



December 21, 2009

Michael A. Huff, Ph.D.  
Director  
African American Health Disparity Project San Francisco  
1255 Post Street  
Suite 495  
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear Dr. Huff,

**The San Francisco Childhood Obesity Task Force:**

The San Francisco Childhood Obesity Task Force (formerly the Childhood Obesity Prevention Work Group) will present Childhood Obesity 2010: The Next Generation of Prevention and Management a practical training for physicians and other providers working with children, youth and families in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This interdisciplinary task force has been working together since 2005. It represents public, non-profit, private and academic participants, physicians, nurses, health educators, nutritionists, social workers, hospitals, public health departments, clinics, health plans, and community based organizations.

**Focus on Vulnerable Communities:**

The target population for the task force's work is low income children and youth living in vulnerable communities where violence and substandard housing, unsafe streets and parks, and poor access to healthy foods are the norm. Many of these children are from marginalized families living in HUD and subsidized housing developments. Many are very low income African American children and youth, many live in immigrant families, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Latino whose parents work several jobs to survive. They attend schools where a large percentage of students receive free or reduced fee lunches, and are eligible for child care subsidies. Many of these children and youth are among the 14% in San Francisco whose parent's income is below the Federal Poverty Level.

**Children and Obesity:**

The scientific literature shows the link between obesity and the development of chronic illness. Clinical experience demonstrates this link over and over again. Obesity rates are often high among low income individuals, especially low income people of color. Obesity often begins in infancy and increases as children enter elementary school. This conference addresses children in the Bay Area. We will use San Francisco statistics to make the link between obesity, chronic illness, health disparities and underachievement.

Rates of obesity among low income children in San Francisco are high. 12.3% of all low income infants and toddlers 0-59 months old are at or above the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for weight (obese). The prevalence is highest among African Americans (11%) and Latinos (14.1%). The percentage for low income Whites is too small to calculate; while 9.3% of low income Asian infants and toddlers are obese (pedNSS, 2007).

Among low income San Francisco children and youth 5-19 years old 16.8% are overweight (85<sup>th</sup> to below 95<sup>th</sup> percentile for weight) and 18.7% obese with highest prevalence among African Americans (24.1%) and Latinos (29.4%). The largest increase in obesity is among low income White 5-19 year olds. In the White infant and toddler group the number of obese young children is too small to calculate. This is in sharp contrast to the older children and youth with an obesity prevalence of 18.7% and another 22.4% overweight. The increase in the Asian population is much smaller moving from 9.3% of infants and toddlers to 9.6% of 5-19 year olds. Overall there is a rather dramatic increase in the number of low income obese children living in San Francisco. As children move from preschool to school age and adolescence the prevalence of obesity increases (pedNSS, 2007).

It becomes clear why health care professionals and professionals working with children and youth must address obesity. This training is designed to increase their knowledge, and build their skills. This training gathers together creative strategies to address different populations in varied settings and to offer a science-based foundation for understanding obesity.

**The Training:**

The all day training will target health care and other providers who work in low income communities. A goal of the training is to present the science behind childhood obesity as well as practical interventions ready for implementation in clinical and non-clinical work settings. The training will demystify the science for a non-specialist audience to improve knowledge about childhood obesity, and promote science-based, culturally sensitive management and prevention strategies. Another goal of the training is to recognize the value of an interdisciplinary approach for addressing childhood obesity and collaborative partnerships between clinical and non-clinical providers. Continuing medical education units and continuing education units in other disciplines will be available to participants.

The hypothesis behind the training program is that a better understanding of the science will clarify the importance of prevention and management strategies and assist in developing the most appropriate prevention interventions and management approaches. An additional goal is to improve the overall knowledge and skills of clinical and non-clinical providers working in vulnerable marginalized neighborhoods in order to improve the health and wellbeing of children, youth and families and to address and redress health disparities in low income Bay Area communities. The training embraces a public health and a clinical perspective, as well as an understanding of the social determinants of health, and the pivotal importance of cultural competency and sensitivity in addressing all health care issues..

**Opportunity to Partner with the San Francisco Childhood Obesity Task Force:**

This training offers you an opportunity to support important work addressing health disparities and the prevention and management of childhood obesity, from a public health and a clinical perspective. Obesity rates are high in low income communities and can lead to serious chronic illness, early onset Type 2 Diabetes, and cardiovascular disease, and additional marginalization, overall suboptimal health and development, underachievement, and the perpetuation of a culture of poverty as well as soaring health care costs. The training also offers you a chance to showcase your own innovative programs to address childhood obesity and share your work with others, or to demonstrate your recognition of and concern about the issues.

Additionally, your support can be leveraged to underwrite the important work carried on by safety-net clinics and community based organizations addressing obesity and its co-morbidities by donating the free admission tickets you earn through your sponsorship to these programs. The training will assist safety-net clinics and community based organizations in developing quality programs, clinical expertise, and outreach to more underserved families.

**Sponsorship Levels:**

We invite you to join us to develop a robust and practical training. Your support will allow us to make a difference in addressing childhood obesity a marker for endemic health disparities in low income communities.

There are five levels of support which are described in the enclosed "Sponsorship Overview". We encourage you to consider this very important work which also gives you the added opportunity to support staff from safety-net clinics and community based organizations to attend the training that will benefit them directly. This will give you additional visibility and demonstrate your commitment to community service. Your sponsorship is an investment in healthier communities. This kind of investment builds health, resilience, and self-efficacy. To do well in school, achieve full potential and make valuable social contributions children must be healthy and have the confidence and motivation to succeed and break the cycle of poverty.

The fiscal agent for the training is the San Francisco Breastfeeding Promotion Coalition, a 501 (C) (3) non-profit corporation with the tax ID # 61-1408129. All sponsorships will be acknowledged by a thank you letter that can be used to document your charitable contribution.

Thank you for taking the time to review the information about the training and considering joining us by becoming a sponsor. If you have questions, or would like more information, please contact Gloria Thornton, at 415 740-7539 or by e-mail at [gloria.thornton@wellpoint.com](mailto:gloria.thornton@wellpoint.com).

Very truly yours,

*Robert Lustig*

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*Gloria Thornton*

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