Colorado Legislative Update 2005

For the first time since a 120-day calendar was adopted by the Colorado Legislature in 1989, the session ended two days early. As in recent years, priority for lawmakers focused around state budget issues with a particular emphasis on a reform measure that would address the Taxpayer’s Bill of Rights (TABOR). With early adjournment and heated discussions aside, the legislature still had time to pass several measures that will address physical activity and nutrition policy for the state.

Two bills passed this session focus on school policies—SB05-81 and HB05-1237. The first, SB05-81 encourages schools to adopt policies that ensure that students have access to healthy food choices including meals provided in cafeterias and food for sale in vending machines as well as access to age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction on healthy eating and physical activity habits. In addition, school district boards are also encouraged to adopt a local wellness policy that meets guidelines outlined in the federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004. This legislation was successfully sponsored by Representative Alice Madden and Senator Paula Sandoval. HB05-1237, sponsored by Representative Debbie Benefield and Senator Ron Tupa, was passed, but then vetoed by Governor Bill Owens. This bill would have established a physical education recognition program, to recognize physical education programs and educators that met certain objective criteria created by a statewide board. Governor Owens found a provision that would require physical education teachers to have a degree in PE and other criteria to be too restrictive. It was vetoed in early June.

Some other notable legislative highlights include the passage of HB05-1218, which changes some traffic laws to be more cyclist friendly. This bill was sponsored by Representative Greg Brophy and Senator Tupa. Representative Brophy was inspired to address this issue following a bike accident where he was seriously injured by a car. Representative Madden and Senator Sandoval teamed up again to pass HB05-1066, a measure that allows for the development of a pilot program for the treatment of obesity within the state Medicaid program. Finally, legislation that would have required schools to ensure that by the 2007-08 school year, at least 50% of the food sold in vending machines would meet acceptable nutritional standards—died on the house floor. Last year a similar bill recommending but not requiring such changes passed the legislature. San Luis Valley Senator Lewis Entz sponsored both pieces of legislation. For more information about state public health legislative activities, visit Colorado Public Health Association website at http://www.coloradopublichealth.org/.

Amber Minogue, RMPRC
Partnerships offer exciting opportunities for developing more effective and sustainable health promotion strategies and for leveraging limited resources. Here are a few partnerships in my work. You can read about other partnerships of the RMPRC on the following pages.

Adoption and sustainability of health programs - When teachers brainstormed about factors linking innovative health curriculum with successful curriculum adoption at Alamosa’s Boyd Elementary School, lack of time for teachers to talk about curriculum with each other was identified as an important barrier - not only for health curriculum but for core content areas (see page 7 for other selected findings from the INPAP follow up project).

Coordinated health surveillance motivated by the needs of multiple partners - Together with state and local partners (see RMPRC Update V2 issue 1), we are working on a height and weight surveillance system for school-age children. This system will also include modules for collecting child fitness measures and attributes of school environments and school policies that may affect health, especially those related to eating and physical activity. This system will be accessible to all schools for self-assessment and to evaluate the effectiveness of school-specific programs. Common data elements across Colorado schools will allow us to identify priority areas and describe progress in promoting child health. With formative studies and a pilot behind us, we plan to have initial prevalence estimates by next summer. This project continues to require effective, ongoing and constant communication, as well as flexibility, to figure out how goals, timelines and limited resources can be coordinated among partners.

A systems approach to prevention and control of chronic disease - The Colorado Diabetes and Cardiovascular Disease Collaborative met last month to showcase Colorado teams implementing the Chronic Care Model, a model of system level changes in health care to proactively prevent the devastating complications of diseases like diabetes. Providers, health plan representatives, consumers and researchers discussed such things as coordinated electronic health records (EHR) across providers in a region, and health care staff completing a single data form across insurers. It was an exciting discussion. Time and communication capability is needed to create a common vision for disease prevention among partners. I attended this meeting as a result of being an active member of the Colorado Diabetes Advisory Council where partners are working together to increase communication and coordinate resources statewide devoted to the prevention and control of diabetes.

The RMPRC is working with community and agency partners across disciplines at local and regional levels. We’re committed to finding common ground and creating a shared vision with diverse partners so that our research is useful, training is relevant, and together we can improve public health.

Testing to Prevent Colon Cancer in Rural Colorado

What would it take for you to get a free travel mug with the words “Got polyps?” imprinted on it? Residents in Cheyenne Wells, Colorado, can tell you... talk to your doctor about colon cancer testing. The travel mugs are part of a campaign by the High Plains Research Network at the University of Colorado at Denver and Health Sciences Center (UCDSC) to increase colorectal cancer screening rates in rural northeast Colorado. The Project is funded by the CDC through a Special Interest Project of the RMPRC. The Project Investigator is Dr. Jack Westfall (Family Medicine and Associate Dean of Rural Health).

