

## Power-Up: A Collaborative After-School Program to Prevent Obesity in African American Children

Shahid Choudhry, MPH<sup>1</sup>, Lori McClinton-Powell, BS<sup>2</sup>, Marla Solomon, RD, CDE<sup>1</sup>, Dawnavan Davis, PhD<sup>1</sup>, Rebecca Lipton, PhD<sup>3</sup>, Amy Darukhanavala, MD<sup>3</sup>, Althera Steenes<sup>1</sup>, Kavitha Selvaraj, BS<sup>4</sup>, Katherine Gielissen, BS<sup>4</sup>, Lorne Love<sup>2</sup>, Renee Salahuddin, MA<sup>2</sup>, Frank K. Embil, MA<sup>2</sup>, Dezheng Huo, PhD<sup>5</sup>, Marshall H. Chin, MD, MPH<sup>1</sup>, Michael T. Quinn, PhD<sup>1</sup>, and Deborah L. Burnet, MD, MAI<sup>2</sup>

(1) University of Chicago Department of Medicine; (2) Woodlawn Community School; (3) University of Chicago Department of Pediatrics; (4) University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine; (5) University of Chicago Department of Health Studies

### What Is the Purpose of the Study?

- To assess whether a program promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity can be successfully implemented in the after-school setting, and to begin assessing its promise as a means to prevent childhood obesity.

### What Is the Problem?

- Childhood obesity has risen significantly in recent decades, increasing the health risks for youth and young adults.
- Schools represent a key venue in which to address obesity, but academic pressures limit curricular changes and other activities during school hours.
- After-school programs are expanding nationwide, and represent a potential opportunity for promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity.

### What Are the Findings?

- The Power-Up After-School program to prevent obesity was successfully integrated into the after-school setting at one Chicago public school using a collaborative, community-based participatory approach.
- Participating children lowered their degree of obesity on average.
- Girls decreased their prevalence of overweight/obesity more than boys.
- The heaviest children remained obese.

### Who Should Care Most?

- School leaders.
- Public health leaders and community health care providers.
- Elected officials.
- Families of schoolchildren.

### Recommendations for Action

- Work to incorporate opportunities for healthy nutrition and physical activity into after-school programs.
- Children who are already obese may need more intensive treatment.
- Larger scale studies are needed to better understand the value of this type of program in preventing childhood obesity.