



MAKING AN

IMPACT



National Collaborative on
Childhood Obesity Research

Annual Report 2012





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Four of the nation's leading research funders have come together in a common mission to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and application of childhood obesity research. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognize that through collaboration and joint action, they can get more done more quickly and have a greater impact on halting—and even reversing—the epidemic of childhood obesity.

To achieve its mission, the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) has five goals:

- Identify, design, and evaluate practical and sustainable interventions, especially in high-risk populations and communities.
- Increase and improve national, state, and local surveillance of childhood obesity.

- Improve the ability of childhood obesity researchers and program evaluators to conduct research and program evaluation.
- Provide national leadership to accelerate implementation of evidence-informed practice and policy.
- Work with non-health partners to integrate childhood obesity priorities with synergistic initiatives (e.g., environmental design and sustainability, food systems, food marketing, disabilities, or economics).

Using “Capital” to Make a Difference

NCCOR makes a difference for childhood obesity research by leveraging each funding partner's “capital”—in other words, the time, resources, assets, and abilities used to create high-value projects. NCCOR creates social capital by working together to build relationships, cooperation,

and trust. With this social capital as a base, NCCOR members create projects by leveraging one another's financial, managerial, and intellectual capital in flexible combinations. These combinations of capital create efficiencies, strengthen resources and capacity, build and share knowledge, accelerate progress, and result in national impact.

Making the Most of Outside Expert Advice

In 2012, the Collaborative established an NCCOR Expert Scientific Panel (NESP) to advise NCCOR on its overall direction and to provide guidance and assistance on specific projects and initiatives. The Panel serves as a valuable link between NCCOR and the extramural research community and informs the Collaborative about new science, ideas, and connections to research, practice, and policy. NESP developed a set of recommendations for high-impact projects that NCCOR members are addressing.



Building Partnerships and Leveraging Capital for Impact in 2012

Publicly launched just four years ago (Feb. 19, 2009), NCCOR's members already have leveraged their social, intellectual, managerial, and financial capital to affect childhood obesity research in key ways:

ADVANCING RESEARCH AND OUR UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

→ **Envision** coordinates and supports statistical and systems science modeling efforts to forecast the impact of public health policies and interventions on childhood obesity on a population-wide level and among specific subpopulations. Envision's various modeling teams are advancing our understanding of the effects of individual, sociocultural, economic, environmental, and policy forces on children's diet, physical activity, energy balance, and body weight. Envision teams continued their research this year and as a result, close to 50 papers have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals since its creation.

→ **Youth Energy Expenditure.** In April, CDC, NIH, and NCCOR convened leading researchers for a two-day workshop to discuss methods and measurements to improve energy expenditure estimates for youth. This initial investment has resulted in additional

work that is contributing to the development of a standard metric of energy expenditure that accounts for different types of physical activities as well as differences in gender, age, height, and weight. This will vastly enhance researchers' ability to conduct physical activity research among children.

→ **Green Health.** Ongoing work resulting from the October 2011 "Green Health: Building Sustainable Schools for Healthy Kids" workshop is providing opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration between childhood obesity researchers and the fields of green building and environmental design. An article that emerged from the workshop will be published in the May 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. It lays out seven principles to guide the emerging field of green health research and practice that can be applied to childhood obesity prevention.

RAPIDLY MOBILIZING TO MEET SHORT-TERM NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

→ **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education (SNAP-Ed).** Following a request for help at NCCOR's Oct. 18, 2012, Member Meeting, NCCOR immediately assembled a working group to help USDA create a toolkit of effective tools and interventions that

embody community-based and public health approaches to nutrition education and obesity prevention. USDA will use the toolkit to guide states as they implement a new Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) nutrition education initiative, which explicitly emphasizes obesity prevention efforts delivered through community-based and public health approaches.

→ **Rapid Response Funding.** NCCOR's funding partners have been instrumental in helping two new funding mechanisms become a reality. NIH's Fast Track R01 Mechanism and the Johns Hopkins Global Center on Childhood Obesity funding mechanism will significantly reduce grant application times, greatly enhancing researchers' ability to respond to time-sensitive topics in obesity prevention research.

INVESTING FOR THE LONG TERM

→ **Healthy Communities Study.** After several years of intensive planning, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of NIH, is beginning to implement this large study, which is assessing the effectiveness of community obesity prevention efforts in areas where childhood obesity rates are highest. The involvement of NCCOR members has been instrumental in the successful planning leading to implementation.

→ **Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration.** CDC is spearheading a four-year, community-based childhood obesity demonstration project in three communities. The Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration (CORD) project aims to involve children, parents and other family members, and communities in identifying strategies that improve children's health behaviors and reduce obesity. NCCOR funding partners provided advice on the draft funding announcement before its release, and an NIH NCCOR member served as a reviewer during the application process.

DEVELOPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

→ **Catalogue of Surveillance Systems.** This web-based, searchable catalogue developed by NCCOR contains around 100 resources maintained by federal, state, academic, and private sector institutions that provide data related to health behaviors, outcomes, and determinants of obesity. It also contains systems that track environmental and policy factors. The Catalogue has given researchers and practitioners, for the first time, a tool that allows them to assess the range of childhood obesity resources, see possible gaps, and plan for innovative multilevel obesity prevention research. This resource continues to be highly popular, with nearly 1,300 unique visitors

a month, more than 500,000 hits in 2012, and more than 1 million hits to date.

→ **Measures Registry.** This web-based, searchable repository developed by NCCOR, includes nearly 1,000 measures. It is an invaluable resource for researchers interested in using standard measures to describe, monitor, and evaluate interventions, particularly policy and environmental interventions, and factors and outcomes at all levels of the socio-ecological model. This resource averages 250 unique visitors a month, had 130,000 hits in 2012, and has had more than 300,000 hits to date.

TRANSLATING AND DISSEMINATING RESEARCH AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

→ **NCCOR Communication Activities.** A key to building a vibrant childhood obesity research community is open communication and continual dialogue. But as a field with many players and a wide range of activities, it can be difficult for researchers to stay abreast of all new developments. NCCOR provides a central conduit for information about childhood obesity research. Through its website, e-Newsletter, blog, Twitter feed, and booth, NCCOR serves as a vital information portal for the field. It also reaches out to the field through periodic surveys, “convenings” of researchers and stakeholders, and presentations

at national meetings. These results provide guidance on the development of specific projects as well as the overall work of NCCOR.

Looking Ahead to 2013

NCCOR will continue to make progress in each of its five goal areas. It will continue to refine and strengthen existing projects, and move forward on several exciting new projects. Two areas will receive special focus:

- Increasing NCCOR's efforts to translate and disseminate research findings and to build capacity among researchers for dissemination and translation of their work to a variety of audiences. For example, NCCOR is developing a web-based Registry of Studies, which will house descriptions of large outcome studies. Providing this information will enable researchers to access critical insights and compare these key studies to their own work.
- Developing action plans to implement and make progress on NESP's four recommendations for NCCOR (see pages 10-11 of this report).

NCCOR: MAKING AN IMPACT ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH



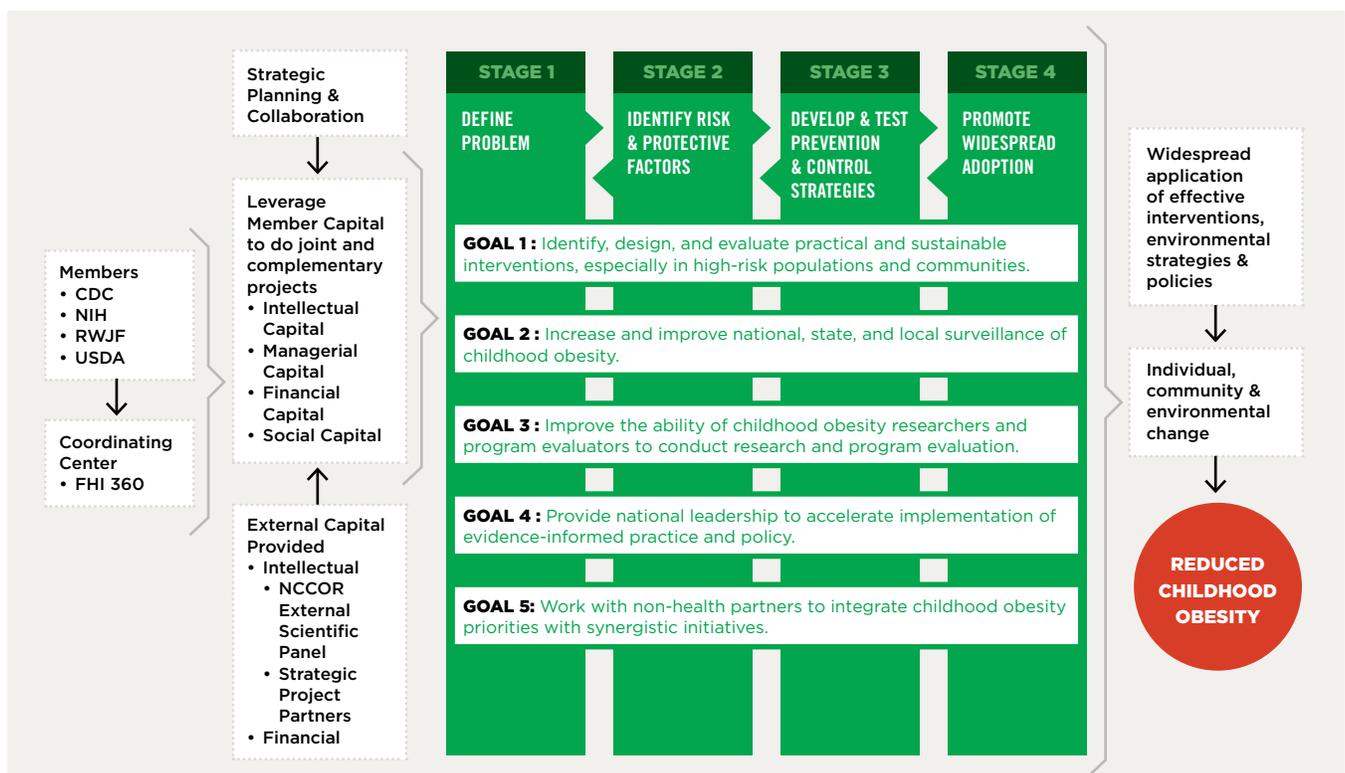
Four of the nation's leading research funders have come together in a common mission to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and application of childhood obesity research. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recognize that through collaboration and joint action, they can get more done more quickly and have a greater impact on halting—and even reversing—the epidemic of childhood obesity.

