

The Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

Newsflash

Summer 2016 Issue

The PRC has prepared this electronic **Newsflash** to keep you informed about our work and invite you to take part in our research, education and outreach activities. It serves as a communication tool for our Community Committee members, and our colleagues in academia, education, clinical settings, and social service agencies. If you have ideas for working together on shared projects, please let us know.

For more information about the Yale-Griffin PRC:

Please visit our website at <http://www.yalegriffinprc.org>

PRC Updates

CDC Site Visit: In April, the Yale-Griffin PRC and the Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) at the Yale School of Public Health hosted a 2-day site visit by Dr. Mehran Massoudi, Director of the CDC's national PRC Program and Toye Williams, PRC Program Officer, with 2 other members of the national PRC Program office (Dr. Connie Bish, Program Evaluation Team Lead, and Mattie Jones, Program Dissemination Team Liaison) taking part via telephone. The first day, which took place at Griffin Hospital, focused on discussions of our core research, core infrastructure, community engagement, training, evaluation, and dissemination, and overlapped with one of our monthly VITAHLS working group meetings. The second day, which took place at the CARE office in New Haven, focused on CARE initiatives and data collection, including the results of a recent Neighborhood Survey in New Haven. The feedback from the PRC Program office was very positive and they were particularly impressed with the array and depth of our partnerships. We'd like to thank our Community Committee members and other partners who participated in the site visit.

International Health Promotion Conference at Yale University: On June 8th-10th, the PRC joined with Griffin Hospital and Planetree in hosting the 24th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services. This year's conference, which focused on the theme of "Creating a Culture of Health through Innovation and Partnership, was held in the U.S. for the first time, specifically at the Yale University campus, with a pre-conference workshop held at Griffin Hospital. Planetree, Inc., a global leader in advancing patient-centered care, is a not-for-profit organization that is headquartered at Griffin Hospital. Other conference planning partners included the International Health Promoting Hospitals Network, the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute Health Promotion Research, and the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Health Promotion in Hospitals and Health Services. Participants in the annual conference are generally industry leaders, researchers and professionals from the health, medical, healthcare, health promotion, hospital, health services, and public health community.

Current Projects

UPDATE - Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS)

This initiative, led by the PRC and Griffin Hospital in partnership with 5 school districts, and several community partners, involves developing, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining a comprehensive

Valley-wide school-based program focusing on nutrition and physical activity for PreK-12 students. Our school partners are the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, Shelton and Naugatuck school districts, and Emmett O'Brien Regional Technical School. For more information, contact VITAHLS Coordinator Amy Bethge by email at amy.bethge@yalegriffinprc.org.

- **Healthy Cooking Challenge**

The 3rd Annual VITAHLS Healthy Cooking Challenge took place on May 17th in the Dining Room at Griffin Hospital. Earlier this spring, 5th-8th grade students from the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton school districts submitted healthy breakfast recipes, and certain students were chosen to compete in local competitions. Winners from each district were then invited to compete in the final event. Contestants and their respective recipes were Alyssa from Shelton (My Belly's Full Pancakes), Arlinda from Seymour (Healthy Cinnamon Apple Waffles), Anthony from Derby (Whole Wheat French Toast), and Haylee from Ansonia (Butternut Squash French Toast). All contestants received a certificate, a Massaro Farm tote bag, cookbook, and a gift certificate for produce from the farm; a pedometer; a spiral vegetable cutter; a personalized apron and certificate; and movie passes. The overall winner, Haylee, received all of these items plus a Nutri Ninja® blender and a gift certificate to SportsCenter of CT. This year's emcees were Chef Anne Gallagher, a community food educator who is involved in First Lady Michelle Obama's Chefs Move to Schools initiative; and Dr. Diane D'Isidori, a pediatrician who partners with New Milford Hospital, schools, and organizations to educate families about health. Serving as judges were the mayors or other public officials from each community, and Jenna Hourani, a dietitian from ShopRite Supermarket.

- **Physical Activity Videos for Secondary Schools**

This spring, 2 physical education teachers (Eric O'Toole from Derby High School and Nick Aprea from Seymour High School) and several of their respective students partnered to create 8 videos featuring these students. The intent of these videos is to promote classroom-based physical activity breaks as part of the VITAHLS initiative. The videos vary with regard to the grade levels of their target audiences, ranging from elementary through high school. On the day of the video production, students were assigned to teams of 4, with 2 Derby High students and 2 Seymour High students in each team. Special guests who spoke that day with the students included Dr. Jean Mee, Health and Physical Education Consultant from the CT State Department of Education, and Eunice Lisk, Director of Cardiac Rehab at Griffin Hospital. The Audio Technical Department at Derby High School worked with students throughout the day of filming, and oversaw post-production editing as well. Nick and Eric have been asked to offer a workshop on their video project at a state conference for health and physical education teachers to be held in the fall. The VITAHLS working group would like to congratulate the group on their creative efforts to promote health and wellness in schools.

