

# 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.*

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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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## About this issue

This issue of the *CPHN Quarterly* focuses on public health nutrition research in which Center faculty, staff and their partners are engaged. For more information, please refer to the contact information listed for each article.

## Poverty and Obesity

Adam Drewnowski, [adamdrew@u.washington.edu](mailto:adamdrew@u.washington.edu)



Through its National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Cooperative State Research Education and Extension Service recently awarded funds to address the issue of obesity, with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, including recipients of food assistance. The University of Washington with Dr. Adam Drewnowski as Principal investigator, and the Cooperative Extension of the University of California at Davis, with Dr. Marilyn Townsend as lead researcher, were awarded this collaborative grant. The USDA's Human Nutrition Research Center at Davis will also participate in the project.

This multi-state project will explore the relationship between dietary energy density, diet costs, and actual food expenditures in two groups: 120 middle-income men and women in Seattle and 120 low-income women from four California counties. Studies to be conducted in Seattle will develop a new tool to estimate individual diet costs, using local supermarket prices, California food prices and mean national food prices for some 400 foods, as estimated by the Economic Research Service of the USDA.

All study participants will provide data on shopping patterns, away from home foods, availability and accessibility of preferred foods, participation in food assistance programs, and potential financial and psychosocial barriers to dietary change. Questions on sensory acceptability and satisfaction with the diet will be based on those developed for the USDA's Thrifty Food Plan.

The study goal is to develop ways to offer dietary advice that takes food preferences, usual eating habits, and financial limitations into account. Helping low-income consumers obtain high-quality diets at an affordable cost may be the key strategy for stemming the obesity epidemic among the disadvantaged groups.

## School Nutrition and Physical Activity

### Implementation and Evaluation

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The Seattle School Board adopted a non-commercialism policy in 2001 in response to several years of lobbying by parents and citizens' groups. The policy is intended to decrease commercialism in Seattle Public Schools by reducing the students' exposure to advertising and other marketing pressures, including those from commercial food vendors. A research study funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) began in Fall 2002 to assess the impact of this policy in two Seattle Public High Schools. Student focus groups were conducted at both schools. Analysis of the focus groups indicated that students have good knowledge of recommendations for nutrition and physical activity but face attitudinal, environmental, and policy barriers to adopting recommended behaviors. School faculty, administrators, staff, students, and parents came together to use the School Health Index (SHI), a tool developed by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to assess the school environment for nutrition and physical activity. Both schools were assessed during the spring of 2003 and 2004. The repeat assessment indicated that, despite many challenges, positive changes can be made.



### Assessing Policies

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In collaboration with CPHN and the Washington State Department of Health, Public Health-Seattle & King County (PHSKC) conducted a mail and web-based survey of school district policies related to physical activity and nutrition in King County. The purpose of the survey was twofold: (1) to generate systematically collected data on district policies and; (2) to test this approach for the purposes of developing a statewide school district policy surveillance system that can be used to measure progress toward the goals and objectives of the Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, as well as the plans of other constituency groups. Data were collected from 16 of the 19 school districts in King County. Results, lessons learned and recommendations will be shared with organizations across the state at the Washington State Joint Conference on Health in October 2004.

## Maternal and Child Health

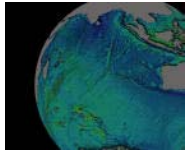
### Partners for Leadership Excellence

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Anne Lund, [acl4@u.washington.edu](mailto:acl4@u.washington.edu)

This five year training grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) provides opportunities for partnership with UCLA, USC and Colorado State as well as national leadership initiatives for nutrition. The partners grant provides funding for a collaborative obesity course for professional students, graduate students and public health practitioners in the western states. Other activities include facilitating meetings for an initiative to develop a comprehensive national plan for nutrition and developing materials and training to assure that the policies recommended in the Washington State Plan for Nutrition and Physical Activity are implemented in child care settings.

### GIS and Public Health

Colin Rehm, [crehm@u.washington.edu](mailto:crehm@u.washington.edu)



CPHN, in conjunction with the UW Nutritional Sciences Program, is pleased to announce the installation of ESRI

ArcGIS 9 Geographic Information System (GIS) software on three of the program's workstations. The state of the art software has been made available by the University of Washington ESRI Site License, and will prove to be an important tool in the Center's efforts to understand and prevent obesity and chronic disease.