To achieve its mission, the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) has five goals:

- ➔ Identify, design, and evaluate practical and sustainable interventions, especially in high-risk populations and communities.
- ➔ Increase and improve national, state, and local surveillance of childhood obesity.
- ➔ Improve the ability of childhood obesity researchers and program evaluators to conduct research and program evaluation.
- ➔ Provide national leadership to accelerate implementation of evidence-informed practice and policy.
- ➔ Work with non-health partners to integrate childhood obesity priorities with synergistic initiatives (e.g., environmental design and sustainability, food systems, food marketing, disabilities, or economics).

////////////////////////////////////
 NCCOR's goal areas and strategies to meet these goals align with a four-stage conceptual model.
 //////////////////////////////////////

NCCOR CONCEPTUAL MODEL



NCCOR'S FUNDING PARTNERS

Because of their shared missions to enhance the health of all Americans, NCCOR's funding partners also share a strong commitment to action on childhood obesity. These agencies bring complementary perspectives and approaches to their childhood obesity research activities.

- The **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the leading supporter of biomedical research in the world. Its mission is to seek fundamental knowledge about the nature and behavior of living systems and the application of that knowledge to enhance health, lengthen life, and reduce the burdens of illness and disability.
- The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, works with partners throughout the nation and the world to create the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health—through health promotion, prevention of disease, injury and disability, and preparedness for new health threats.
- The **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)** works with a diverse group of people and organizations to improve the health and health care of all Americans. It addresses problems at their roots to help make a difference on the widest scale—particularly for the most vulnerable. It seeks out innovative approaches that can lead to breakthroughs in childhood obesity, health care coverage, human capital, public health, and quality/equality.
- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** is the federal department responsible for providing leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management.

NUTS AND BOLTS

NCCOR Funding Partners

CDC, NIH, RWJF, and USDA provide resources for NCCOR functions and specific collaborative projects.

NCCOR Steering Committee

A small group of NCCOR members who represent each of the funding partners. The Steering Committee provides strategic guidance, obtains consensus for operational decisions, and ensures funding for NCCOR functions and activities. The Steering Committee also provides updates to leadership of the partner organizations they represent about NCCOR activities. See Appendix 1 for a list of Steering Committee members.

NCCOR members

Individuals from various divisions and institutes within the four NCCOR funding partners, who contribute to the Collaborative's strategic direction and particular projects and activities. NCCOR members collaborate on monthly member calls and at in-person Member Meetings three times per year. See Appendix 1 for a list of NCCOR members.

NCCOR Coordinating Center

Since 2008, FHI 360 has served as the NCCOR Coordinating Center, ensuring comprehensive and synergistic partnership management. FHI 360 provides four main services to the Collaborative: strategic planning, coordination, external and internal communications, and evaluation. FHI 360 also oversees multiple subcontractors and consultants who support NCCOR projects.

Using “Capital” to Make a Difference

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- Create efficiencies
- Strengthen resources and capacity
- Build and share knowledge
- Accelerate progress
- Result in national impact

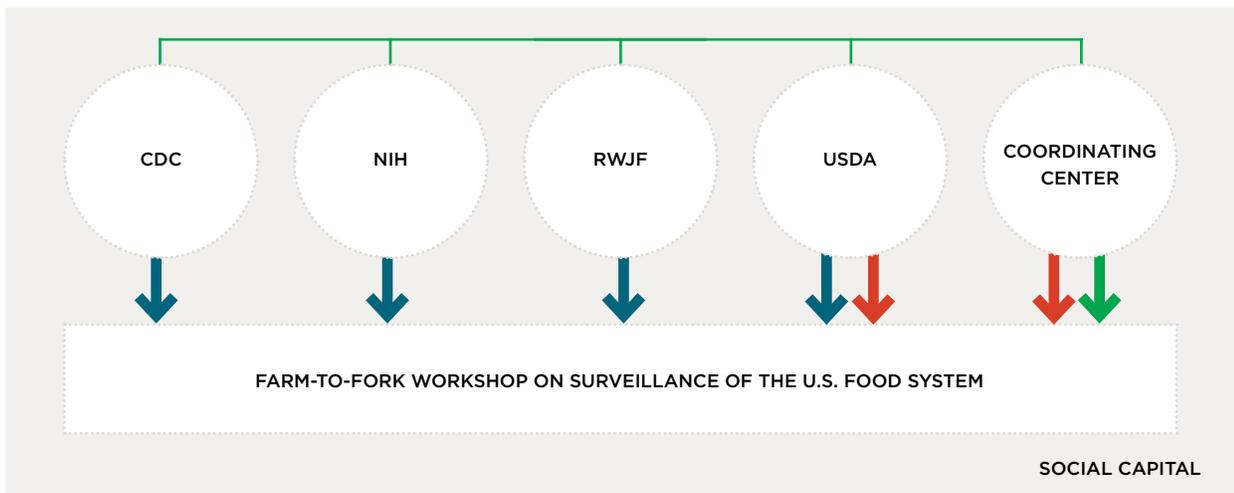
There is no one model for how NCCOR applies these types of capital to specific projects. Rather, NCCOR designs the funding, management, and implementation structure that is most efficient for the project. The Measures Registry is one example of how NCCOR funding partners and the NCCOR Coordinating Center contributed to the planning, design, implementation, and promotion of a project (see page 28 for additional details on the Measures Registry). Another example is the financial contributions that NCCOR funding partners made in response to a request from USDA to support the preparation of data releases for the Food Patterns Equivalents Database (FPED). NCCOR partners recognized the central role that FPED plays in analyses of diets in relation to current dietary guidance, and their combined financial support ensured a

LEVERAGING CAPITAL TO ADVANCE CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION

The funding partners have invested about \$4.5 million over four and a half years in the NCCOR Coordinating Center for strategic planning, coordination, internal and external communications, and evaluation. More than \$85 million has been invested in NCCOR projects that advance the funding partners childhood obesity research aims. The results of these collaborative efforts are helping to support more than \$1 billion in other obesity prevention projects led by NCCOR funding partners, such as CDC’s Communities Putting Prevention to Work and Community Transformation Grants, NIH’s Healthy Communities Study, RWJF’s Active Living Research and Healthy Eating Research programs, and USDA’s HealthierUS School Challenge.

robust future for this resource, thus helping NCCOR achieve one of its five goals—increase and improve national, state, and local surveillance of childhood obesity. The combination of capital for the Farm-to-Fork workshop on Surveillance of the U.S. Food System held in January 2012 is shown below.

EXAMPLE: FARM-TO-FORK WORKSHOP ON SURVEILLANCE OF THE U.S. FOOD SYSTEM



→ Intellectual Capital
 → Managerial Capital
 → Financial Capital

Making the Most of Outside Expert Advice

In 2012, the Collaborative established an NCCOR Expert Scientific Panel (NESP) to advise NCCOR on overall direction and to provide guidance and assistance on specific projects and initiatives. The Panel serves as a valuable link between NCCOR and the extramural research community and informs the Collaborative on new science, ideas, and connections to extramural research, practice, and policy.

