

Title: Community Health and Nutrition - Extension

Project Leader: Lindiwe Sibeko

Project Overview

Most Americans fall short of achieving national guidelines for healthy dietary intakes, particularly of fruits and vegetables. This has contributed to unprecedented obesity rates in the US for both child and adult populations. Disparities in achieving national dietary guidelines are particularly evident in low income and some racial and ethnic minorities; population groups with high levels of food insecurity and poor health status.

The city of Springfield has an infant mortality rate (IMR) that is nearly double that of the state of Massachusetts (8.8 versus 4.7 deaths per 1000 live births, before the age of 1). Racial disparities are at the core of these distressing figures, with African American IMR being higher than the white counterparts (8.2 vs 3.2). The CDC estimates the infant mortality gap in the black population can be reduced by at least 50% through increased breastfeeding among African American women.

This work will address the nutritional health issues of low income and racial and ethnic minorities who are at high risk of food insecurity and poor health outcomes, including overweight and obesity. Training of undergraduates and graduate students will focus on delivery of nutrition education to underserved populations in the community. Extension education activities and research will be advanced by developing partnerships in the community to provide effective nutrition education and to motivate behavior changes that will increase diet quality for target populations and strengthen collaboration with community organizations. Through a similar community collaborative approach this work is also focused on increasing breastfeeding rates among African American women and ultimately help reduce the unacceptably high rates of IMR in that population.

Activity Summary – 2015

- Mentored students in developing the Fit & Focus Mentor Program (1)
- “Snacking Fact Sheet; Passport to Health” Nutrition Education lessons were developed and delivered by my students at the request of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County (5)
- A proposal for a study “Breastfeeding Attitudes, Belief and Experiences of African American Women in Springfield MA: a community based participatory approach”, has been submitted to the UMASS IRB for approval (1)
- Establish Breastfeeding Disparities Advisory Board (1)

- Speaking Engagements for Community Groups addressing topics such as: obesity prevention, promotion of heart health and promotion and support of breastfeeding in Springfield(3)
- Co-facilitated a community discussion on drivers of the Obesity epidemic with Bettye Anderson Frederick (Deputy Commissioner of the Springfield Dept. of Health/Human Services (1)
- Delivered presentation on Heart Health for African American women (1)
- Interviewed for a documentary film addressing the benefit and impact of peer counselor support on breastfeeding success (produced by local WIC office) (2)
- Co-chair of session on Food Security and Its Connections to Nutrition and Health, at the Experimental Biology (American Society for Nutrition section ASN) Conference (1)
- Judge for ASN Lactation Interest Section: Emerging Leaders in Nutrition Science Poster Competition at the Experimental Biology ASN Conference (1)
- Peer reviewer of abstract submissions for the ROSE (Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere) conference in Atlanta, GA. (1)
- Mentor to a PhD student and a Masters student (2)

Total Educational contacts

	Youth Contacts	Adult Contacts
In Person	30	289
Indirect Contacts (Print, Web, etc...)		

Narrative Summary and Impact

The Fit and Focus nutrition education program was developed by students in two courses I teach (I. Nutrition Education in Practice (397B) and Community Nutrition (572) that have a significant service learning component. In both courses students are trained to conduct needs assessments and design nutrition education lessons that meet the needs of the population served by community Partners. Based on a request from Holyoke Community College (HCC), students in my class developed a 'train the trainer' program, incorporating a nutrition education curriculum for promoting healthy eating and healthy body image for high School students from a largely Hispanic high school in Holyoke, MA. The HCC students were mentored by my students and practiced delivering the 3 nutrition education lessons curriculum as part of their training. The plan is for HCC students to deliver the program at the high school during 2015/16 academic year.

Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Hampshire County, in their newly funded M.E.N.T.O.R (Moving and Eating Nutritionally to Overcome Risks) passport to health program approached me to form a partnership to provide nutrition education lessons targeted to their mentees (grades 3 to 6 children enrolled in their program). This project has grown into a collaboration between Big

Brothers Big Sisters, Amherst Schools and the University of Massachusetts. The overall aim of the program is to provide the volunteer mentors (mostly University students) with information and tools that can help them model and encourage health and wellness practices by the mentees they spend time with. Lessons were developed and delivered by students in my 397B and 572 courses. Through the various nutrition lessons, students also developed supporting education materials.

I received invitations to deliver various nutrition education presentations from Mason Square Health Taskforce (a community organization addressing health disparities in the African American population of Springfield MA). Presentations were the following:

A) Co-facilitated a community discussion on Obesity with Bettye Anderson Frederick (Deputy Commissioner of the Springfield Dept. of Health/Human Services) at an organized event in Springfield. The event began with screening of the HBO "Weight of the Nation" documentary, and was followed by a discussion with the audience on issues raised in the film in reference to prevalence of obesity in the African American Community.

B) American Heart Association Go Red campaign- (sponsored by Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. - an African American Sorority- the Springfield Alumnae Chapter). The focus of my presentation was on Heart Health for African American women.

I acted in an advisory role in a collaboration with Franklin/Hampshire/North Quabbin WIC on a documentary film illustrating the impact of peer counselor support on breastfeeding success. I was interviewed for the documentary, commenting on the importance of a WIC peer support program for supporting women breastfeeding, many of who live under challenging circumstances. The film: **Succeeding with Breastfeeding** was screened on August 6, 2015 5:30-7:30pm. There was a diverse audience at the screening, composed of clients, health professionals, peer counselors and educators. Approx. 60 people attended the event, which was part of the local WIC's *World Breastfeeding Week* celebration. The documentary has been requested by various interested parties to use as part of their education activities.

I became a member of the advisory board of the Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence (RNECE), which was awarded to Cornell (by NIFA) for the North East region (there are 4 regions in total). The role of this center is to build the evidence-base for nutrition education and obesity prevention strategies and interventions that produce measurable improvements in health, obesity, nutrition (food behavior), and physical education/extension, environmental, systems, and policy translation targeted at low- income families and children.

Professional Association activities have included co-chairing a session on Food Security and Its Connections to Nutrition and Health, at the Experimental Biology (American Society for Nutrition section ASN) Conference in Boston March 2015. I also served

as a judge for the ASN Lactation Interest Section: Emerging Leaders in Nutrition Science Poster Competition at the Experimental Biology ASN Conference in Boston March 2015. I've provided my expertise as a peer reviewer of abstract submissions for the ROSE (Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere) conference in Atlanta, GA. ROSE is a non-profit organization that was founded to address breastfeeding disparities among people of color nationwide through culturally competent training, education, advocacy, and support. The conference brought together over 300 attendees representing academics, Federal agencies, professionals and peer counselors from around the country, who are committed to addressing breastfeeding disparities.

My PhD student has successfully completed her doctorate and has submitted 1 manuscript and continues work on 2 additional manuscripts from her dissertation. I am co-author (and corresponding author) on all 3 papers. I have a Masters student who is completing her studies by the end of the year and preparing one manuscript on her work.

Collaborating (Partner) Organizations

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Hampshire County**
- **Holyoke Community College**
- **HeadStart Northampton**
- **Amherst Public Schools**
- **Springfield Dept. of Health/Human Services**
- **Mason Square Health Task Force**
- **Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence**
- **Franklin/Hampshire/North Quabbin WIC**
- **Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.**