GIS software has proven to be an invaluable epidemiologic tool in mapping the geographic distribution of health outcomes and determinants. GIS can be used to examine the socio-environmental barriers and determinants of access to healthy and affordable food and physical activity. The technology has been applied at a number of scales in the research of childhood obesity ([http://www.esri.com/industries/health/business/gis\\_and\\_obesity.html](http://www.esri.com/industries/health/business/gis_and_obesity.html)). In addition, a recent project at Harvard School of Public Health has examined the role of social and economic disparities in health outcomes through the use of a GIS (<http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/thegeocodingproject/>). The Center has recently begun applying the technology to the Healthy Community Project in Moses Lake, creating base maps and recording the community audit information within the software.

The Center is eager to begin working with our collaborators in mapping the environmental factors related to obesity at multiple geographic scales. In addition, we are able to assist our partners in the creation of any maps for brochures, publications or reports.

## Grants for Healthy Youth

### Project Implementation

Barbara Bruemmer, [bbruemme@u.washington.edu](mailto:bbruemme@u.washington.edu)

Many of the projects are completed or in their final phase. We commend all the excellent work that has been accomplished and celebrate everyone's hard work and dedication to improving nutrition and physical activity for our youth!



Two of our projects have activities for this summer. The Children's Alliance is currently involved in their project on out-of-school-time programs. Shelley Curtis and Kara Ludlow are working with Schools Out Washington and the Washington Regional Action Project. These groups are involved in regional training, distribution of science kits with nutrition education materials, and support of conferences and workshops.

Sandy Brown and Melissa Della-Paolera of WSU Extension, Clark County, will be working on the "Eat and Play for Health" project this summer continuing their mentoring program with the Boys and Girls Club. They anticipate an additional 100 children will participate this summer. An exciting additional element will be the opportunity to work with a new organic garden project in the community. For CPHN, this will provide a venue to link projects from the Grants for Healthy Youth.

Sandy and Melissa hope to interact with the SNAC project "Kids on the Move" which developed materials on gardening for youth in the Seattle area.

### Process Evaluation

Lynne T. Smith, [smithly@u.washington.edu](mailto:smithly@u.washington.edu)

It's been a little over a year since CPHN distributed vitamin settlement funds through five mini grants for projects aimed to improve nutrition and physical activity for children and youth in Washington State. Grants were awarded to the Spokane Regional Health District, the Children's Alliance, the Child Care Health Program at Public Health Seattle & King County, WSU Clark County Extension and Seattle Nutrition Action Coalition. As the Grants for Healthy Youth funding cycle is coming to a close, CPHN has undertaken process evaluation of the mini grant projects and the Center's performance in administering and facilitating the project grants. Grant recipients and their partners are being asked about their experiences with their projects and with CPHN. We're asking about what worked well and what barriers there were to project implementation. We want to learn about how an academic center such as CPHN can partner with community-based efforts to work toward shared goals of improving nutrition and physical activity and reducing and preventing

obesity. The study findings will be applied to improve how the Center interacts with its partners in future collaborations and will help us focus on building strong and effective interventions.

## Senior Health

### Take Charge of Your Health Senior Nutrition Education Program

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*Take Charge of Your Health* is a curriculum developed by the Georgia Division of Aging Services; the University of Georgia; and Wellness, Inc., a private health education company. The program was awarded the Dannon Institute's *Awards for Excellence in Community Nutrition* and USDA's 2003 FNS LINC *Excellence in Practice Award*. The intervention focuses on three primary behavior changes participants can make to improve their health: take down fat, take five a day, and take action. The program seeks to improve the nutritional status and general health of the participants; reduce their risk of developing chronic diseases; and lessen the impact on health and quality of life for those already experiencing chronic disease.

The WA State Unit on Aging, Senior Services of Snohomish County, Olympic Area Agency on Aging, and Senior Services for South Sound have conducted 41 lessons from this curriculum to over 140 participants in 12 senior congregate meal and housing sites throughout Washington State. More lessons and sites are planned throughout the summer. The CPHN, partnered with these agencies, is currently evaluating the lessons' impact on nutrition and physical activity knowledge and behavior. Results from the evaluation are expected in early fall.



### Mark Your Calendars for Upcoming WA Events!

*Washington State Public Health Association*  
Joint Conference on Health  
October 4-6  
Wenatchee, WA  
Info: [www.wspha.org/JCH1.html](http://www.wspha.org/JCH1.html)

*Washington Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance*  
WAPERD State Conference  
October 22-23  
Pasco, WA  
Info: [www.wahperd.com/conference.htm](http://www.wahperd.com/conference.htm)

*Washington State WIC Program*  
State WIC Conference  
October 25-26  
SeaTac, WA