PROJECT OVERVIEW

ATTACHMENT B

PROJECT NAME
Healthy Latino Families: A Nutrition/Exercise Program to Reduce Obesity

HWPP PROJECT NUMBER
20071-15

PROJECT SUMMARY
Describe the major purpose of the project, the need and how it relates to the Health Improvement Model. Briefly describe the project's implementation plan, methods to be utilized and involvement of affected communities. Detail the community-academic partnership plan. Specify the evaluation method that will be used to measure feasible, quantifiable and significant outcomes and the impact the project will have on the health of Wisconsin residents. Do not exceed this one page.

Latino middle school children are at high risk for becoming overweight which places the children at risk for diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular diseases in adulthood, and increasingly, for type 2 diabetes in childhood. These are preventable chronic diseases, but family and school-level changes are needed. At Bruce Guadalupe Charter Middle School (BGMS) (97% Latino), 27% of children are currently at risk or overweight (BMI ≥ 85th percentile). It is critical to prevent overweight in these children by establishing healthy behaviors within the context of their most important referents—the family and school. The short-term aim of this program is to help BGMS children and their families adopt and maintain healthy eating and school and family-oriented physical activities to prevent overweight over the course of an 11-month school year. The longer-term goal is to help sustain these behaviors and prevent overweight among BGMS children and use this as a model program for other Latino schools.

The project will modify the school meal program to be healthier (healthy Latino cuisine) and infuse more physical activity and targeted health education messages into the current curriculum. A short program will inform school staff about the program objectives and solicit input about ways to make effective changes in the school. A team of key BGMS teachers, UCC program staff, and UWM and MCW faculty will design the program and implement changes. All BGMS children will receive the school-based intervention. To reinforce the school-based intervention and sustain behavioral changes, a family-based early evening educational program (1 night/wk; 2 hrs/ session beginning with a healthy Latino supper) offered at the start of the school year will help children and parents incorporate these changes.

The community-academic partners have worked together on funded projects over the past 5-6 years primarily focused on preventing overweight in Latino children; some are ongoing. All projects use community-based participatory research methods. For example, the Healthy Latino Families pilot project involved UCC personnel (culture & Latino cuisine expertise), the 16th Street Community Health Center (SSCHC) (culture, outreach, nutrition expertise), UWM faculty (exercise/nutrition physiology; epidemiology; community based participatory research methods), and MCW faculty (C. Cronk anthropometry). The evening program took place in the BGMS with the collaboration of the principal and dean of students. Drs. Snyder and Hewitt and Chef Arturo are writing a Latino cookbook/physical activity book based on the HLF program. Another collaboration is the HWPP funded Bilingual Chronic Care Project, which is a healthy lifestyle program for overweight children and their parents that involves Dr. Cronk and staff at both UCC and SSCHC.

Dr. Hewitt works with Dr. Cronk (Co-PI) on the National Children's Study, which involves outreach to the Latino community in a nearby city.

Qualitative and quantitative methods will be used to evaluate the school-based intervention and evening program components. Trained observers will gauge acceptance of new healthy Latino cuisine as it is introduced into the school meal and evening programs, and participation in physical activities in school and after-school programs. Body Mass Index will be calculated for all BGMS students twice each year. Additionally, body fat and physical fitness ability will be measured. Interview tools adapted for the Healthy Latino Families pilot project from questionnaires used by the CDC will be employed to assess dietary intake, physical activity, sedentary activities, and food preferences for children and their parents at the enrolled in the evening program. A simplified pencil-and-paper version of this tool will assess food intake and activity level of BGMS students at three points in time during the school year. At the end of each school year, focus groups will be used to obtain feedback from teachers and parents about the effectiveness of the program and ways to improve the program.