Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Initiative: Childhood Obesity Surveillance

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About the Program:
The Wisconsin Obesity Prevention Initiative (OPI) is a Wisconsin Partnership Program funded program that promotes a multi-faceted approach to addressing the state’s obesity epidemic. The initiative represents a collaborative, interdisciplinary effort of individuals working within the university, (e.g., faculty and staff from the School of Medicine and Public Health, the School of Human Ecology, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Department of Nutritional Sciences). Moreover, it also promotes the strategic alignment among government entities, communities, researchers, advocates, non-profit organizations and businesses around efforts towards community-based approaches to childhood obesity prevention. One key component of OPI is the development of a statewide obesity surveillance system. Students assigned to this UW PRIME program would work and be mentored specifically within the OPI surveillance core.

Project Opportunity 2016

Barriers to School-Based BMI and Physical Fitness Reporting

The OPI surveillance system includes multiple indicators among school-age children, including body mass index (BMI). School-based fitness assessments are an important potential surveillance data source of both BMI and other measures of physical fitness among school-age children. This data can be used as part of the larger statewide surveillance system, as well as reported back to local communities to help inform community-based interventions. The infrastructure for school-based BMI and fitness reporting has been developed through previous efforts Wisconsin Partnership for Childhood Fitness (http://fitness.pediatrics.wisc.edu/). However, the number of participating schools has decreased over the past several years. This project seeks to determine barriers to school-based reporting and determine possible strategies to address these barriers.

Activities of the project include:
1. Attend weekly OPI Surveillance and Evaluation meetings and all-OPI Team monthly meetings
2. Review literature regarding the use of Fitnessgram and other standardized school-based physical fitness reporting measures.
3. Identify key stakeholders with regard to School-based BMI/Physical Fitness Reporting
4. Develop interview questions, conduct key informant interviews and analyze results
5. Present findings to OPI team members and back to appropriate stakeholders

Required:
• Student must have the skills and ability to assist and/or conduct key informant interviews.
• Student will assist with compiling, organizing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data.
• A student with the ability to work and communicate effectively with a diverse range of community members and OPI team members is the ideal candidate for this project experience.
• The student should also have strong written and verbal skills, be highly organized and self-directed.

November 30, 2015