



# CPHN Quarterly

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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 highlights news from CPHN and ECOR's work with school and community partners, upcoming events, and news from the Centers' faculty, staff and students.*



## Project Evaluation at T.T. Minor

This Spring, students in the Public Health Nutrition course at the University of Washington evaluated the impact of two nutrition initiatives at T.T. Minor Elementary School in Seattle. As an adjunct to their Healthy Living by Design work, Feet First was able to implement a nutrition intervention at T.T. Minor called "Eat Better, Feel Better." This intervention is funded through Healthy Eating by Design (HEBD), a national initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. For the past two years, T.T. Minor Elementary has also been selected as one of twenty-five schools across Washington to receive free fruits and vegetables for snacks from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Fresh Fruit and Vegetables program. Together these two programs built a positive food environment at T.T. Minor by providing fruits and vegetables as snacks, nutrition education for teachers, staff, students and parents, a new salad bar in the cafeteria, family nights, cooking demonstrations and the development of a school garden.

The evaluation included interviews with teachers, staff and parents, student surveys and lunchroom observations. Findings at T.T. Minor were compared with those from a control school with similar characteristics. Students at T.T. Minor reported a significantly greater intake of fruits and vegetables compared to the control school. Teachers, staff and parents all felt that the program had a strong and positive impact on the students and the school environment.

## RWJF Awards Grant for Healthy Eating Research

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation recently awarded a three-year research grant to Donna Johnson, Principal Investigator, at the University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition. Victor Colman, JD, from WA State Department of Health, is a co-investigator. Dr. Johnson's grant is one of 14 grants provided nationwide to explore how federal, state and local school food policies can help prevent childhood obesity. The grants are being administered through RWJF's Healthy Eating Research program, based at the University of Minnesota.

The *Policy Legislation and Nutrition (PLAN)* study is designed to identify successful policy implementation strategies that lead from legislation about school nutrition policies to actual improvements in the diets of students. *PLAN* will take advantage of several existing initiatives and partnerships to study the impact of Senate Bill 5436 in 64 middle schools across the state.

## Analysis of Washington State School District Nutrition and Fitness Policies

Janice Kao, Nutritional Sciences MPH student, analyzed policies that were developed in response to SB 5436, state legislation that requires that each district in Washington State develop nutrition and fitness policies. Out of 120 district policies, 97 included guidelines for the types of food or beverages allowed in a la carte sales, vending machines, and concession stands; 46 school districts recommend teacher training and staff development for improved health curricula; and 47 districts recommend or require that PE teachers have appropriate training or certification. Only 3 district policies included additional resources for implementing the policies. In general, large school districts and those that participate in federally funded programs such as Coordinated School Health and Steps to a Healthier US had more rigorous policies and implementation plans.

## Luncheon Policy Discussion: Policies to Reduce Obesity and its Health, Economic and Social Consequences

Health behaviors leading to obesity reflect both the private choices individuals make and the matrix of social and economic circumstances that affect those choices in an *obesogenic* environment. The significant public impact of the recent rapid increase in obesity warrants a discussion about how best to develop and implement policies that will promote changes for the greater public good.

A diverse group of public health practitioners, clinicians, public health researchers, social science researchers, and policy makers gathered at an informal luncheon campus on May 30, 2006 to discuss *social dilemma* literature and past examples of similar public health challenges and policy successes (e.g., smoking reduction, AIDS prevention, and seatbelts and bicycle helmet use) in order to identify elements of policies that have been effective nationwide. A policy evaluation framework was applied and attendees discussed where there are knowledge gaps and opportunities for research in King County and the state of Washington.

Attendees generally enjoyed the discussion and hearing each other's perspectives. For improvements, the suggestion was made that there should have been some small group discussion time to brainstorm ideas, process information and work together. The event promoted interdisciplinary understanding.

## CPHN & ECOR Staff News

**Anne Lund, RD, MPH** joined the staff this summer to assist with the writing of a NIH grant (R-01) on early adolescent life predictors of obesity and oral health, and to serve as Acting Research Coordinator for the RWJF PLAN grant at CPHN.

## Policy Evaluation Training at the Annual Meeting of the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND)

CPHN, partners and collaborators planned and facilitated a six hour training session on evaluation of nutrition policy initiatives at the annual ASTPHND meeting in June. This special training session was a joint meeting of ASTPHND and the Western Regional MCH Nutrition Leadership Network. The training began with a panel discussion that highlighted the policy development and evaluation work being done in Washington State. Panel members included Kyle Unland, Marilyn Sitaker, and Victor Colman from the WA DOH, Shelley Curtis from the Children's Alliance and Donna Johnson from CPHN. Following the panel, state and national public health nutrition leaders participated in round table discussions of efforts underway across the country. Results of the round table discussions have been transcribed, thanks to Amy Ellings from WA DOH.

## New Grant with Partners from the Evans School of Public Affairs

Erin Maher, PhD from the Human Services Policy Center in the UW Evans School of Public Affairs is Principal Investigator on a new project, *The Relationship between Non-Parental Child Care and Children's Overweight /Obesity Outcomes during a Critical Development Period*, funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. This grant will provide an opportunity to examine the impact of child care environments on the risk of overweight in early childhood with data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study. Louise Carter, PhD from the Evans School and Donna Johnson from CPHN will serve as co-investigators.

## Staff News – continued

**Donna Johnson**, Associate Director of CPHN, has been promoted to Associate Professor in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine. She has also been appointed to two Centers for Disease Control panels: the Community Guide Obesity review team and the Expert Panel for Television Reduction.

## Recently Published Articles



**Johnson DB**, Birkett D, Evens C, Pickering, S. Promoting Family Meals in WIC: Lessons Learned from a Statewide Initiative. *J Nutr Educ Behav.* 2006 May-June;38(3): 177-182.

Sanders LF, **Duncan GE**. Population-based reference standards for Cardiovascular Fitness among U. S. Adults: NHANES 1999-2000 and 2001-2002. *Med Sci Sports Exerc.* 2006 Apr ; 38(4):701-707.

Mendoza JA, **Drewnowski A**, Cheadle A, Christakis, DA. Dietary energy density is associated with selected predictors of obesity in U.S. Children. *J Nutr.* 2006 May; 136(5):1318-22.

Moudon AV, Lee C, Cheadle AD, Collier C, **Johnson, D**, Schmid TL, Weathers, RD. Operational definitions of walkable neighborhood: Empirical and theoretical insights. *Jour of Phys Activity & Health.* 2006;3:S99-S117.



## Mark Your Calendars!

**2006 Washington State Food & Nutrition Council Annual Conference** "2020 Vision: The Future of Food in Washington State" September 22, 2006 – Highline Community College, Des Moines, WA. For information, visit: [www.wsfnrc.org](http://www.wsfnrc.org)

**2006 Washington State Joint Conference on Health** October 16-18, 2006 – Yakima Convention Center, Yakima. Anne Lund, MPH, RD, Acacia Larson, MPH, RD and Angela Kong, MPH, RD will present "Applying TV Reduction Initiatives: WA State Early Childhood Populations." For information, visit: [www.wspha.org/JCH1.html](http://www.wspha.org/JCH1.html)

## WA Association for the Education of Young Children Annual Conference

October 26-28, 2006 - Hilton Inn, Bellevue. Donna Johnson and Angela Kong will present their research on TV reduction initiatives with early childhood populations. For information, visit: [www.waeyc.org](http://www.waeyc.org)