

Preventing Childhood Obesity

A Healthy Imperative for Connecticut's Next Generation

A forum sponsored by the Connecticut Childhood Obesity Council,
the Connecticut Department of Public Health, & the Connecticut Commission on Children

9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Friday, November 7, 2008
Room 2-C, Legislative Office Building, 300 Capitol Avenue, Hartford

Speaker Biographies – Afternoon Breakout Sessions

Panel A: The Home Environment \ Early Childhood Nutrition

Rafael Perez-Escamilla, Ph.D., is a professor of nutritional sciences and public health at the University of Connecticut and director of the Connecticut Center of Excellence for Eliminating Health Disparities among Latinos. He is an internationally recognized scholar in the area of community nutrition for his work in food safety, obesity, diabetes, and food security, with a specialty in Latinos and low-income American populations. He was recently appointed to the advisory committee of the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. He is one of 13 experts selected to develop new dietary guidelines for implementation in the U.S. and many other parts of the world. In addition, he is assisting the Institute of Medicine in re-examining pregnancy weight-gain guidelines.

Susan Jackman, MS, RD, CLC, is a nutrition consultant with the Connecticut Department of Public Health. She was appointed to the position of DPH breastfeeding coordinator in 2005. She also serves as the state WIC program's breastfeeding coordinator and nutrition surveillance coordinator. Susan earned an MS degree in public health nutrition at Teacher's College, Columbia University, and is a registered dietitian and certified lactation counselor. She represents DPH on the Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition's Board of Directors and participates in the Maternal and Child Health Advisory Committee, the Community Health Center Living Smart, Living Fit Advisory Group, and a number of other nutrition and breastfeeding work groups.

Colleen A. Thompson, MS, RD, is an extension educator in residence at the University of Connecticut. She has co-authored three books on child nutrition, including, "Fueling the Teen Machine" (Bull Publishing, 2001), and "Overcoming Childhood Obesity" (Bull Publishing, 2003). She has worked extensively with grant-funded projects in Connecticut, including several years with the Connecticut Team Nutrition program, whose mission is to "empower children to make healthy food choices". She is a frequently invited presenter at conferences and workshops for parents, childcare providers, and community groups on the topic of childhood obesity. She is also a certified educator, with endorsements in health education and family and consumer sciences education. At the University of Connecticut, Colleen teaches courses on community nutrition, medical nutrition therapy, and fundamentals of nutrition. She is a member of the School Health Advisory Committee in her hometown of Wallingford and is the mother of three active boys.

Janine Campisi DiNatale has a passion for preventing childhood obesity. Growing up as an overweight child herself, she relates to 35 percent of today's youth. With the help of her mother, Janine reached a normal weight for her teen years and into adulthood. During her first pregnancy, however, she gained too much weight and found herself back in a familiar place, emotionally and physically. She began her education in pediatric nutrition and vowed that her children would not follow her in dealing with lifelong weight issues.

As a partner in a marketing and design firm, Simbrom Campisi & Associates, she recognized that misleading advertising on food packaging can easily confuse parents into thinking they are buying healthy options. She realized that many new parents did not have the time to research pediatric nutrition guidelines or properly read food labels and ingredient lists. As a mother of three young children, she understood the education and dedication needed for parents and guardians to guide their children to make healthy lifestyle choices.

After her second child in 2001, using her marketing and design skills, she began to develop a software program to assist children and their families in making healthy choices. After a two-year commitment to the project, she had significant research and marketing focus on the topic of childhood obesity. While volunteering on her daughter's school wellness committee, she used her professional skills to create what is now a successful family education program, Wellness Across America.

Janine and her business partner, Michael Simbrom, have secured nonprofit status for Wellness Across America and enlisted the help of medical and educational professionals who are as dedicated as they are to helping children and their families change their behavior.

Panel B: The School Environment

Susan Fiore, MS, RD, is a registered dietitian, holding an MS in nutritional sciences from the University of Connecticut and a BS in biology from Tufts University. She has been the nutrition education coordinator for the state Department of Education since 1992. In this role, Susan develops and coordinates statewide training, technical assistance, and resources for schools and child care programs. She has also authored many SDE publications and resources. In addition, Susan promotes the Coordinated School Health model to schools and serves as facilitator of nutrition education with other state and private entities. As the project director for Connecticut's Team Nutrition grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Susan is responsible for administering and coordinating the planning, implementation, and evaluation of all grant activities.