UPDATE – Community Health Opportunities Organized with Schools at the Epicenter (CHOOSE)

The PRC's core research project for this 5-year CDC funding cycle (October 2014 through September 2019) will compare the impact of 4 levels of interventions in 5 communities, with school districts serving as epicenters, and expanding within/beyond schools to other "portals" in their respective communities. The Valley Initiative to Advance Health and Learning in Schools (VITAHLS) is one component of CHOOSE. CHOOSE will use a multilevel approach to improve diet quality and physical activity in children and adults. Potential portals include schools, worksites, clinical settings, faith-based settings, and supermarkets. We will continue to develop/expand the VITAHLS initiative in Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton schools, and have added the Naugatuck Public Schools to serve as a control/delayed intervention group. For more information, contact PRC Deputy Director Beth Comerford, email beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org.

- **CHOOSE data collection:** Now that we have added the Naugatuck Public Schools as a control district, we will collect baseline data this summer from a subset of students from grades 4, 6, and 8 in the district, along with 1 parent/guardian of each student. The data will include diet quality, body mass index, waist circumference, and blood pressure of students and parents, along with parents'

physical activity levels. Each of the anticipated 155 student/parent pairs who take part in the data collection will receive a healthy meal and a \$50 gift card.

- ***YMCA Summer Day Camp Cooking Project:*** This spring, we pre-piloted 2 children's cooking classes at the YMCA After-School Program at Mead School in Ansonia. We now want to conduct a pilot project with an evaluation component as part of the Valley YMCA Summer Day Camp in Ansonia, which typically enrolls about 60 to 80 children who are about 5-12 years of age. The project will include 6 to 8 weekly classes offered in an age-appropriate manner to children (in small groups based on age range) during the 10-week camp. Each class will focus on preparing a healthful snack, beverage, or a component of a meal such as a salad or side dish. The foods will be tasty, affordable, and simple to prepare, using only a few ingredients. Each class will last about 1 hour, and will include time to prepare and taste the food. We will combine direct instruction delivered by a qualified lead chef/instructor with additional instruction delivered by high school and/or college students who have been trained by the lead chef/instructor to assist in offering the cooking classes, and who will serve as slightly older role models to emulate and encourage the children's interest in cooking and trying new foods. YMCA staff will provide assistance and oversight, and PRC staff, interns, and volunteers will observe and assist as needed. We will evaluate the impact of the cooking classes with a pre/post survey designed to assess changes in children's preferences for healthful foods, self-efficacy in preparing meals and snacks, and willingness to try new foods. We will assess the feasibility of the cooking by through discussions with instructors and YMCA staff about training, staffing, logistics, program satisfaction, ease of integration into the Day Camp, and sustainability.

UPDATE - CARE Community Forum to Discuss New Haven Health Survey Results

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE), based in New Haven, extends the PRC's work with a mission to improve health in New Haven. CARE, in partnership with the New Haven community, is working in tandem with the PRC in taking action against chronic diseases and other challenges that threaten the health of community members.

On May 7th, CARE hosted a community forum to discuss and build on the results of its fall 2015 survey of nearly 1200 residents of low-income neighborhoods in New Haven. The survey had included questions about health, diet, exercise, smoking habits, and neighborhood safety. More than 100 people participated in the forum to learn more about health in their neighborhoods and to strategize ways to bring evidence to action. Following a brief summary of survey results, participants split into breakout groups by neighborhood: Dixwell/Newhallville, Fair Haven, West River/Dwight, West Rock, and two citywide groups for people who live outside the city (e.g., staff from local community-based organizations). The breakout groups discussed survey results and priority issues. Participants were encouraged to brainstorm strategies to reduce health inequities in their neighborhood. Some of the strategies that emerged are listed below.

- **Dixwell:** improving safety, and cleaning up the neighborhood
- **Newhallville:** improving the physical environment of the neighborhood
- **Fair Haven:** building a community center, and increasing access to transportation and healthy foods
- **West River/Dwight:** increasing access to healthy foods, empowering youth, and improving safety
- **West Rock:** encouraging community cohesion, connection and communications
- **Citywide:** improving access to healthy foods, and providing safe opportunities for physical activity

The forum participants were invited to apply for a \$1500 mini-grant from CARE to implement their proposals. To nurture creative thinking, major points made by each breakout group were illustrated by local artists. Mayor Toni Harp closed out the day with inspiring remarks, encouraging resident involvement in their neighborhoods to help solve these complex health problems. Funding has been provided by the Donaghue Foundation, Yale-New Haven Hospital, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention/Yale-Griffin PRC. A detailed report on the forum is available at <http://tinyurl.com/zegudrd>. For more information, contact CARE Program Coordinator Letitia Charles by email at letitia.charles@yale.edu, or by phone at 203-737-5270.