As part of its 2012 strategic planning efforts, NCCOR asked NESP members to provide advice on how NCCOR can best accelerate progress in reducing childhood obesity. Through a workshop and other participatory activities, NESP generated a set of ideas for high-impact projects that NCCOR might undertake. NCCOR members are already taking steps to develop and implement the NESP concepts:

→ **Light the Way.** Develop the “next generation” of community interventions (3-4 years)

- ◆ Capture lessons and successes from large-scale domestic and international programs
 - ◆ Conduct social marketing research
 - ◆ Engage multi-sectoral partners
- **March in Step.** Identify, recommend, and monitor measures (2-3 years)
- ◆ Qualitatively assess existing measures



- ◆ Capitalize on existing efforts
- ◆ Ensure measures can be used by communities
- ➔ **Get Research Used.** Improve research translation and dissemination (1-2 years)
- ◆ Develop training, technical assistance, tools and templates
- ◆ Share lessons from effective translation and dissemination efforts

- ◆ Offer research translation/ dissemination grants
- ➔ **Show Me the Money.** Address the economics research gap (2-3 years)
- ◆ Build on momentum already underway at NCCOR
- ◆ Establish a platform for economics research
- ◆ Connect with new partners

NESP MEMBERS—2012

Terry T-K Huang, Ph.D., M.P.H. (NESP Chair)
 Professor and Chair, Department of Health Promotion, College of Public Health, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Ronette R. Briefel, Dr.PH., R.D.
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Ross C. Brownson, Ph.D.
 Professor of Epidemiology, Washington University in St. Louis

Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.PH.
 Professor of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, Founding Director, Institute for Health Promotion Research

James F. Sallis, Ph.D.
 Distinguished Professor, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, University of California, San Diego
 Director, Active Living Research

Mary Story, Ph.D., R.D.
 Professor, Division of Epidemiology and Community Health
 Senior Associate Dean of Academic and Student Affairs,
 University of Minnesota School of Public Health







BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS AND LEVERAGING CAPITAL FOR IMPACT IN 2012

Publicly launched just four years ago (Feb. 19, 2009), NCCOR's members already have leveraged their social, intellectual, managerial, and financial capital to influence childhood obesity research by:

Advancing research and understanding of childhood obesity

Rapidly mobilizing to meet short-term needs and opportunities

Investing for the long term

Developing tools and resources that make a difference

Translating and disseminating research and funding opportunities

ADVANCING RESEARCH AND UNDERSTANDING OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY

ENVISION



The Issue

The childhood obesity epidemic can be thought of as a complex system. Multiple levels—individual, family, community, national—are involved. Varied factors—biological, behavioral, and environmental—interact in complex ways to influence its development.

This complexity makes childhood obesity challenging both to study and to address. In recent years, statistical modeling has emerged as a particularly valuable tool for obesity research. Models are constructed to represent a system's behavior, and can be used to gain insights about policy and environmental drivers and potential solutions. Models are useful because their assumptions are easily testable and they can capture multiple levels and complex dynamics at work in the system.

As a result of Envision, nearly **50 PAPERS** have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.



NCCOR Takes Action

The NCCOR Envision project coordinates and supports statistical and systems science modeling efforts to forecast the impact of public health policies and interventions on childhood obesity on a population-wide level and among specific subpopulations. Envision consists of various modeling teams that are examining the effects of individual, sociocultural, economic, environmental, and policy forces on children's diet, physical activity, energy balance, and body weight. Launched initially with a small group of modelers from the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia, Envision now brings together more than 50 leading modeling teams worldwide.

Through Envision, NCCOR is:



- Gaining a greater understanding of the complex etiology of childhood obesity
- Conducting comparative evaluations of energy balance models
- Conducting comparative evaluations of models projecting the impact and cost-effectiveness of different policy and environmental changes
- Virtually testing the effects of different combinations and sequences of childhood obesity interventions
- Forging collaborative, cooperative, and strategic networking bonds among modeling groups
- Developing and disseminating scientific papers, presentations, and reports

On Aug. 26, 2011, the journal *The Lancet* published four papers and three commentaries by Envision

research teams. These papers described the reasons behind the pandemic, the economic and health burdens of the disease, and the changes needed to the obesogenic environment to stem the tide of obesity for future generations.

The support of NCCOR and NCCOR funding partners has been essential to helping Envision flourish during 2012. Financial capital supported the teams' research efforts, and the NCCOR Coordinating Center managed all of Envision's meetings, webinars, and conference calls. This coordination permits critical opportunities for this large collaboration, which involves researchers from around the world, to share their work and learn from each other.



Envision's statistical and simulation models, developed in close collaboration with

leading researchers working on cohort and intervention studies, provide a powerful tool for assessing public health policies for childhood obesity prevention, guiding intervention and funding strategies, and supporting policy development. The papers in *The Lancet* received worldwide coverage—630 stories published as of the end of 2012—and continue to be highly influential in public health and public policy discussions about obesity.

Envision teams continued their research throughout 2012, exploring a wide variety of applications of statistical and systems science modeling to childhood obesity. As a result of Envision, nearly 50 papers have been published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.

YOUTH ENERGY EXPENDITURE



The Issue

Efforts to reduce childhood obesity must emphasize healthy eating as well as sufficient physical activity. In the physical activity arena, investigators would like to be able to compare the effects of interventions that target different kinds of physical activity. To do that, they need to be able to accurately assess how much energy children expend when they engage in different types of physical activity, from sedentary activities like watching television to high-intensity activities like running or playing basketball. Tools that allow translation of diverse self-reported or observed activities onto the same energy expenditure measurement scale would be extremely helpful because self-report and direct

Efforts to reduce childhood obesity must emphasize **HEALTHY EATING** as well as sufficient **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**.

observation studies remain among the most useful, cost-effective, and accurate methods for measuring the prevalence of specific kinds of physical activity in children.

In 2008, Dr. Kate Ridley, an investigator at Flinders University in Adelaide, South Australia, published a compendium of energy expenditure values for youth physical activities. This Youth Compendium, which included 44 activities, was useful but was hampered by limited data and values based on studies with old data, adult data, or small sample sizes.

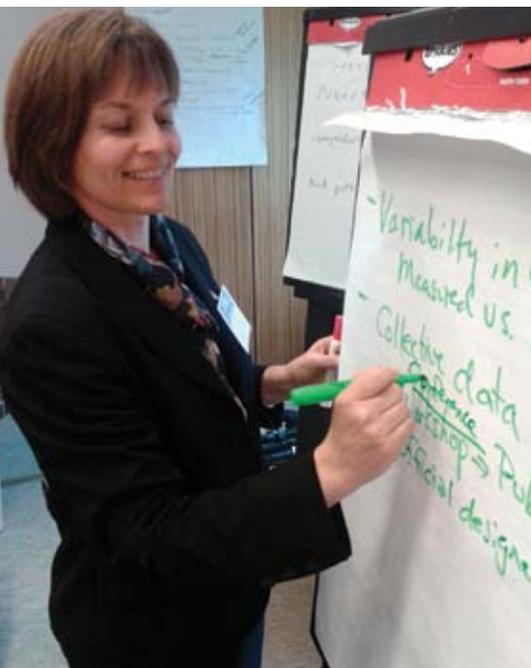


On April 19-20, 2012, CDC, NIH, and NCCOR convened leading childhood obesity researchers for a two-day workshop. The Youth Energy Expenditure (YEE) workshop aimed to:

- Achieve consensus on methods and measurements to improve energy expenditure estimates for youth
- Develop a plan for updating, reformatting, and making the Youth Energy Expenditure Compendium more accessible

The meeting provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the longstanding need for better energy expenditure measurements and begin to plan how to answer this key need.





TOP: Signage for the Youth Energy Expenditure workshop

ABOVE: NCCOR member Janet Fulton of CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity noting recommendations and ideas during a session of the Youth Energy Expenditure workshop in April 2012

NCCOR is now supporting several projects involving workshop participants that are following up on recommendations emerging from the workshop. One team began evaluating several metrics for reporting youth energy expenditure in an attempt to determine which would work best when applied to children of all ages and body types. A paper reporting on this analytic work is currently in development and will be submitted to a major scientific journal. NCCOR coordinates all of the conference calls and meetings held to conduct the follow-up work. NCCOR's assistance is crucial to managing this complex project, which involves multiple collaborators.

NCCOR also funded Dr. Ridley to conduct a review of relevant literature on youth energy expenditure published since 2005. These results, along with the results of the metrics work, will be used to update and expand the Youth Compendium. NCCOR was able to rapidly secure funding for this task, allowing it to maintain momentum throughout the year.

NCCOR IS SUPPORTING several teams of workshop participants who are following up on recommendations emerging from the workshop.



Researchers' ability to conduct physical activity research among children will be vastly enhanced with the development of a standard metric of energy expenditure that accounts for different types of physical activities as well as differences in gender, age, height, and weight. The Compendium of Physical Activities, first published in 1993, provides such information for adults and has had a tremendous impact on physical activity research and education. The work of the metrics team is a giant step toward the development of such a metric. Through its support for this work, NCCOR also is leading the way to a potential project to fund collection of youth energy expenditure values and house them in a repository system, another much needed resource for the field.

