the arguments and policy rationale for employing schools to address these issues, as well as strategies being considered for improving the school environment. The forum consisted of two, half-day informational seminars given to legislators and their staff, as well as to key stakeholders working with schools. The collaboration with HPAP on this forum produced two briefing papers, *Childhood Nutrition and Physical Activity in the Schools: Background Briefing and Inventory of Major Nutrition and Physical Activity Programs and Initiatives*. The briefing papers are available through a link on the CPHN homepage.

### Healthy Schools in Washington

The *Healthy Schools in Washington* website identifies resources and tools for Washington State educators, policy makers and community members as they work together to make it easy for children to choose health-promoting foods, to be physically active, and to be ready to learn at school. The site is a collaborative effort between CPHN, the State Board of Health, the Department of Health, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Children's Alliance. The site is organized into tools and resources for key stakeholders as well as example programs, model policies, background data, reports and other materials supporting healthy school environments. The website can be accessed at [www.healthyschoolswa.org](http://www.healthyschoolswa.org).



## Hunger & Food Insecurity

### PHSKC WIC and the Basic Food Program

As proposed in the Plan, one way to decrease the burden of food insecurity is to increase access to nutrition programs. Many who are eligible to receive such support are not utilizing available assistance. For example, Public Health-Seattle & King County (PHSKC) WIC Program found that roughly 65% of WIC clients are living at or below the poverty line, yet only 23% are participating in the Basic Food Program (BFP).

The task of identifying barriers to the WA BFP and recommendations for increasing the proportion of eligible WIC clients who participate in the BFP was bestowed upon the 2004 UW Community Nutrition class, taught by Donna Johnson. As a class project, the students conducted an extensive assessment of the attitudes and barriers to the BFP in both WIC staff and clients. The assessment included literature searches, key informant interviews, and surveys at three public health clinics in the PHSKC service area. The students found that many clients were unaware of the BFP or were discouraged by perceived barriers to the application process. In addition, a large percentage of staff never received training on the BFP and many spent very little to no time addressing the BFP and making referrals.

In an effort to increase the number of staff referrals to the BFP, the students used this information to create a 30-minute PowerPoint training module for WIC staff, which outlines the benefits, eligibility requirements, and available resources for the BFP. PHSKC plans to implement the training module sometime this summer.

For more information about this project, please contact Donna Oberg at [Donna.Oberg@metrokc.gov](mailto:Donna.Oberg@metrokc.gov) or Lisa DiGiorgio at [Lisa.DiGiorgio@metrokc.gov](mailto:Lisa.DiGiorgio@metrokc.gov).

## Breastfeeding

### Breastfeeding Policy and Environmental Evaluation

Building on the Department of Health's work with the Moses Lake Healthy Communities Breastfeeding Project, we are conducting a pilot project that will establish methods for evaluating various components of societal support for breastfeeding. We will evaluate the impact of policy and environmental interventions in the hospital, workplace, childcare, and other community settings on breastfeeding practices and other outcomes of interest. One notable product of this work will be a validated breastfeeding policy and environmental audit tool that can be used for assessment and community action. The funding for this project is through a cooperative agreement between the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Data for this project is expected in early 2005.

### Community-based Initiatives to Improve Nutrition & Physical Activity

#### Community Inventory

The Center has been involved in all phases of the Healthy Communities pilot projects in Moses Lake and most recently, Mount Vernon, but it's most significant contribution may be the technical assistance it has

provided to communities around evaluation, including assessment. Staff have trained and worked collaboratively with community members to establish project goals and objectives for planning and implementation as well as gather data about nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. Given the focus on nutrition and physical activity environments and policies, the Plan serves as the foundation for the community inventory or audit. The inventory's purpose is to:

- To gather information about nutrition and physical activity environments and policies within a geographic boundary
- To explore opportunities for partnership and collaboration
- To facilitate decision making about community interventions

Community members are actively engaged in data collection. After the results are compiled and summarized, a community advisory group in each community makes decisions about which intervention activities outlined in the Plan are most appropriate for the community. For more information, contact Caroline Tittel at [cmtittel@u.washington.edu](mailto:cmtittel@u.washington.edu).

#### Grants for Healthy Youth

CPHN funded five community-based projects in 2003 to improve nutrition and physical activity in children and youth. Many of the projects are working within the Plan's framework to change policies and environments.



These projects include:

- The Spokane Regional Health District's "Grassroots Neighborhood Action Teams" are working in nine Spokane communities. Projects include community gardens to increase access to health promoting foods and increase physical activity, safe and active routes to school, increasing healthy foods offered in school meal programs, as well as changing worksite policies to support breastfeeding.
- The Children's Alliance is working with three school districts on an evaluation of the school nutrition environment using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) assessment and planning tool, the School Health Index. Using the data collected, partners will identify areas for targeted improvement and will work together to implement and monitor at least one nutrition policy change to increase access to health promoting foods.
- The Child Care Health Program out of Public Health-Seattle & King County is providing training for child care providers on nutrition and physical activity. Nutrition activities focus on menu improvement and physical activity is promoted using Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids program (SPARK), a research-based program to

improve the quantity and quality of physical activity for children, young and old.

- WSU Clark County Extension is still going strong as it trains and facilitates interactions between middle-school mentors and elementary students. The "Eat and Play for Health" program seeks to improve nutrition and physical activity in students enrolled in after-school programs and in housing projects.
- The "Kids on the Move" project from the Seattle Nutrition Action Consortium (SNAC) program has worked to improve access to health promoting foods and physical activity through gardening and other activities. Final results for this project are expected in April.

More information, as well as contact information for each project, is available on the CPHN website, [www.cphn.org](http://www.cphn.org).

## Physical Activity Opportunities for Children

### T.V. Reduction Strategies

The AAP recommends that children spend less than two hours each day watching television. Excessive television watching is associated with overweight in children, and television reduction has been proposed as one of the key interventions for reducing prevalence of overweight in children. Television reduction is part of the statewide health promotion program, Healthy Habits, which was developed for the Washington State WIC Program. This spring, Healthy Habits materials will be available to all Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs (ECEAP) in Washington State.

Each ECAEP agency will receive brochures that describe a set of television reduction materials, a "Clickit," that they can order at no cost. The Clickit contains background materials about the impact of excessive television on child development and health, ways to reduce television use in homes, and colorful posters, bookmarks and handouts. The Clickit project is collaboration between CPHN, Washington State Community Trade and Economic Development, and the Washington State DOH Nutrition and Physical Activity Program.

## Other News

### CPHN hires a communications specialist

The Center welcomed Lynne T. Smith, PhD, MPH, RD to the team in early March. Lynne's expertise in evaluation from her work as a research fellow on the Nutrition chapter of the CDC Community Guide will be invaluable to the work she will be doing with process and program evaluation for the Center. Please welcome Lynne!