For the past five years, much of Susan's work has focused on promoting a healthy school environment, with a specific emphasis on helping school districts create policies, programs, and practices that encourage healthy eating and physical activity. Susan developed the Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, which provides comprehensive guidance for school districts on developing and implementing policies that promote healthy eating and physical activity. This guide has been used extensively by school districts in Connecticut and other states as a resource in the development, implementation, and evaluation of local school wellness policies.

Dr. Kathryn Henderson is the director of school and community initiatives at the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity at Yale University and former clinical director of the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders. Her research currently focuses on environmental and policy changes to improve the nutrition and physical activity environment in school and childcare settings, and on development and dissemination of clear messages to aid families in making positive nutrition changes. Her research is funded by the Rudd Center, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Public Health Foundation of Connecticut. Dr. Henderson has published and presented on the topics of obesity, environmental contributors to obesity, the prevention and treatment of childhood obesity, weight loss surgery, weight bias and stigma, and binge eating disorder. Dr. Henderson also has many years of experience in treating clinical eating disorders and obesity in children and adults.

Mary Ann Lopez, SNS, has been director of food services for the South Windsor Public Schools for 23 years. She also serves as president of the School Nutrition Association of Connecticut. She served as northeast regional director of the national SNA from 1996 to 1998. Her work for the state organization stretches back 26 years, including service on numerous committees, as secretary, and as president in 1994. Mary Ann also serves on several advisory committees, including the MilkPEP and the National Cattlemen's Beef Council. She participates on the committee reviewing the Healthy Food Certification Nutrition Standards for the state Department of Education. In 2001-02, Mary Ann was the third recognized National Outstanding Director of the Year by the national SNA.

Mary Ann holds a degree in hotel and restaurant administration from the University of Massachusetts and spent several years as front-of-the-house and general manager of Stouffer's restaurants and Magic Pan Creperies before overseeing daycare food programs for the state Department of Education. She began in school foodservice as a manager in an elementary and middle school in her home town of West Hartford and was a regional Louise Sublette award winner in 1984. She assumed the responsibilities of director in South Windsor in 1985.

Her program participates actively in the Farm to School initiative, currently has two Fresh Fruit and Vegetable grants, and promotes healthier options in her schools through the Healthy Foods Certification. Her program has been recognized several times, including as the Team Nutrition Model School for Connecticut.

Margaret E. Gaughan, Ph.D., RD, is an associate professor and director of the Coordinated Program in Dietetics in the Department of Nutrition at Saint Joseph College. She is also a consultant in her own Hartford-based nutrition and wellness counseling practice, which is called the Nutrition Coach.

She has served as nutrition consultant at the Department of Preventive Cardiology at Hartford Hospital, health education specialist in the Department of Health Promotion at the Hospital of Central Connecticut, and associate director of the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Grant at the University of Connecticut.

Dr. Gaughan received her BS in dietetics from Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She received her MS in nutrition education from Framingham State College in Framingham, Massachusetts, and her Ph.D. in human nutrition from the Pennsylvania State University.

Her research and publications are in the area of heart-healthy eating and health promotion in ethnic and racial minority groups, and include grant awards from the Donaghue Medical Research Foundation, the Connecticut Department of Education, the Capitol Region Education Council, and the Hartford Consortium for Higher Learning.

Dr. Gaughan is a member of the American Dietetic Association (ADA), the American College of Sports Medicine, and the National Alliance for Hispanic Health. She has received the ADA service award and the Connecticut Dietetics Association award for her work on minority recruitment and retention. She was a Kraft fellow at Penn State University and the recipient of the Golden Apple Teaching Award and the Dean's Leadership Award at University of Connecticut's School of Allied Health.

She has given many lectures for health professionals, students, and teachers about health promotion and wellness in school-based programs, both throughout Connecticut and nationally. Meg serves as a member of the Hartford School Lunch Advisory Board and is the parent of a child in the Hartford Public Schools.