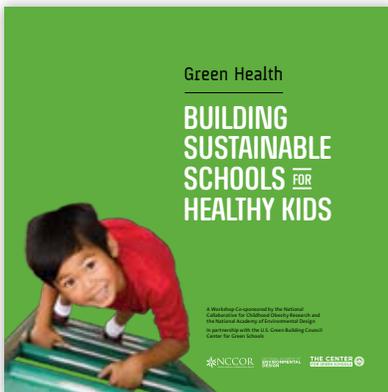
The workshop captured the attention of the participants, who are leading researchers in the field. Their willingness to devote considerable time and energy to planning the meeting and participating in follow-up projects reflects their commitment. It also demonstrates their belief that NCCOR can make a long-term contribution to the field of childhood obesity research, notably through its support of much-needed research tools and resources.

GREEN HEALTH

The Issue

It is clear that changes in individual behaviors alone are not enough to reverse the course of the childhood obesity epidemic. A growing body of research indicates that environmental design at multiple spatial scales, from regional land-use patterns to aspects of interior or graphic design, can influence social norms and default behaviors related to dietary choices and daily physical activity.

A prime opportunity for progress in this area lies in collaboration between public health and the sustainability-focused “green” design and building industries. These fields have many synergies and shared goals, such as community design that reduces automobile reliance and promotes active transportation. These synergies offer the prospect of a coordinated “Green Health” approach to built environment obesity prevention research.



More than 500 copies of the workshop report have been distributed.

NCCOR Takes Action

On Oct. 27-28, 2011, NCCOR and the National Academy of Environmental Design, in partnership with the U.S. Green Building Council Center for Green Schools, hosted “Green Health: Building Sustainable Schools for Healthy Kids.” The workshop used an interdisciplinary case-study approach to explore how childhood obesity prevention can be integrated into school-based sustainability and green building initiatives and frameworks.

Participants included designers, urban planners, public health experts, and representatives from multiple federal agencies. Through presentations and discussions, participants:

- Examined how environmental design strategies at different levels—neighborhood, school building, and schoolyard—can be used to promote physical activity and healthy eating
- Discussed emerging tools for health behavior assessment and environmental measurement within school-focused obesity prevention research and examined training and capacity needs
- Identified specific opportunities for integrating childhood obesity prevention, environmental sustainability, and green building research and practice

One of the major outcomes of the October 2011 workshop was a sense of excitement about the potential for transdisciplinary collaboration between public health and non-health, complementary partners, such as the green building industry. During 2012, planning for several such collaborations took place. These efforts at cross-disciplinary action directly serve NCCOR’s Goal 5. See **Looking Ahead to 2013** for more details on these collaborations.

NCCOR Makes an Impact

More than 500 copies of the workshop report, *Green Health: Building Sustainable Schools for Healthy Kids*, have been distributed to workshop participants and their colleagues, NCCOR members and childhood obesity researchers, and attendees at various professional conferences where NCCOR had a booth. The report has garnered much interest across both the public health and green building communities. In addition, an article that emerged from the workshop will be published in the May 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. The article, co-authored by NCCOR members and several workshop participants, highlights multidisciplinary partnership opportunities between public health and the green building industry and lays out seven principles to guide the emerging field of green health research and practice that can be applied to childhood obesity prevention.



One of the major outcomes of the October 2011 workshop was a sense of **EXCITEMENT** about the potential for transdisciplinary collaboration between public health and non-health, complementary partners, such as the green building industry.



RAPIDLY MOBILIZING TO MEET SHORT- TERM NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM— EDUCATION

////////////////////////////////////
About 1 in 7 Americans
participates in SNAP.
Nearly **HALF ARE**
CHILDREN younger
than age 18.
////////////////////////////////////



The Issue

During FY 2011, nearly 45 million people living in more than 21 million households participated in USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps). This number represents about 1 in 7 Americans. Nearly half are children younger than age 18.

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Virgin Islands provide nutrition education for SNAP participants and other eligible low-income individuals. The goal is to help people make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate.



Traditionally, the focus of SNAP education initiatives has been on the individual recipient, but the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 transformed the program into a Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program. Known as SNAP-Ed, the program explicitly adopts obesity prevention as a major emphasis and embraces comprehensive, evidence-based strategies delivered through community-based and public health approaches. National, state, and local coordination and collaboration are strongly encouraged.

In fiscal year 2014, USDA expects to distribute about \$400 million to state agencies for SNAP-Ed initiatives. To make the most effective use of these SNAP-Ed funds, states need a robust set of effective interventions from which to choose.

NCCOR Takes Action

At NCCOR's October 2012 Member Meeting, USDA asked for NCCOR's help in assembling a toolkit of effective and actionable tools and interventions that embody community-based and public health approaches to nutrition education and obesity prevention. USDA will promote the toolkit to state agencies and program providers to help them focus SNAP-Ed planning efforts on outcome-driven collaborative activities. At the NCCOR meeting, USDA stressed that the toolkit had to be completed rapidly—by the end of March 2013—because the states must have their new nutrition education programs ready for implementation by September 2013.

NCCOR responded immediately. A group of interested members convened at the October meeting to begin discussing the project. Their challenge: Create a toolkit of existing options that can be readily adopted by SNAP agencies and providers at the state level. The tools must be proven effective, consistent with SNAP-Ed policy

and practice, suitable for low-income populations, and likely to achieve obesity prevention goals.

NCCOR Makes an Impact

Through periodic in-person member meetings and monthly conference calls, NCCOR provides regular forums for members to share activities, discuss lessons learned, and call upon each other for help and collaboration. The SNAP-Ed toolkit project shows how NCCOR was able to rapidly respond and mobilize resources to answer a need expressed by a funding partner.

This project also is a good example of the benefits of collaboration. By asking the Collaborative for help in this new venture, USDA did not have to “go it alone.” It could contribute but also rely on the support and expertise of other members to ensure the successful completion

of the project. The Collaborative has allowed NCCOR funders and the agencies within these organizations to try new things, thus strengthening their existing expertise.

Since the October meeting, the SNAP-Ed workgroup has held biweekly conference calls to identify and discuss interventions that are best suited for SNAP-Ed. They are drawing on various sources, including public health literature, collections of existing interventions and other resources developed by CDC and others, and the website of the North Carolina Center for Training and Research Translation. The NCCOR Coordinating Center is facilitating the process by arranging calls, and gathering and editing resources for the workgroup to consider. NCCOR members also are lending their expertise to help SNAP-Ed consider evaluation approaches to capture the impact of the program.



RAPID RESPONSE FUNDING



The Issue

Helping children achieve and maintain a healthy weight is a critical public health goal, but there are major gaps in our knowledge about the effectiveness of current programs and policies focused on changing individual behavior and altering the environments in which children and families make decisions about nutrition and physical activity.

It generally takes many months, sometimes even years, for investigators to be funded through the traditional mechanisms at funding agencies, thus hampering their ability to respond to new or rapidly emerging opportunities.



NCCOR Takes Action

The need to develop new funding mechanisms to facilitate an agency's ability to rapidly respond to research opportunities has been a subject of discussion among NCCOR members for some time. NCCOR's funding partners have been instrumental in helping two such mechanisms become a reality.

NIH FAST TRACK R01 MECHANISM

On Aug. 8, 2012, several NIH NCCOR members—the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institute on Aging (NIA), *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National

Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research (OBSSR)—issued the eagerly awaited PAR 12-257: Time-Sensitive Obesity Policy and Program Evaluation (R01). This funding opportunity announcement (FOA) established an accelerated review and award process to support time-sensitive research that evaluates a new policy or program expected to influence obesity-related behaviors (e.g., dietary intake, physical activity, or sedentary behavior) and/or weight outcomes. Research priorities identified by NCCOR members are highlighted in the FOA. The goal of the FOA is to award funding to eligible applications within 3-4 months after the application is submitted rather than the minimum of nine months that it usually takes for regular NIH R01 submissions.

Since its release, the FOA has engendered substantial interest, and inquiries have covered a range of issues, including school policies (especially those related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act), other government or healthcare programs or policies (such as SNAP-Ed, WIC, and reimbursement for obesity services), and transportation policies or changes (such as light rail and bike share programs).

One grant has been funded to date, and the award was made within four months of the application. Dr. Brian Elbel, of the New York University School of Medicine, will

It generally takes **MANY MONTHS** for investigators to be funded through the traditional mechanisms at funding agencies, thus hampering their ability to respond to new or rapidly emerging opportunities.

evaluate New York City's recent policy restricting the size of sugar-sweetened beverages served in restaurants to less than 16 ounces. Dr. Elbel will determine the impact of the policy on beverage calories purchased at fast food restaurants, examine the impact of the policy on total daily calories consumed by fast food consumers, and examine changes to the beverage and food environment as a result of the policy.

JOHNS HOPKINS GLOBAL CENTER ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY

The Johns Hopkins Global Center on Childhood Obesity (JHGCCO) issued its most recent Request for Applications (RFA) on Feb. 15, 2012. These RFAs are designed to jumpstart pilot and feasibility research projects with timelines that do not allow funding through the regular NIH review cycles. JHGCCO is interested in supporting novel, rigorous projects that use systems science concepts and frameworks to understand the environmental mechanisms driving childhood obesity, and that can lead to the development or confirmation of effective interventions relevant to children's diet, physical activity, energy balance, and weight status. Additional RFAs will be released between 2013 and 2016.



