

CARE Research Partnership Program: July 2007 Pilot Projects

Grant Recipient: Fair Haven Community Health Center

Title: *Family-Based Group Visits to Combat Pediatric Obesity: A Pilot Project*

Background: Obesity is epidemic among children in the United States. While nationwide the rates have increased to 20% in youth ages 2-19, at Fair Haven Community Health Center (FHCHC) the rate approaches 50% in their diverse patient population, consistent with the increased vulnerability of the minority population to this epidemic. Seeking to address this issue in the clinical setting, the FHCHC initiated a quality improvement project entitled *Pediatric BMI Recognition and Intervention During General Encounters* (PediBRIDGE) in 2003 to improve clinical care for overweight children. Their goals were to 1) implement Body Mass Index (BMI) screening in the context of routine healthcare visits, and 2) provide standardized assessment, treatment, and follow up for those children who were overweight or at risk for overweight. Preliminary analysis in 2005-2006 showed that 70% of the overweight or at-risk children had either not changed or had increased their BMI. The limited success of the PediBRIDGE approach in improving weight management prompted the team to develop a new group-therapy strategy modeled on successful prenatal care and diabetes control clinic interventions.

Specific Aims: To conduct a family-based weight management strategy for overweight or at-risk children who had little or no success in controlling weight in the PediBRIDGE clinical counseling intervention.

Methods: A group of children and their parent(s) will participate in twelve group sessions over a period of one year involving individual clinical assessments and goal setting, coupled with group education regarding diet and physical activity.

Outcomes: Fair Haven Community Health Center will evaluate the program's feasibility, participants' success in changing behavior, change in children's BMI percentile compared with a control group, and sustainability of weight loss/management.

Principal Investigators: *A University-Community Partnership*

Maria Mauldon, MSN, APRN, has been a family nurse practitioner at FHCHC since 1988. In 2003 she received a Yale School of Nursing intramural grant to conduct a pilot project to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and efficacy of a Spanish language Type 2 diabetes mellitus educational intervention for Hispanic adults. In September 2006 the findings were published in a paper entitled *Tomando Control: A Culturally Appropriate Diabetes Education Program for Spanish Speaking Individuals with Type 2 Diabetes Mellitus – Evaluation of a Pilot Project* in *Diabetes Educator*. She was the project coordinator for the PediBRIDGE expansion project in 2004-05, and has actively participated in study design development, continuous quality improvement, provision of clinical care to patients and families, and data collection and analysis since the inception of PediBRIDGE.

Karen Dorsey, MD, PhD, Instructor, Yale School of Medicine, has research interests in prevention and treatment of obesity in clinical settings. She conducted the formative research project with the FHCHC on how health care providers engage in obesity prevention and treatment in with their patients. Using a review of medical records from the four largest community health centers in New Haven, she described pediatric clinicians' practice behaviors and found low rates of screening and diagnosis of overweight children and infrequent documentation of treatment with respect to changes in diet or physical activity. She then collaborated with the FHCHC to developed the PediBRIDGE Program in response to these results. Related work isolates strategies for utilizing new laboratory measurement devices in the clinical setting to improve assessment and treatment of obesity-related health risk.