Panel C: The Community Environment

Katie S. Martin, Ph.D., is a research associate at the Center for Public Health & Health Policy at the University of Connecticut. She earned a BA in political science from Indiana University and an MS and Ph.D. from the School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University. Her research expertise is in food security, food assistance programs, obesity, and social capital among low-income populations. For the past two years Dr. Martin has partnered with the Hartford Food System to evaluate their Healthy Food Retailer Initiative among small markets in Hartford. She serves as an adjunct professor in the UConn MPH program and teaches a graduate course entitled Food, Health and Politics. Dr. Martin serves on the Strategic Planning Committee at Foodshare, Hartford's regional foodbank, to help change the conversation about hunger. She is married with two sons.

Jane Slupecki is the program manager of the Connecticut Farm-to-School Program, where she helps school food service directors locate and use Connecticut-grown food in their school cafeterias. She also encourages wholesalers to reach out to Connecticut farmers and include them in their product lines. At the same time, she encourages farmers to sell produce directly to their local schools. She has created a website for the program and developed and purchased promotional tools for state schools, including banners, pencils, crop calendars, and 11 costumes for school events and points of sale, with a cheerful, kid-friendly logo.

Currently, the Farm-to-School Program proudly lists 71 schools and school systems and more than 45 farmers on its website. In addition, Jane has opened a channel of communication for our food service and school system administrators, with the help of the state departments of education and administrative services.

Jane has more than 30 years' experience in the field of agriculture, from helping her dad sell choose-and-cut Christmas trees every December to managing small farms and businesses. She earned a BS in agriculture and natural resources from the University of Connecticut in 1981 and an MBA in marketing from the University of Hartford in 1993.

She has a wonderful family that includes her husband, Gregory, and two children, Anna, 16, and Stanislaus, 14. They reside in Union, Connecticut.

Jennifer McTiernan is the founding executive director of CitySeed, a community-based nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing access to local, healthy food and promoting farm viability. What began with a single farmers' market in New Haven has grown into an organization that works statewide to build a local, equitable food system through innovative, responsive programs and policy work. In New Haven, CitySeed coordinates a network of four neighborhood farmers' markets, all of which accept food stamps and WIC. Nationally recognized by both USA Today and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for bringing local food to those who need it most, City Farmers' Markets support farmers who sell what they grow. In 2008, market sales contributed at least \$1.75 million to job creation and the local economy, with farmers redeeming over \$78,500 in WIC and food stamps from families in need.

Building on the farmers' markets, CitySeed works collaboratively to make local, healthy food available to everyone. Its Community-Supported Market, for example, delivers fresh produce from the farms at CitySeed's Thursday market directly to community members while supporting the viability of a farmers' market in a low-income neighborhood. In 2008, it delivered 1,105 subsidized bags of produce to Food Stamp and WIC recipients. Moreover, CitySeed partnered with the Connecticut Children's Museum to create an educational curriculum designed to grow healthy eaters and readers. It has reached more than 1,200 New Haven preschoolers and their families in the past two years. In addition, in June 2008, CitySeed and the Buy CT Grown Advisory Team launched www.BuyCTGrown.com, a comprehensive, online directory of local food and farms.

CitySeed's advocacy also led to the establishment of the New Haven Food Policy Council and the Working Group on School Food, which are currently focused on increasing healthy, fresh food in New Haven's public schools, promoting school gardens, and advocating for policy change at the federal level to support these objectives.

Marydale DeBor is vice president of external affairs at New Milford Hospital and executive director of the New Milford Hospital Foundation. Her work includes organizing a community-based initiative, sponsored by the hospital, called Plow to Plate. The initiative is designed to: 1) transform New Milford Hospital's food service to a sustainable foods system, under the guidance of John Tureene/Sustainable Food Systems (working with an internal task force), and 2) provide public education activities, including a series of "sustainable food learning experiences," at a local farm that houses a cooking school, taught by the trio of farmer, chef and physician, culminating in the production of a DVD for distribution through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, New Milford Hospital, and other nonprofit organizations. Ms. DeBor is an attorney who began her career with a large international law firm, then formed a philanthropic advisory consulting business with a focus on healthcare philanthropy. She moved from New York to Cornwall, Connecticut, and greatly prefers dairy cows to skyscrapers and subways.