Two projects were awarded during the 2012 funding cycle:

- The first, which will be conducted by Dr. Maryann Mason of the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children, will evaluate dynamics of the Community Eligibility Option (CEO) and elementary students' participation in school breakfast and lunch programs among six CEO participating schools. The CEO is a new extension of free breakfast and lunch to all students at low-income schools. This evaluation of the CEO policy, coupled with USDA's new nutrition standards for school meals, will help to estimate the combined contribution of these two policy efforts aimed at improved student access to healthy foods and childhood obesity prevention.
- The second, which will be conducted by Dr. Emmeline Chuang of San Diego State University, will examine the

dynamic, emergent effects of policy, environment, and systems changes introduced in October 2012 through Mass in Motion Kids and Our Choice-Nuestra Opcion, two multilevel, multi-sector childhood obesity prevention and control projects being implemented in Massachusetts and California. Findings will help policy makers understand potential sources of and strategies for overcoming unintended effects that can hinder intervention outcomes and sustainability and identify ways to effectively coordinate prevention and control efforts within communities.



NCCOR Makes an Impact

These rapid response mechanisms will give investigators new options and greater flexibility to conduct childhood obesity research. In particular, it will help them respond to new and ongoing opportunities

to assess “natural experiments” (studies that observe the effects of changes in an environment, policy, or practice). With traditional funding mechanisms, investigators often do not have enough time to secure support and collect baseline data before the program or policy starts. Having the baseline data is critical to observing and assessing any changes as the program takes effect.

The NIH fast track mechanism will allow investigators to more effectively conduct these studies, which can yield immediate and practical evidence for what works and is acceptable in real-world settings and populations. Support from the JHGCCO pilot study mechanism will have other effects, enabling researchers to successfully compete for additional funding at NIH or elsewhere, and to collect follow-up data on and complete the evaluation of policy and/or environmental changes.

INVESTING FOR THE LONG TERM

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES STUDY



The Issue

Many communities are recognizing that childhood obesity is an important impediment to their long-term health and vitality, and they are taking steps to implement programs and policies to address it. However, their varied approaches have not been systematically studied so it is difficult to know what works and what does not. Additionally, no studies have been conducted to examine community factors, such as family sociodemographics, that may modify or mediate associations between community programs or policies and childhood obesity.



NCCOR Takes Action

In 2008, an NCCOR member, the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), began planning the Healthy Communities Study to fill in these important knowledge gaps. NCCOR was integrally involved from the start, and NCCOR members currently serve on

subcommittees that are responsible for specific aspects of the study.

This five-year study, which began in August 2010, is examining characteristics of community programs and policies in more than 200 demographically diverse communities across the nation. Almost 20,000 children and their parents will eventually participate. Several communities have been selected because of promising policies and programs each has in place. The remaining communities have been randomly chosen through a national probability sample. Communities with high proportions of Latino and African-American residents are being oversampled.

The study is assessing community efforts in areas where childhood obesity rates are highest. Investigators are examining how such efforts are related to health behaviors and body weight. Collected data will include body mass index (BMI) abstracted from medical charts and details of community programs and policies dating back 10 years.

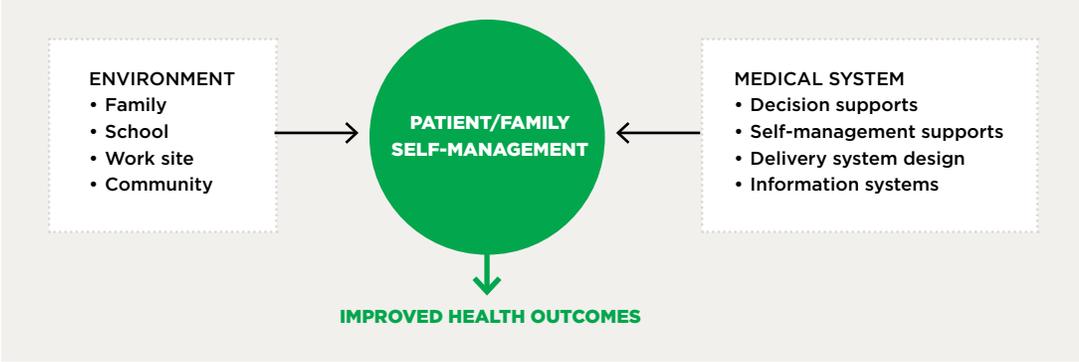


NCCOR Makes an Impact

The Healthy Communities Study was one of the first projects that NCCOR funding partners worked on together. NCCOR members representing the funding partners supported and helped design the study, contributed extensive in-kind expertise and measurement tools for the protocol, and provided financial support.

The support and involvement of NCCOR funding partners has helped to promote and accelerate this critical research, maximize its outcomes, and create and support the mechanisms and infrastructure needed to translate and disseminate findings from the study communities to other communities across the country. When the Healthy Communities Study concludes in 2015, its findings will help elucidate policy and environmental drivers of the childhood obesity epidemic and identify community-based solutions.

THE OBESITY CARE MODEL



This model highlights two concepts that are central to CORD: (1) Management is central to the process. Management means an engaged family that is making changes to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and reduce inactivity. (2) Children and families are not on their own. Communities and the medical system play big roles in supporting evidence-based strategies for healthy weight.

CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH DEMONSTRATION

One of the project's **MOST INNOVATIVE** approaches blends traditional community-based interventions with individual behavior support.



The Issue

Rates of obesity are particularly high among minority and low-income children, many of whom participate in the Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP). The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act appropriated \$25 million to CDC to conduct four-year, community-based childhood obesity demonstration projects in three communities. Using the Obesity Care Model as a conceptual framework, the Childhood Obesity Research Demonstration (CORD) project aims to involve children, parents and other family members, and communities in identifying strategies that improve children's health behaviors and reduce obesity. One of the project's most innovative approaches blends traditional community-based interventions with individual behavior support.

NCCOR Takes Action

CORD has a federal steering committee with representatives from a variety of agencies concerned with health, children, and families. Recognizing the value of involving outside experts,

CDC also reached out to NCCOR members for guidance and advice on planning and implementing out the intervention. NCCOR funding partners provided advice on the draft funding announcement before its release and an NIH NCCOR member served as a reviewer during the application process.

NCCOR Makes an Impact

CDC anticipates that CORD's innovative features will enhance its impact. By intervening with community institutions as well as individuals, CDC hopes to provide consistent messages about healthy eating and physical activity behaviors and to change the environment in which food and physical activity decisions are made. CDC's established relationship with NCCOR allowed them to easily reach a broad spectrum of expertise for the CORD Steering Committee and study workgroups, and helped to improve communication and collaboration across agencies and with outside groups; reduce duplication of effort; build capacity to conduct research; and accelerate progress for future childhood obesity research efforts.

DEVELOPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

CATALOGUE OF SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS



**The
Issue**

Research on childhood obesity has traditionally focused on individual-level factors. As the field has matured, it has come to encompass social, environmental, and policy issues as well. However, much less is known about the organizational, community, and macro-level determinants of childhood obesity than about individual determinants.

Publicly available data resources can shed light on these various factors, but knowledge about these resources is relatively limited, especially for those new to the field. Few researchers, therefore, have taken full advantage of available data systems. When deciding which data resources to use in their research, investigators often use familiar systems, ask their colleagues for advice, or go to Internet search engines.



**NCCOR
Takes Action**

In 2010, NCCOR began to develop a one-stop web-based location for researchers interested in accessing obesity-relevant data systems. Launched in February 2011, the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems provides access to resources maintained by federal, state, academic, and private sector institutions that provide data related to health behaviors, outcomes, and determinants of obesity. It also contains systems that track environmental and policy factors.

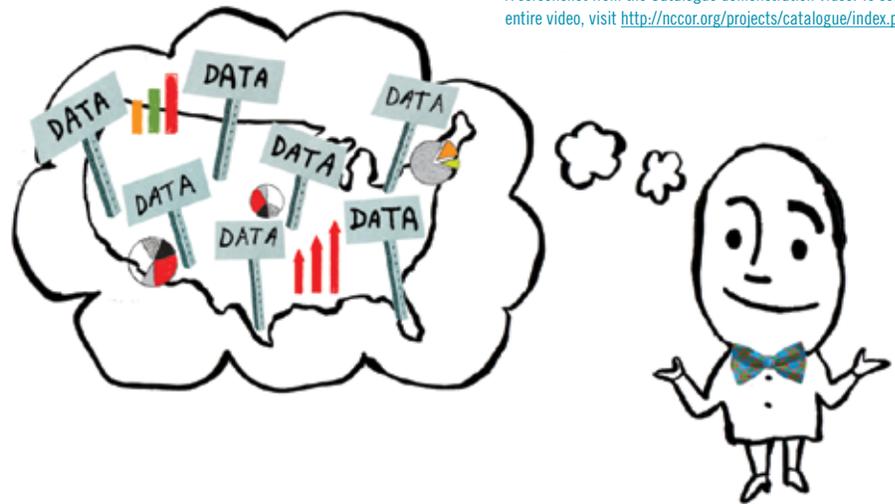
The Catalogue currently includes around 100 systems, and new sources are continually being added. Each system in the Catalogue includes data that are relevant to childhood obesity, collected within the past 10 years, publically available, and gathered in the United States.