Testing to Prevent Colon Cancer in Rural Colorado utilizes community-based participatory research; researchers and community members collaborate to decide what are the important messages about colon cancer and the best ways to disseminate the messages. Last October, fifteen local community members including farmers, ranchers, school teachers and several medical professionals from northeast Colorado formed the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) and have customized the project’s intervention for the different rural communities based on what they believe will be effective in their communities.

The four main messages include: colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the US, colon cancer is preventable, testing is worth it and talk to your doctor about testing. The messages will be disseminated initially in two pilot communities. Besides the travel mugs, factual newspaper articles on colon cancer, personal interest stories about local residents’ experiences with colon cancer, and advertisements on the importance of colon cancer testing featuring community residents will run in the local newspapers. Community talks on colon cancer testing are also planned. The final intervention will be rolled out to all communities in northeast Colorado over the next 18 months.

Becky VanVorst, UCDHSC
In March of 2004, the Denver Board of Education representing Denver Public Schools (DPS), passed a resolution to establish the Commission on School Nutrition and Physical Activity. The commission was directed to examine effective school practices that shape students’ nutritional intake and physical well-being. The commission—made up of 17 members including pediatricians, registered dieticians, physical education teachers, and university researchers—was required to report recommendations based on their findings to the Board of Education.

The commission, co-chaired by Elaine Gantz Berman and Dr. Reginald Washington, presented their recommendations to the Board in December 2004. On June 2, 2005, Denver district staff proposed that DPS Board of Education adopt most of the commission’s recommendations. Due to questions of fiscal feasibility, the Board delayed action for some of the recommendations. For example, one recommendation suggested a 90 minute per week requirement of physical education. As a creative solution to address this dilemma in the short term, schools will begin to certify classroom teachers in physical education to help increase their capacity until a fiscal solution can be determined. For more information on recommendations made by the commission, please visit http://www.dpsk12.org/pdf/final_report.pdf.

Amber Minogue, RMPRC

IRAS Family Study Follow-Up

We are pleased to announce the start of the IRAS Family Study Follow-Up in June. This is a follow-up exam of the individuals who participated in the original IRAS Family Study (IFS) exam. These studies were first funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 1999 and again in 2005.

In the IFS, families were recruited to participate in a study exam. The study was done in three locations: the San Luis Valley, San Antonio and Los Angeles. The IFS objective was to see if there is a familial connection between insulin resistance, diabetes and adiposity (obesity). The IFS explored some of the risk factors that may be associated with diabetes such as, insulin resistance and where you store your fat (for example, waist vs. hip), how much fat you have, and whether the fat is in the abdomen or just under the skin. The results showed that these risks do run in families, which indicates there are strong genetic components to these problems. However, no one knows which genes control these things. The IFS has been extremely helpful in helping us find good candidates for genes that may control these factors.

The IRAS Family Study Follow Up (IRASFS) is designed to obtain more data on these factors in people to help us confirm the genetic connections between obesity, diabetes and insulin resistance. The follow-up exam will get measures of abdominal fat by CT scan and measures of whole body fat by DEXA scan. In collaboration with the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center, the IRASFS purchased a state-of-the-art DEXA scanner, for this purpose. IRASFS will also be conducting bone density scans for the purposes of our research. The IRASFS is proud to be working with the SLVRMC in providing cutting edge medical screening technology to the region.

This series of studies is the only large, community-based study of the genetics of obesity and insulin resistance among Hispanics and African-Americans. As a research study aimed at improving public health, IRASFS is unique in the way in which it is examining potential hereditary connections for chronic disease factors historically considered to have only behavioral causes.

Jill Norris, UCDHSC
State Legislators Pass Plan to Allocate Amendment 35 Revenue

In 2004, with a 61 percent majority, voters approved a 64-cent per pack increase on the state cigarette tax when they passed Amendment 35. While the initiative earmarked the revenue for different health initiatives, final discretion for allocation of the funds was given to the Colorado General Assembly. During the 2005 legislative session, Colorado legislators considered several proposals to address spending measures for the revenue. Legislators, lead by Senator Bob Hagedorn and Representative Betty Boyd, reached a bi-partisan agreement about the measure towards the end of session with the passage of HB 05-1262. The legislation was signed into law by Governor Owens on June 2, 2005.