Panel D: Fostering Physical Activity

Sandy M. Fry is a principal transportation planner for the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CROG), responsible for bicycle and pedestrian planning and transit planning. As a bicyclist and someone who enjoys a good walk, she has a keen interest in improving the safety of our transportation infrastructure for bicyclists and pedestrians. Prior to joining CROG, Ms.

Fry was senior project engineer for Gwin, Dobson, & Foreman in Altoona, Pennsylvania, a transit planner for Port Authority Transit in Pittsburgh, and a transportation planner for Barton Aschman Associates in Evanston, Illinois. She holds a BS in civil engineering from Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, and served on the Altoona City Council. She is also a founding member of the Central Connecticut Bicycle Alliance.

Tim Callahan, MS, has served as the director of health for the city of Norwalk for 16 years. With the support of the Board of Health, the city administration, and the Health Department staff, Tim has developed and launched many services and projects, including the NorWALKER project, a development of 40 walking routes in 14 city neighborhoods. He also has created physical activities for school-aged children and a rating system for food establishments known the Lighthouse Program

Tim serves on the board of the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health, the Public Health Accreditation Board Standards Development Workgroup, and the board of Connecticut Renaissance Inc., where he is secretary.

Tim Callahan earned a BA in economics from Fairfield University and an MS in public health from Yale University

Charles Chatterton, Ph.D., is an associate professor in the Health and Physical Education Department at Eastern Connecticut State University.

He received his B.S. and M.S. from the University of Delaware and his Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut. He is past president of the New England Chapter of the American College of Sports Medicine, chairperson of the Connecticut Governor's Committee on Physical Fitness, co-chair of the Action for Healthy Kids Connecticut State Team, and a member of the Vernon School District's School Wellness Committee.

Charlie promotes physical activity on the national, regional, and local levels, calling attention to how physical activity brings better health and enjoyment to children and adults of all ages. He advocates the development of "pedestrian-friendly" environments that enable people of all ages to be physically active in their neighborhoods and towns, whether through sidewalks, accessible trails and greenways, or bike lanes.

Charlie received a Special Achievement Award from the Connecticut Greenways Council in 2003 and the Connecticut Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance's Professional Honor Award in 2005. He is a certified health fitness instructor through the American College of Sports Medicine and a certified strength and conditioning specialist through the National Strength and Conditioning Association.

Monica Belyea, MPH, RD, is the nutrition consultant/program planner for the Opportunity Knocks Collaborative in Middletown.

She holds an MS in public health from the University of California, Berkeley, where she also completed a dietetic internship. She holds a bachelors degree in nutrition and food science from the University of Maine, Orono. She moved to Connecticut in 1995 to pursue her interest in the community food security movement through an internship with the Hartford Food System. As the

food education coordinator, she developed family- and child-focused workshops as well as school-based curricula to introduce food system and food security concepts to Hartford residents. She was the staff support person for the Hartford Food Policy Council and participated in the development of the Connecticut Food Policy Council legislation. She went on to direct the Senior Nutrition Awareness Project (SNAP), a food stamp nutrition education program for the University of Connecticut and the University of Rhode Island. During her time with SNAP, she developed and delivered hundreds of nutrition education programs for lower-income older adults, agency staff, and University students on a variety of topics related to food security and nutrition. She also created more than 50 healthy/low-cost cooking video shows, appeared on local radio and television and produced hundreds of newsletters, newspaper articles, and other print materials. As a doctoral student with SNAP, Ms. Belyea was responsible for creating a Food Stamp Outreach and Nutrition Education partnership and collecting data on the barriers and social factors related to participation in the food stamp program among older adults.

Ms. Belyea lives in Middletown and serves on the Mayor's/Middlesex Coalition for Children's Hunger Task Force and the Farmers' Market/Farm Viability grant program. She is also the proud mom of a healthy 5-year-old.

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