The Catalogue currently includes about 100 systems, shown here.

Feedback on the Catalogue from Daniel Taber, a postdoctoral research associate

“Too bad the Catalogue wasn’t designed when I was in graduate school—I would have graduated a year earlier! This tool is exactly what I needed when I was designing my dissertation. I spent countless hours and energy sifting through data sources. . . . Finding the right data source is a process that can take weeks, if not months; with the Catalogue, it can be completed in a day or two.”



A screenshot from the Catalogue demonstration video. To see the entire video, visit <http://nccor.org/projects/catalogue/index.php>

NCCOR Makes an Impact

The Catalogue provides a separate, seven-page profile for each system, including an At-a-Glance summary and information on sampling design, key variables, data access and cost, geocoding and other linkage variables, selected publications, and resources. The Catalogue is a valuable and flexible tool that allows users to:

- Identify and locate surveillance systems of interest
- Search by topic
- Easily compare different systems
- Access detailed information on each system
- Access non-surveillance system resources, such as the Child Trends Data Bank, USDA Food Environment Atlas, and federal nutrition program information and legislative databases

A variety of promotional activities have made the Catalogue a well-known and valued tool for obesity researchers. NCCOR actively promotes the Catalogue through its website, blog, and Twitter page, at professional and scientific conferences, as well as in a widely distributed, visually delightful demonstration video housed on the NCCOR site and on NCCOR’s YouTube channel.

Links to the Catalogue can be found on major websites for the nutrition, public health, and childhood obesity fields, as well as those of NCCOR’s funding partners, state health agencies, and universities. An article about the development of the Catalogue and Measures Registry (see page 28 for a description of the Measures Registry), published in the April 2012 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* has helped to widely publicize this resource across the research community.

The response to the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems was immediate and overwhelmingly positive. During 2012, the Catalogue averaged nearly 1,300 unique visitors each month and more than 500,000 hits. Since its 2011 launch, the Catalogue has received more than 1 million hits. Professors even use it in their nutrition and research methods classes.

The development of the Catalogue has given researchers and practitioners, for the first time, a tool that allows them to assess the range of childhood obesity resources and see possible gaps.

For example, it is clear that many more individual-level data systems exist than do systems at outer rings of the socio-ecological framework. Knowing the gaps will allow the research community to begin to fill those gaps. In addition, NCCOR hopes that the Catalogue will encourage multilevel research by providing increased awareness of linkage variables, and this in turn, will contribute to efforts to increase knowledge and lower rates of childhood obesity.

MEASURES REGISTRY

The Issue

Obesity and public health researchers need standard measures to describe, monitor, and evaluate interventions, particularly policy and environmental interventions, and factors and outcomes at all levels of the socio-ecological model. Measures are tools and methodologies to assess individual diet, physical activity, and the environments in which these behaviors occur. Examples of measures include questionnaires, instruments, diaries, logs, electronic devices, direct observations of people or environments, protocols, and analytic techniques.

Many measures have been developed, but until recently there was no centralized repository that investigators could search to find the right measure for a particular research purpose.

- Individual dietary behavior
- Individual physical activity behavior
- Food environment
- Physical activity environment

Each measure includes information about the domains measured, validity and reliability, protocols on the use of the measure, settings, geographic areas, and populations for which the measure has been used. Users can search or browse for measures, access specific details on each measure, compare features among measures, link to other measures registries and related resources, find measures in development, and submit new measures for inclusion in the registry.



The Measures Registry contains almost 1,000 measures, a few of which are shown here.



A Twitter Testimonial

What a useful tool for finding research on childhood obesity @NCCOR nccor.org/projects/measures

Tweeted by: @kellymoltzen, Dec. 3, 2012
Retweeted by: @SchoolNutrPlus and @geneticmaize



NCCOR Takes Action

In 2010, NCCOR began to develop an online, searchable repository of measures relevant to childhood obesity. Project team members conducted comprehensive literature searches of articles published between 2004 and 2010, examined a best-practices review, contacted subject matter experts to supplement lists of measures, and used a tailored abstraction tool to collect data for each measure.

In April 2011, the Measures Registry was launched, with nearly 750 measures categorized into four domains:

NCCOR Makes an Impact

Project team members continue to update the Measures Registry on a regular basis, and it now contains almost 1,000 measures. A variety of promotional activities have made the Measures Registry a well-known and valued tool among obesity researchers. NCCOR actively promotes this tool through its website, blog, and Twitter page as well as in a widely distributed, visually delightful demonstration video housed on the NCCOR site and YouTube. Links to the Registry can be found on major websites for the nutrition, public health, and childhood obesity fields as well as those of NCCOR partner agencies, state health agencies, and universities. An article about



A screenshot from the Measures Registry demonstration video. To see the entire video, visit <http://nccor.org/projects/measures/index.php>



Project team members continue to update the Measures Registry on a regular basis, and it now contains almost **1,000 MEASURES.**

the development of the Measures Registry and the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems, published in the April 2012 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* has helped to widely publicize this resource across the research community.

During 2012, the Measures Registry averaged 250 unique visitors each month and received 130,000 hits. Since its launch in 2011, the Measures Registry has had more than 300,000 hits. In the short

term, it is increasing the awareness and use of measures resources by researchers. As a result, it is helping to decrease redundancy, improve productivity, and build research capacity. In the longer term, NCCOR hopes that the Registry will help the research community think more broadly and comprehensively about measures-related issues, such as validity, reliability, standardization, and harmonization, which ultimately will enhance the effectiveness and innovation of childhood obesity research.

Since its launch in 2011, the Measures Registry has had more than **300,000 HITS.**

TRANSLATING AND DISSEMINATING RESEARCH AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



The Issue

A key to building a vibrant childhood obesity research community is open communication and continual dialogue. However, as a field with many players and a wide range of activities, it can be difficult for researchers to stay abreast of all new developments. A central conduit for information can be a boon to the field.

The Collaborative is positioning itself as a key hub where childhood obesity researchers and other stakeholders can come for information and news about funding opportunities. At the same time, the Collaborative recognizes that communication goes in two directions. It also needs to reach out and learn what the field is thinking about current and emerging priorities for childhood obesity research and action. During 2012, NCCOR took action on both fronts.



NCCOR Takes Action

In 2012, NCCOR's Coordinating Center enhanced its communication portfolio, improving both functionality and user experience. It now uses a variety of communication tools and platforms to serve as an information portal and to take the pulse of childhood obesity researchers and the field.

SERVING AS AN INFORMATION PORTAL

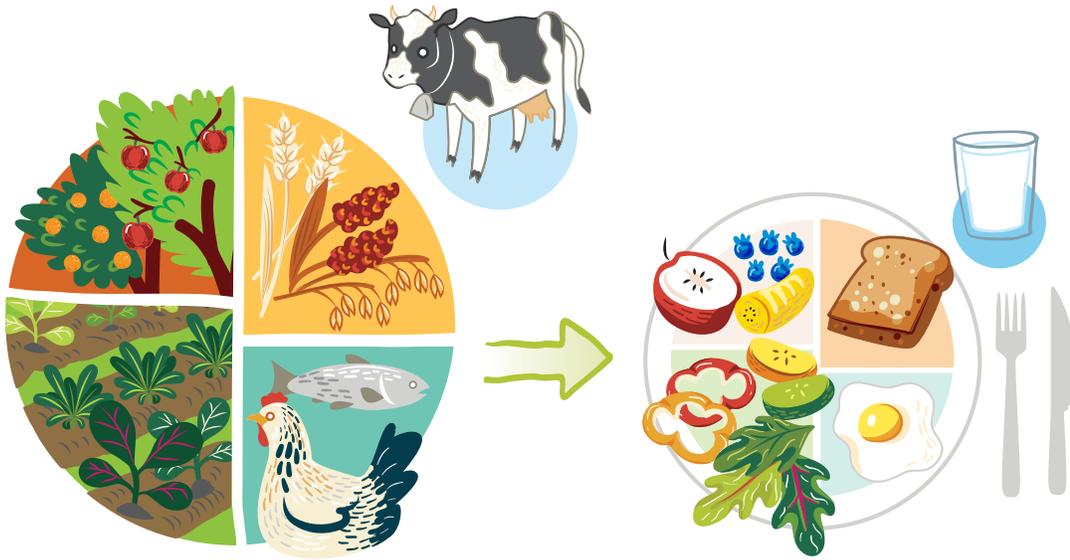
The Collaborative website and its monthly NCCOR e-Newsletter were launched in February 2009 and April 2009, respectively. Both resources have proven valuable to NCCOR members, researchers, and others interested in childhood obesity prevention. Over time, however, it became increasingly clear that NCCOR needed to redesign its website and expand its communications methods so the Collaborative could better

serve as an asset to the field by sharing childhood obesity research and news, publicizing funding opportunities, and encouraging conversation. NCCOR now collects information across funding partners and disseminates it efficiently and effectively to the childhood obesity prevention field through a variety of channels, including:

→ Website

- ◆ NCCOR's website provides information about NCCOR projects and activities, as well as upcoming conferences, events, and webinars. The site also provides links to resources from NCCOR funding partners.
- ◆ The NCCOR e-Newsletter, blog, and Twitter feed are also accessible from the NCCOR homepage. The website houses NCCOR-developed videos and links to

EATING A HEALTHY DIET DEPENDS ON HAVING A HEALTHY FOOD SUPPLY



NCCOR uses compelling infographics to translate research results.

