

The Northeast Regional Nutrition Education Center of Excellence Update – February 2016

The Northeast Regional Nutrition Education Center of Excellence (NE-RNECE) at Cornell University aims to expand the evidence base that supports effective nutrition education of diverse low-income program participants delivered in conjunction with policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches that make healthy choices easier in order to prevent obesity. The Northeast key initiatives are a signature research program, nationwide training program, and a systematic review of literature. Highlights of these initiatives follow.

Signature Research

The center's signature research program is testing whether nutrition education and public health/PSE approaches delivered together are more effective in improving obesity prevention outcomes than either alone. The five implementation research projects described below currently comprise the center's signature research program. The projects represent different program sizes, urban/rural settings, variation in race, ethnicity, and cultural contexts, target audience and methods of delivery. Two projects are implemented in SNAP-Ed, and three in EFNEP. Three projects are working in urban areas, 1 is suburban, and one is in rural counties with micropolitan areas. Three projects are randomized controlled trials and two have quasi-experimental designs. All projects are underway: data collection instruments have been identified and/or developed; recruitment and baseline data collection is in process or completed; and interventions have begun in all projects.

- 1) **Adopting Healthy Habits in Worksites: Increasing adoption and acceptability of policy, systems, and environmental changes within agencies serving low-income families** is a collaboration between the center and Cornell Cooperative Extension EFNEP programs in Jefferson and Orange counties in New York State. The project aims to assess the effects of combining direct nutrition education with PSE changes in community agencies and day care centers to support healthy habits for employees and agency participants. The nutrition education component is *Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference!* The PSE component is worksite environmental and policy changes.
- 2) **Nutrition Ed, Access and Texting (NEAT): Combining the Hartford Mobile Market with e-Marketing**, led by the Hispanic Health Council in Hartford, Connecticut, aims to assess the effects of combining nutrition education with a text messaging campaign, mobile produce markets & vouchers on access, purchase, and intake of fruits and vegetables. The nutrition education component is a SNAP-Ed lesson on MyPlate; the social marketing and PSE component is daily text messages plus produce vouchers.
- 3) **Sustaining a Successful Youth-Leader Program as part of a Multi-Level, Multi-Component Food Environment/Behavioral Intervention**, led by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health



