

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR CSREES OBESITY PREVENTION WORKSHOP

Obesity Prevention Planning Workshop – Summary of Responses

The Obesity Prevention Planning Workshop was held April 21-23, 2004 in Washington D.C. About 40 CSREES grantees were invited to present their projects and to provide responses to four specific questions. Following itemization, they were invited to prioritize their responses. The following shows the responses to each of the four questions and the number following the response indicates the number of people who considered the response a high priority. Only the highest six priority responses to each question are shown.

WHAT IS CSREES' UNIQUE NICHE IN OBESITY PREVENTION?

- * Focus on multidisciplinary, integrated research, education, and extension projects. This reflects CSREES unique structure. (11)
- * Take a food systems approach. The food system encompasses agricultural production, processing, packaging, marketing, purchasing, preparation and consumption. Food is our advantage because of the food and agriculture connection. Focus on food - the relationship between food and the other factors that influence obesity. Build on the mission of USDA - to promote food using an integrated format. (9)
- * Focus on behavior and environment; encourage behavioral research in Land Grant universities and non Land Grant universities. (8)
- * Increase funding and utilization of the Cooperative Extension System where we have direct access to consumers. Encourage researchers to use extension. Increase coordination between research and extension, including EFNEP, and other USDA programs such as Food Stamp Nutrition Education, WIC and price supports. The capacity of Extension is great because local Extension offices are accessible to all people. Grass roots influence is invaluable. (8)
- * Focus on community; help build community. The Morrill Act was about Community Development. Link food with community. Link food and agriculture and urban areas. (5)
- * Focus on health and fitness rather than on weight loss. (4)

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES TO FURTHER COORDINATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND EXTENSION WORK IN OBESITY PREVENTION?

- * Provide training grants to universities to prepare future graduates who will become researchers and educators who will use environmental and behavioral models to deal with obesity prevention at the community level rather than in the clinic. Explore more involvement of undergraduates in research, internships, and work/study programs. (13)
- * Allow FNS to fund research for validation and evaluation of their programs, such as the Food Stamp, WIC, and School Lunch programs. (11)
- * Continue and expand the integrated research, education and extension grants. Require proposals to take a multidisciplinary, multifunctional approach to address issues. Ensure that grant review panels have the expertise to fairly review multidisciplinary, multifunctional proposals. (7)
- * Explore partnerships with other USDA and other Federal agencies on topics of mutual interest. For example, USDA could coordinate obesity related breastfeeding research/intervention projects with NIH. (7)

* Develop bridging communities to bring research, education and extension together. Provide financial support for meetings or require that a small part of grant budgets be used to facilitate coordination e.g. funding for annual meetings. Also explore other mechanisms of enhancing dialog among disciplines and functions. USDA could create and maintain a listserv for grant recipients or utilize other innovative web-based technologies to enhance communication. (6)

* Consider an environmental approach to obesity prevention and be advocates for this approach. (5)

IN THE AREA OF OBESITY PREVENTION, WHAT SHOULD CSREES FOCUS ON IMMEDIATELY (2005)?

* Support translational research and increase facilitation of collaboration between basic and applied research. Increase support for collaborative projects like Multistate Research Fund projects. (12)

* Support work that determines effective media messages and strategies for increasing media accuracy and media literacy. (9)

* Focus on the role of community including the role of transportation, media and safety on obesity development especially in rural communities. Fund projects that test interventions in community populations that do not rely on randomization. Support community coalitions to prevent obesity. USDA could help empower and sustain positive changes. For example, community improvements and community exercise programs could be supported. (8)

* Partner with other agencies within USDA to pool resources for research and interventions. Support multiagency collaboration in identifying gaps and pooling knowledge/resources. Support coordination within USDA for development of educational materials and strategies for programs such as Food Stamp Nutrition Education, WIC, and EFNEP. (7)

* Support work that promotes an understanding of the basis for the increase in childhood obesity which can then be used to develop interventions. Fund research, including methodological research, on the effect of caregivers on the development of childhood obesity and fund interventions that test new educational strategies directed to young families and childcare providers, especially strategies that address the recognition of hunger and satiety. (6)

* Support work that shows the importance of physical activity especially in schools. Fund studies that test the impact of school policies. (6)

IN THE AREA OF OBESITY PREVENTION, WHAT SHOULD CSREES FOCUS ON OVER THE LONGER TERM (2006-2010)?

* Fund obesity centers for multidisciplinary, integrated, long-term projects, including those that focus on community, prevention, behavior, and the food system. Take ownership of a problem and then fund large multi-state, multidisciplinary, multiyear (10 year) projects. For example, Extension could work with the school meal program to do a longitudinal child study on diets and physical activity in multiple states. (8)

* Support integrated, ecological, multi-institutional (schools, health centers, grocery stores, etc), community-based programs. Encourage sharing and integration of research and interventions. Field research should also inform basic research. (7)

* Support training grants for graduate education programs in Community Nutrition (addressing behavior and environment) at Land Grant universities and all universities. (7)

* Build research teams across the country that span basic, clinical, intervention and policy expertise. Funded projects need to address the multiple aspects of obesity - psychological, economic, environmental, behavioral and physiological. (6)

* Take cultural diversity into consideration – build on strengths and not just barriers that influence lifestyle choices. Focus on obesity in ethnic groups, such as Native Americans and other population groups, and the role foods play in their cultures. However, not all “traditional” lifestyles are healthy. We need to determine what should be kept and what should be changed. (6)

* Fund projects that look at the role specific foods and nutrients play in the prevention or treatment of obesity. Look at changes in foods from production, processing and other aspects. Also look at food supply issues that can influence many people, like enrichment/fortification, high fructose corn syrup, and trans fatty acids. Fund projects that take a food systems approach and thereby show the unique position of CSREES. (4)

Abstracts from the workshop.