The makeup of the nation's food supply...

directly influences what's on our plates.

NCCOR's YouTube channel, which includes a repository of videos addressing the issue of obesity prevention, such as HBO's Weight of the Nation™ video series and videos from funding partners.

- ◆ NCCOR explains its mission, goal areas, and projects, as well as childhood obesity research through infographics, which are accessible as PDFs.
- ◆ Because NCCOR members are active contributors in the field, a Flickr account chronicles NCCOR's presence at conferences and meetings, on panels, and more.

→ e-Newsletter

- ◆ The e-Newsletter is a monthly, subscription-based resource that compiles research highlights, childhood obesity news, publications and tools, funding opportunities and awards, and NCCOR-authored content. Currently, the e-Newsletter has 2,151 subscribers, a 19 percent increase since 2011.

→ Blog

- ◆ The NCCOR blog, with more than 150 entries to date, houses NCCOR-authored content, news articles, research findings, and

other information related to childhood obesity research. It provides a place to both search for and comment on childhood obesity research and trends. Content is regularly updated and promoted through Twitter.

→ Twitter

- ◆ NCCOR's Twitter feed allows the Collaborative to send out information about funding opportunities, blog posts, research findings, and other content related to childhood obesity. It also helps NCCOR connect with others interested in childhood obesity research.



 A Twitter Testimonial

@NCCOR I love the list of surveys that you provide on your website. This is invaluable to me in my research.

Tweeted by: @Kimbah19



Since its launch in March 2012, NCCOR has tweeted more than 250 times and has more than 240 followers.

→ Booth

- ◆ The NCCOR booth provides a place for NCCOR members and Coordinating Center staff to share NCCOR materials, and engage in discussions about NCCOR and childhood obesity research with professionals from a variety of disciplines. Debuted at the CDC Weight of the Nation™ Conference in May 2012, the booth has exhibited at large, national conferences, including The Obesity Society’s Annual Scientific Meeting in September 2012, and the Annual Meeting & Exposition of the American Public Health Association in October 2012.

REACHING OUT TO RESEARCHERS AND THE FIELD

NCCOR reaches out to researchers and other childhood obesity stakeholders in a variety of ways. It conducts surveys of members to seek feedback on the development of particular projects and on its tools and resources. NCCOR uses these results to improve its

overall work. Funding partners also find survey findings valuable and share them within their own agencies. NCCOR also reaches out by convening groups to discuss issues of importance and through presentations at national conferences.

→ **NCCOR Investigator Survey.**

This 2012 survey collected data on childhood obesity investigator demographics and research topics, awareness of NCCOR and NCCOR tools, and perceptions of the field, past and future. The survey was emailed to 895 investigators funded by the NCCOR partners. A total of 334 investigators responded (a response rate of 38.4 percent). Ten follow-up interviews were conducted. Major findings included:

- ◆ Since 2010, investigators’ awareness of NCCOR has increased from 50 percent to 73 percent.
- ◆ 52 percent of the investigators focus on both nutrition and physical activity in their research, while 17 percent focus only on nutrition, and 15 percent focus only on physical activity. An additional 17 percent focused on other topics.
- ◆ 33 percent of investigators stated that most of their research focuses on disparities. Only 15 percent of investigators stated that little or none of their research focuses on disparities.
- ◆ Investigators thought the top three roles for NCCOR should be disseminating information on research, promoting cross-

cutting collaborations and research opportunities, and developing research tools.

- ◆ When asked about what tools could be useful to their research, they responded that NCCOR should develop common or standardized measures outside individual-level tools, pursue strategies for measuring population disparities in environment and policy, and create an easily accessible library of key intervention strategies.
- ◆ When asked about their perceptions of the field, investigators thought the most significant topics in the past five years were the school food environment, the built environment, and food policy issues. The most important topics for the next five years were the home food environment, food policy issues, and the built environment.

→ **FLASHE Study.** The Family Life, Activity, Sun, Health and Eating (FLASHE) Study is a 2012 survey conducted by the National Cancer Institute and CDC. FLASHE is designed to assess correlates of obesogenic and cancer preventive behaviors (mainly diet, activity, and sedentary behaviors), as well as other behaviors (such as, sleep, sun-safety, tobacco) among parent-adolescent pairs. During 2011, NCCOR assisted in the development of the survey instrument by conducting an online survey of 516 NCCOR members and others, including researchers, federal and local government

officials, and practitioners. NCCOR's contribution to the survey strengthened the scientific content of the FLASHE Study by identifying key priority areas and gaps in childhood obesity research not currently captured in publicly available data. Data from the FLASHE Study will ultimately become a publicly available dataset.

→ **Convening Researchers and Stakeholders.** NCCOR hosted several meetings in addition to the workshops described in other sections of this report. These “convenings” provided a valuable opportunity to highlight issues of importance to the field and to highlight scientific progress within and outside of NCCOR. For example, in January NCCOR hosted a “Farm-to-Fork workshop on Surveillance of the U.S. Food System.” A variety of speakers reviewed the U.S. food surveillance systems currently in use and highlighted the strengths and gaps of our surveillance, thus laying the groundwork for future discussions in this area. NCCOR

also is exploring the possibility of convening a group to discuss success stories in community-based efforts to reduce childhood obesity.

→ **Presentations at National Meetings.** During 2012, NCCOR made its presence known at key national meetings. For example, several members participated in a symposium at the Society of Behavioral Medicine's 33rd Annual Meeting in April to discuss accelerating the path from exploratory research to evidence-based guidelines.

At the Weight of the Nation™ conference in May, NCCOR hosted a panel discussion focusing on the value of partnering and forming networks, which highlighted the work of NCCOR, the Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN), and the Physical Activity Policy Research Network (PAPRN).

In September, several NCCOR members discussed their NCCOR-related research at The Obesity Society Annual Meeting.

In December, an NCCOR member discussed the benefits of using a systems science approach to childhood obesity prevention research at an obesity prevention conference in New Jersey (see the Envision project description for more on systems science research).



NCCOR is rapidly becoming a central location for information for the childhood obesity research field—a “one-stop” shop in which to discuss current activities, contribute to emerging priorities, and learn about research funding opportunities.

For example, NCCOR is changing the way funding opportunities are identified and shared. NCCOR redesigned its Funding Opportunities webpage in 2012. The page contains tables that summarize funding opportunities generated by NCCOR members and others, such as universities and nonprofit organizations. Tables are sortable by the funding opportunity name, funder, receipt date/deadline, amount, and whether it is a rapid response funding opportunity or not. Each funding opportunity links to an accompanying page that lists purpose, receipt date, total awards, and eligibility information, as well as linking to other URLs about the opportunity. A separate table archives past opportunities so childhood obesity researchers and others can see which areas of research have recently received funding.

The NCCOR Coordinating Center is continually improving this key feature to meet the needs of the research community. One example of positive feedback: On its blog in July 2012, the Directors of Health Promotion and Education (an association of state and territorial program directors) acknowledged the page, and NCCOR's efforts.





LOOKING AHEAD TO 2013

In the coming year, NCCOR will strive to continue to make progress in each of its five goal areas. In continuing efforts on existing and new projects, two areas of special focus will be:



Increasing NCCOR's efforts to translate and disseminate research findings and to build capacity among researchers for dissemination and translation of their work to a variety of audiences



Developing action plans to implement and make progress on NESP's four recommendations for NCCOR (see page 10)

Continued Progress on Existing Projects

NCCOR continually works to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. Ongoing activities get “fresh faces” and other improvements. For example,

→ **NESP.** Four NCCOR members were appointed by the NCCOR Steering Committee as “NESP liaisons” in fall 2012. They will work alongside the Panel in 2013 to enhance the connection between NESP and NCCOR.

These liaisons will help determine NESP's direction and agendas, particularly around implementing the four recommendations NESP made to the NCCOR membership in late 2012. The liaisons will participate in NESP meetings and calls and report on progress and activities at NCCOR Member Meetings and NCCOR Monthly Calls. The liaisons are:

- ◆ Tina Kauh, RWJF
- ◆ Stephen Onufrak, CDC
- ◆ Dionne Toombs, USDA
- ◆ Susan Yanovski, NIH

→ **Envision.** Envision researchers also are preparing papers for a theme issue of the *American Journal of Public Health*. This issue, scheduled for publication in June 2014, will focus on applications of statistical and systems-science modeling to childhood obesity. These papers should reach a broad public health audience and increase awareness of Envision and NCCOR.

