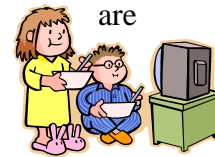


Obesity is a known risk factor for numerous chronic diseases including diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure and respiratory problems. Statistics show that obesity rates are climbing in epidemic proportions. According to the most recent studies, approximately two-thirds of the adult population is overweight or obese nationwide. New Jersey has the 40th highest level of adult obesity in the nation at 22.2% and the highest overweight level for low-income children ages 2-5 at 17.5%. Furthermore, statistics show that 27.3% of the adult population is inactive; which is directly affecting our children as children are more likely to be inactive if their parents are inactive. Youth are spending more time in sedentary activities than ever before (television, video games, computers, etc). The average child watches 3 hours of television each day.



With that being said, New Jersey has decided to take action. Through a grant made possible by New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services, fifteen of New Jersey's Community Health Centers (CHCs) are currently participating in an Obesity Education Program Initiative. The goal of the initiative is to reduce both the prevalence and incidence of obesity statewide and thereby making New Jersey residents healthier.

As part of the agreement in the Obesity Education Program Initiative Terms of Participation, health centers agreed to adopt and implement an obesity education program or enhance an already established program. Each center received some funding to be used for program materials.



Most of the health centers have identified uses for the grant money. AtlantiCare Health Services, Horizon Health Center, Metropolitan Family Health Center, Southern Jersey Family Medical Center and Zufall Health Center have all purchased nutrition teaching aids (food models, posters, DVD's, handouts, games, etc.) from Nasco, a manufacturer/provider of educational products.

Community Health Care, Inc. and Ocean Health Initiatives are instituting the We Can! Childhood Obesity Education Program at their sites and using the funds for program incentives (pedometers, basketballs, gift cards, etc) and a program kick-off. Henry J. Austin Health Center and Visiting Nurse Association of Central Jersey Health Center have preexisting programs and will also use the grant money for program incentives (pedometers, resistance bands, exercise DVD's, healthy eating/lifestyle books and gift cards).



In addition to food models, Newark Community Health Center would like to purchase a body fat analysis machine and implement an employee weight reduction program with their grant money. Horizon Health Center intends to implement a multi-disciplinary approach to weight management for their pediatric patients. The plan consists of weekly evaluations with a dietitian and personal training sessions as well as monthly psychological counseling for behavior modification. AtlantiCare Health Services and Zufall Health Center are planning similar multi-disciplinary approaches at their sites.

While each individual health center has its own plan for use of the grant money, all health centers intend to use the funding for printed educational materials in addition to the aforementioned uses.



Lastly, all sites that have met with NJPCA's Obesity Education Program Coordinator have agreed to promote the 5-2-1-0 Childhood Obesity Prevention Campaign and its messages and will use a portion of the funding to promote the campaign. For more information on the 5-2-1-0 Childhood Obesity Prevention Campaign, download the brochure on the Health Disparities website: <http://healthdisparities.net/hdc/html/home.asp> New Jersey, Tool Box.

AtlantiCare has implemented monthly weight management classes and a diabetes support group for the uninsured and homeless residents of Atlantic City. The weight management classes run by a registered dietitian are offered to all patients with a body mass index (BMI) ≥ 30 . Healthy snacks and beverages are provided at each session. The program goals are to provide education on the importance of maintaining a healthy weight and being physically active in preventing chronic disease and to empower patients to make healthy lifestyle choices. In addition, and also part of the obesity initiative, BMI charts are posted in all exam rooms and BMI's are obtained on all patients.

CAMcare has been hard at work developing guidelines around obesity assessment and evaluation for providers and has devised an interdepartmental nutrition referral process for patients identified as obese. They have partnered with Rutgers Community Outreach Program to provide a healthy eating demo and are in the midst of developing the infrastructure for group classes with their dietitian. They also obtain BMI's on all patients.

Community Health Care Inc. has signed up to be a We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition) site; We Can! is a childhood obesity prevention program. Community Health Care Inc., has titled their program **H.A.N.D.S. (Health and Nutrition Develops Strength)** and will use the We Can! curriculum to teach children about healthy eating and physical activity. The program kickoff event was held on October 12th and we hope to see great results!

Eric B. Chandler has instituted an obesity progress note and flow sheet that assesses all pediatric patients for weight, height and BMI at all Well Child Visits. A nutrition referral is given to all children who have an elevated BMI (greater than the 85th percentile on the pediatric growth charts) and each child and family receives a culturally appropriate nutrition intervention from a registered dietitian. Patients and their families are encouraged to follow up at regular intervals to assess progress. In addition, Eric B. Chandler provides follow-up nutrition care and counseling to patients seen in the Robert Wood Johnson Community Education Program, "New Start."

