USING COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT APPROACHES TO REDUCE OBESITY DISPARITIES

Aidyn Iachini, PhD, MSW, LSW
Darcy Freedman, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professors
USC College of Social Work

October 19, 2012
SOCIAL WORK

- Examining the social determinants of obesity
- Community-engaged research approaches
- Orientation towards social justice, health disparities, and vulnerable populations
THE SOCIAL WORK “LENS” & OBESITY PREVENTION: TWO RESEARCH EXAMPLES

- Fit for Life (FFL) Initiative, Columbia, SC
- Right Choice Fresh Start Farmers’ Market Study, Orangeburg, SC
FIT FOR LIFE (FFL) INITIATIVE

- Community-generated, community-based, and community-engaged

- Goal: Encourage individuals and families in the Gonzales Gardens and Lyon Street communities to become healthy in body, mind, and spirit

- Activities:
  - Weekly soup kitchen at the Gonzales Gardens community center that will be open to all residents in Gonzales Gardens and Lyon Street,
  - Weekly exercise classes for adults and children in the community
  - “Community Health Trainer Scholarship” program that will provide support for 5 community members to become certified exercise instructors for the community
KEY RESULTS

- Lessons learned from the process of program design and implementation
  - Five sessions offered by the Community Empowerment Center to community members focused on program design, evaluation, and community engagement and integration
  - External peer-review process to select awardees (3 sites/$12,000 per award for 6 month intervention)
    - Fit For Life
    - Bethlehem Baptist Food Pantry
    - SEEDS Academy
  - Post-award support with grants management, program organization, goal setting, evaluation, financial planning with fiscal agent
    - Monthly grants meeting
    - Bi-monthly all-grantees meeting to trouble shoot, support, and synergize
- Community defined the “need” and the “intervention design”
- The importance of language in designing interventions
FARMER’S MARKET

- Federally qualified health center (FQHC)-based farmers’ market
- Just completed second season (22 markets in 2011, 20 markets in 2012)
- Year 1 included study to examine influence of market and financial incentive program on diet
  - Tracked a cohort of diabetic patients before, during, and after the intervention
- Year 2 included food subsidy matching study to examine influence of match ($5.00) on food subsidy usage at market
  - 341 people enrolled in the program
  - Provided a $5.00 matching coupon for first $5.00 in food subsidy spent at market
  - Matching Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), WIC Cash Value Vouchers, and Senior and WIC Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program Vouchers
MEASURED USING VALIDATED F/V SCREENER
(GREENE ET AL., 2008; PETERSON ET AL, 2008; THOMPSON ET AL., 2002)

Table 4. Odds ratios (ORs) and 95% confidence intervals (CIs) of improvements in fruit and vegetable consumption among diabetics frequenting a FQHC-based farmers’ market.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-reported BMI at T1</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.92-1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study voucher only</td>
<td>36.53*</td>
<td>3.27-407.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study voucher + other form of payment</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Referent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of farmers’ market visits</td>
<td>2.13**</td>
<td>1.10-4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total amount of money spent at the farmers’ market</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>0.94-1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receipt of food assistance in the past year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0.37</td>
<td>0.07-2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Referent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<0.01

**p<0.05
FOOD SUBSIDY USAGE AT FARMERS’ MARKET BEFORE AND AFTER FOOD SUBSIDY MATCHING INTERVENTION
12 weeks before (2011) and 12 weeks after (2012)
CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

- Lessons learned on where this work can “happen”
  - Urban, public housing community
  - Federally qualified health centers

- Process equally as important as the outcomes (i.e. community engagement and buy-in)

- Important role for community interventions in obesity prevention efforts
RESEARCH-RELATED PRIORITIES AND NEXT STEPS

- Replicating FFL process in other communities

- Social network analysis expertise to explore the impact of physical activity interventions on social outcomes

- Replicating farmer’s market model as a community intervention strategy that not only influences health but also provides economic and community development opportunities (additional social determinants of health)

- Developing policy to get food subsidy matching intervention throughout state-level

- Collaborating: Contributing community-engaged approaches to research ideas
THANK YOU

Aidyn Iachini, PhD, MSW, LSW
Assistant Professor
University of South Carolina
College of Social Work
iachini@mailbox.sc.edu
803-777-2373

Darcy Freedman, PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor
University of South Carolina
College of Social Work
darcy.freedman@sc.edu
803-777-1326