→ **Youth Energy Expenditure.** Work will continue on this project, with final development and publication of the energy expenditure metrics paper. Recognizing the potential impact of NCCOR's youth energy expenditure work on the field of youth physical activity research, the American

College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) also has invited Dr. Janet Fulton, NCCOR member and CDC sponsor of the Youth Energy Expenditure project, and Dr. Robert McMurray, the lead author of the metrics paper and an investigator at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to present a tutorial outlining the challenges related to a Youth Energy Expenditure Compendium and its use at ACSM's 60th Annual Meeting, May 28-June 1, 2013. NCCOR's ability to rapidly secure funding made the participation of Drs. Fulton and McMurray possible.

→ **Green Health.** The excitement generated by the Green Health workshop led to several multidisciplinary collaborations that are supporting an emerging emphasis on health by the green building and environmental design communities. The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the National Academy of Environmental Design, both

co-sponsors of the Green Health workshop, held workshops in early 2013 to discuss ways to integrate health into the green building movement and to explore opportunities and challenges related to data collection and use in environmental design strategies. In addition, the USGBC and RWJF have provided research support to an NCCOR member to develop health metrics for green building and related research.

New Projects

Planning is underway for several exciting initiatives, including launching a mechanism for new strategic alliances and collaborating to develop and co-fund a sustainable national school wellness policy survey to track policy changes and their impacts. Other new projects already underway in 2013 include:

→ The **Registry of Studies** is a new NCCOR project to develop a web-based registry that will house descriptions of key large outcomes studies. It will provide detailed information on the design of each study, measures, content areas, and populations studied. Currently, this information is not readily available to researchers, and providing it will enable researchers to access critical insights and make comparisons to their own studies. The Registry of Studies will first incorporate 4-5 large studies being conducted by NCCOR funding partners with the intention of expanding over time. When launched, the Registry of Studies will be

housed and maintained on the NCCOR website.

→ NCCOR is launching a **Healthy Eating Index (HEI) package** in the spring of 2013 in combination with new research being published about the HEI scoring metric. The HEI is a tool designed to measure diet quality—that is, how closely an eating pattern or mix of foods matches Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations. The HEI is a versatile metric that can be used in a variety of studies, including descriptive analyses, monitoring, evaluations, economic analyses, and epidemiologic research. The HEI was developed by scientists at two of NCCOR's funding partners: the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion and the National Cancer Institute's Applied Research Program.

The HEI package, which will be housed on the NCCOR website, consists of a fact sheet, a video, infographics, links to numerous HEI resources, and photos showing how the HEI can be applied in various ways, including assessing the food supply, \$100 worth of groceries, a school cafeteria menu, and a day's worth of meals. This NCCOR effort is certain to be a great example of research translation and dissemination in 2013.

→ The NCCOR **Childhood Obesity Declines: What's Working?** workgroup was established based on the need to thoroughly understand and document communities that have experienced a reduction in

or stabilization of obesity rates. Accumulating evidence about impact is critical if decision makers and researchers are to understand what works and does not work to reduce childhood obesity. Individually, NCCOR funding partners have been engaged in capturing progress; the workgroup provides an opportunity to build on those efforts, identify areas of synergy, and examine opportunities for cross-promotion in the field. The workgroup is developing a definition of positive progress (such as change in obesity prevalence rates), identifying barriers for measuring progress, developing a method for identifying and categorizing progress, and reviewing positive progress across organizations and agencies.

Appendix 1:
2012 NCCOR Membership

Appendix 2:
2012 NCCOR Financial Summary

Appendix 3:
NCCOR 2012 Key Events and Activities

APPENDICES



APPENDIX 1:

2012 NCCOR MEMBERSHIP

NCCOR STEERING COMMITTEE

Rachel Ballard-Barbash, M.D., M.P.H.
Cynthia Hormel, M.M., R.D., L.D., SNS*
Christine Hunter, Ph.D.
Laura Kettel Khan, M.I.M., Ph.D.
Molly Kretsch, Ph.D.**
Laura Leviton, Ph.D.
Tracy Orleans, Ph.D.
Robert C. Post, Ph.D.**
Jay Variyam, Ph.D.*
**Steering Committee term beginning on Jan. 1, 2013*
***Steering Committee term ending on Dec. 31, 2012*

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APPENDIX 2:

2012 NCCOR FINANCIAL SUMMARY

FUNDER	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Government (CDC*, NIH**)		\$300K	\$750K					
Government (CDC*, NIH**, USDA***)				\$819K	\$1,324K	\$854K	\$930K	\$971K
					Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
RWJF	\$317K							
RWJF		\$600K			\$300K	\$400K		
						Projected		
RWJF (COMNet)			\$192K					
RWJF (Evaluation Research Forum)			\$120K					

* CDC funding has come from two divisions in one center.

** NIH funding has come from six institutes/offices/divisions.

*** USDA funding has come from two agencies within one department.

Funds are rounded to the nearest thousandth.

Options 2-4 are funding projections.

As of January 2013

APPENDIX 3:

NCCOR 2012 KEY EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

JANUARY				WEBSITE REDESIGN	<p>NCCOR External Scientific Panel (NESP) begins work</p> <p>NCCOR members convene for winter Member Meeting</p> <p>NCCOR hosts Farm-to-Fork workshop on Surveillance of the U.S. Food System</p>
FEBRUARY	NCCOR MONTHLY WEBINAR	NESP WEBINAR		WEBSITE REDESIGN	NCCOR hosts three-day Envision Summit
MARCH					NCCOR launches redesigned website with social media features (e.g., blog, Twitter feed), funding opportunities page, and infographics
APRIL	NCCOR MONTHLY WEBINAR	NESP WEBINAR			<p>NCCOR publishes Annual Report 2011</p> <p>NCCOR hosts Youth Energy Expenditure workshop</p> <p>NCCOR publishes Green Health: Building Sustainable Schools for Healthy Kids</p>
MAY					<p>NCCOR premieres videos on the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems and Measures Registry and launches its YouTube Channel</p> <p>NCCOR exhibits booth and hosts reception at CDC Weight of the Nation™ Conference</p> <p>NCCOR conducts Senior Leadership Briefing</p> <p>NCCOR has spring Member Meeting</p>
JUNE					
JULY	NCCOR MONTHLY WEBINAR	NESP WEBINAR	E-NEWSLETTER	WEBSITE MAINTENANCE	NCCOR hosts Envision Meeting
AUGUST					
SEPTEMBER					NCCOR exhibits booth at The Obesity Society's 30th Annual Scientific Meeting
OCTOBER					<p>NESP holds workshop to develop recommendations for future NCCOR projects</p> <p>NCCOR members convene on new projects at fall Member Meeting</p> <p>NCCOR exhibits booth at the 140th Annual Meeting & Exposition of the American Public Health Association</p>
NOVEMBER	NCCOR MONTHLY WEBINAR	NESP WEBINAR			NCCOR's annual evaluation results are shared
DECEMBER					NCCOR develops 2013 Communications Plan



//////////////////////////////////// **NCCOR 2012 BY THE NUMBERS** //////////////////////////////////////

Worked it Out

NCCOR CONVENE

9

NCCOR MEMBER CALLS

10

NESP WEBINARS

9

NCCOR WORKING GROUPS

3

PROJECT-ASSOCIATED MEETINGS

Asked Questions

NCCOR REACHED OUT TO

895

CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCHERS ON A SURVEY TO IDENTIFY KEY PRIORITIES FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Played the Host

NCCOR HOSTED MORE THAN

33,575

UNIQUE VISITORS ON THE NCCOR WEBSITE

NCCOR TOOLS SERVED A NUMBER OF UNIQUE VISITORS PER MONTH



1,300+

CATALOGUE OF SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS SITE

300+

MEASURES REGISTRY SITE

Hit the Road

NCCOR'S BOOTH EXHIBITED AT

3

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF MAJOR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS INTERESTED IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Got Social

NCCOR BEGAN A LIVELY PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA WITH MORE THAN

150

BLOG POSTS

250

TWEETS

240

FOLLOWERS ON ITS TWITTER FEED

Kept You in the Know

NCCOR INFORMED MORE THAN

2,100

RESEARCHERS AND CHILDHOOD OBESITY STAKEHOLDERS THROUGH ITS MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER

Got Published

NCCOR MADE ITS PRESENCE KNOWN IN SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE AND PRESS

NEARLY

50

PAPERS HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN PEER-REVIEWED JOURNALS, AS A RESULT OF SUPPORT FROM ENVISION.

MORE THAN

630

STORIES HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED IN THE MEDIA ABOUT ENVISION'S FIRST SERIES OF PAPERS PUBLISHED IN *THE LANCET*. PAPERS ALSO WERE PUBLISHED IN THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE ABOUT THE CATALOGUE OF SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS AND MEASURES REGISTRY.