Henry J. Austin Health Center continues with the S.W.E.E.T. (Successful Wellness by Eating and Exercising Together) program. An 8 week pediatric nutrition and physical activity program for parents and children with a focus on weight maintenance. S.W.E.E.T is multidisciplinary and is staffed by a dietitian, a child psychologist, a physician and a personal trainer as well as a data coordinator. Nutrition education, behavior modification and fitness components make up the program with maintenance phases occurring bimonthly during the school year and monthly in the summer.

Horizon Health Center hosts a Children's Nutrition and Exercise Program every Friday where children and parents are educated on healthy food choices, portion size, the food guide pyramid and calorie intake. The program is staffed with a pediatrician, a nurse, a medical assistant and a clerk. Each child is encouraged to keep a food diary. A 40 minute exercise routine is included in weekly sessions as well.

Jewish Renaissance Medical Center is using the captive audience at their Quitman Street School After School Program to implement the We Can! program curriculum to their healthy weight and overweight/obese students in grades five through eight. Weekly after school group sessions with an exercise component utilizing karate and dance will be spearheaded by a nurse practitioner and a medical assistant.

Metropolitan Family Health Network has instituted a referral process for any adult with a BMI > 30 and any child with a BMI that plots above the 95th percentile to their dietitian for counseling. Patients receive an initial individual session as well as follow-up sessions and are encouraged to attend group classes. The goal of the nutrition intervention is a two pound weight loss per week (for adults) and/or weight maintenance. To date, 81% of the adult population has met the program goals as well as 75% of the pediatric patients.

Monmouth Family Health Center has chosen to focus on their overweight prenatal population. Initial BMI's are obtained for all prenatal patients and those who are overweight and/or obese are referred to the dietitian or WIC nutritionist for nutritional counseling. The aim of the program is to promote healthy births and prevent complications of obesity in the prenatal state.

Newark Community Health Center has started a "Beat Away the Pounds with Education, Diet and Exercise" class with their obese adult patients. A registered dietitian provides basic nutrition information about making healthy choices and lifestyle modifications to promote healthy weights. In addition, weekly exercise classes are held to promote increased physical activity. BMI's are also obtained on all patients.

North Hudson Community Action Corporation holds monthly group healthy lifestyle education classes at each of their 7 sites. Group sessions are conducted by the community health educator in both English and Spanish with the goal of weight reduction and healthy lifestyles. To date, 888 patients have been made aware of the class.

Ocean Health Initiatives has created a new template in their electronic medical record to capture BMI data, 5-2-1-0 education and self-management goal documentation for pediatric and adult patients. This summer, the pediatric department piloted a weekly fitness program that targeted children ages 3-5 years old and their parents. Dancing, obstacles courses and walks around the block were incorporated into the fitness program. The program was a great success with a 2% weight change noted. They are excited to expand this program to teens. In addition, Ocean Health Initiatives has signed up to be a We Can! community site.

Project H.O.P.E implemented a 6-week "Biggest Loser Weight Loss Challenge" to all patients in the data warehouse with a diagnosis of diabetes, asthma or hypertension with a BMI \geq 30 and new patients identified with any of these diseases. Partnerships were formed with Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Our Lady of Lourdes Wellness

Center for a registered dietitian to provide nutrition information to patients. In addition, staff made presentations on food choices and behavior modification; reading a nutrition label; and 12 ways to eat 100 calories or less. Social work assisted patients with setting self management goals for weight loss. Lastly, weight loss and nutrition education were incorporated into “Diabetic Thursday” classes to reach more people.

Southern Jersey Family Medical Center has started “Successful Journey For Motivating Change, Promoting Healthy Lifestyles” through the “0-4-10 Program. The 10-4-10 program encourages patients to lose 10 pounds in 4 sessions and win \$10. The program sessions include building a healthy plate, shopping and cooking techniques, snacking the healthy way, stress management strategies and physical activity. Patients all receive an initial individual consultation with the community health educator and are given a program binder and patient notebook. Patients are then referred to the group sessions which are held cyclically over an 8 week period. To date there are 23 patients enrolled in the program.

Visiting Nurse Association of Central New Jersey (VNACJ) continues to hold its weekly Weight Control Group run by their registered dietitian. Since the Obesity Initiative, program referral and size has increased and incentives have been incorporated for motivation. The group sessions focus on healthy eating and physical fitness and run for 75 minutes. There are now 27 people in the weight control group!

Zufall Health Center has instituted a 6-week management program, “Lifestyle Changes Program” with an aim to reduce average BMI by 5% and improvement in average HbA1c or Blood Pressure by 5% in both diabetic and non-diabetic patients. Facilitator-guided group sessions were ongoing and educated patients to use behavior modification techniques to help with weight reduction and healthy eating. To date, Zufall has completed one successful 6-week “Lifestyle Changes Program.” In addition, all patients identified as obese are educated on the Plate Method for weight management and blood sugar control.