Project Findings

Effects of ISOThrive Supplement on Body Weight in Overweight Adults

- **Purpose:** This study examined the effects of taking a dietary prebiotic supplement for 3 months on body weight in overweight adults. Prebiotics are healthy food ingredients that are not easily digested, but promote the growth of bacteria in the gut that can benefit the body. The ISOThrive supplement's main ingredient includes a type of dietary fiber that helps to digest food, which theoretically could cause people to eat less. The other ingredients appear to be safe and well-tolerated.
- **Methods:** We conducted a randomized controlled trial with a double-blind parallel design that compared the effects of daily intake for a 3-month period of the ISOThrive supplement (either version A or B, which differed in formulation) vs. a placebo on body weight in 76 overweight men and women. Study participants were 18 to 75 years of age, did not use tobacco products, had a body mass index (BMI) of 25 or more, and weighed up to 350 pounds. We asked participants to keep their weight stable for the first month while taking a daily placebo (inactive substance). Then we randomly assigned each participant to 1 of 2 treatment groups. Each group received either ISOThrive (version A or B) or a placebo to take daily for 3 months. We advised them to adjust their calorie intake and/or physical activity at a level that could help them lose 1 to 2 pounds per week during this period. However, we did not ask them to restrict their dietary intake or physical activity.
- **Outcome Measure:** The primary outcome measure was body weight.
- **Results:** After 12 weeks of daily intake, neither version of ISOThrive (A or B) led to any reduction in body weight, when compared to the placebo.
- **For more information:** Contact Dr. Valentine Njike, (email at valentinenjike@yalegriffinprc.org, phone 203-732-1265 ext. 304).

Presentations

David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, PRC Director, delivered several presentations:

- March 8th at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, CT
- March 18th at the American College of Lifestyle Medicine's Annual Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania
- March 24th at a Lunch and Learn event at St. Raphael's Hospital in New Haven, CT
- March 30th at the Vermont Worksite Wellness Conference in Burlington, VT
- April 8th at the Tufts University Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy in Boston, MA.
- April 13th at the Bridgeport Hospital Pediatric Grand Rounds in Bridgeport, CT
- April 16th at the University of Florida in Gainesville, FL
- May 4th at the American Heart Association's Go Red For Women Luncheon in Stamford, CT
- May 5th to the Greater New York Dietetic Association, Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY
- May 10th at the Yale Alumni Nonprofit Association Health Forum in New York, NY
- May 15th at the Today's Dietitian Spring Symposium in Orlando, FL
- May 19th for the Harvard University Continuing Medical Education program in Boston, MA
- May 21st at the American Academy of Anti-Aging World Congress in Hollywood, FL
- June 6th at the Tastes of the World Culinary Conference, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA

- June 10th at the International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals and Health Services at Yale University in New Haven, CT
- June 14th at the Menus of Change Conference, Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, NY
- June 29th at the 34th International Symposium on Diabetes and Nutrition in Prague, Czech Republic

Beth Comerford, MS, PRC Deputy Director, presented a webinar entitled “Becoming a Health-Promoting Workplace: Beyond the Employee Gym” on April 27th for Planetree, Inc.

Publications

Katz DL. *Chocolate Consumption and Risk of Myocardial Infarction: A Prospective Study and Meta-Analysis.* Practice Update website. Available at: <http://www.practiceupdate.com/content/chocolate-consumption-reduces-risk-of-myocardial-infarction/36329/65/2/1>. Accessed April 27, 2016

Katz DL. Commentary: *Diet, Despotism, and the Dialectic of Denial.* Journal of the Association for Consumer Research, 2016; 1(1): 190-191.

In-Service / Training Opportunities

You are invited to join us at our **Journal Club meetings or other professional development sessions**, usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects. Occasionally, we devote these sessions to reviewing recent findings from our own studies.

Our next meeting will be held at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital.

- **Tuesday, July 12th from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m.**
Lawlor DA, Howe LD, Anderson EL, et al. *The Active for Life Year 5 (AFLY5) school-based cluster randomised controlled trial: effect on potential mediators.* BMC Public Health. 2016 Jan 22;16(1):68.

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org, or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

Let's Stay in Touch

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director (beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org) or any of the staff listed in this **Newsflash**.

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