Key components of the legislation include:

- Increased support to community clinics that provide primary health services to low-income, uninsured parents
- Increased funding to provide comprehensive tobacco education, prevention, and cessation programs particularly to children and pregnant women
- Providing funding to support programs that work to prevent, detect, and treat chronic disease
- Creating a health disparities grant program in the Office of Health Disparities
- Allocating 3% to the General Fund to help support the old-aged pension fund and to assist municipal and county governments with health related expenses

Discussions about how to allocate tax dollars for research activities related to smoking cessation and smoking-related chronic disease prevention and interventions are underway. Funding will be distributed through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. The appointment process for a 15-member commission who will clarify and implement the Request for Applications process is ongoing.

Amber Minogue, RMPRC

Diabetes Summit Partners: 2005 a Busy Year!

The San Luis Valley Diabetes Summit Partners (DSP) is “a group of community organizations and individuals in the San Luis Valley dedicated to preventing or delaying the onset of diabetes, improving diabetes care, and helping prevent complications related to diabetes” (DSP Mission Statement). From October 2004 through February 2005, DSP initiated a community planning process to learn how to improve diabetes treatment and prevention in the San Luis Valley. A series of meetings was hosted, inviting both community members and health professionals. Meetings began by presenting a visual interpretation of the results of an ethnography on diabetes treatment issues in the Valley, conducted by Dr. John Brett for the SLV Healthy Family Project. Graphic or visual facilitation was used to encourage meeting participants to voice their own specific issues of what it was like to live with or to treat people with diabetes, and their perceptions were literally drawn on paper.

A similar process followed to draw the vision of what people would like to see in the future, and finally, to conceptualize and prioritize potential projects as “bridges” that could bring us to the envisioned future. Nearly 70 people from throughout the San Luis Valley participated in all three meetings. These visuals are now being used by the Summit Partners and their member organizations, along with the community stakeholders, to improve diabetes care in the San Luis Valley.

DSP are planning their fourth Diabetes Summit, to be held October 20, 2005, at Adams State College. The focus of this year’s Summit is in regards to how community resources can work together to help persons through the stages of understanding and coping with the management of diabetes. The Diabetes ExPO will be held October 22, and will provide workshops geared towards persons with diabetes and improved self management, and free or reduced cost medical screenings. Persons interested in attending either the Diabetes Summit and/or ExPO should call the San Luis Valley Regional Medical Center Resource Center at (719)587-1309.

Terry Uyeki, RMPRC
RMPRC of the San Luis Valley Health Studies Staff Updates

Shelly Fitzgerald, MBA, recently joined the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center (RMPRC) as the Administrative Coordinator for the center. Prior to coming to the RMPRC, she focused on the health care for the homeless sector, with experience in implementing a federally funded start-up program for chronically homeless persons with co-occurring disorders. Other areas of experience include grant management, technical writing, medical record review for litigation, surgical technologist, and emergency medical technician for the Westminster, CO fire department. Shelly’s primary area of interest is working in the area of health care for medically underserved populations. She has four children and enjoys watching her son play competitive hockey and her youngest daughter cheer for the high school varsity squad. Hobbies include horse back riding, gardening, and cooking.

Leonard Archuleta was employed with the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center of the San Luis Valley Health Studies on March 15, 2005. He is a Professional Research Assistant with the Insulin Resistance Atherosclerosis Family Study. He earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Adams State College in Business Administration with a major in Management and a minor in Marketing. His diverse background includes being a human resource director, community corrections director, carpenter, counselor, case manager, and he also worked for the United States Postal Service for a few years. Leonard is married to Carla and they have a son and a daughter, Lee and Heather, age 26 and 21 respectively. Leonard is a native of the San Luis Valley and enjoys camping, fishing, hunting, music, gardening, and foosball.

Amber Minogue worked with the RMPRC from March 2005 through July 2005. She received her BA in Political Science from the University of Northern Colorado. Amber’s most recent endeavor was working as a policy analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures. While there, she focused on issues related to children and at-risk youth. She started her career in policy working for Colorado State Legislature. Prior to that, she served for one year volunteering in an AmeriCorps youth corps program. Amber is currently pursuing an MA in Political Science from the University of Colorado’s Center in New Directions Program in Politics and Public Policy. In her spare time she enjoys volunteering, gardening, spending time outdoors, and reading.

Andrea Wismann has been the student assistant for the Translation Core of the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center for almost two years, coordinating meetings and facilitating the creation of a Community-Based Participatory Research Interest Group and listserv. During this time, she has been working on her Masters of Science in Public Health at the CU Health Sciences Center. Her thesis project examined knowledge and attitudes about physical activity and nutrition of middle school students in Denver Public Schools. Spurred on by her experiences in health promotion, Andrea has decided to pursue a clinical career, and will be starting medical school at UCDHSC this fall. She completed her undergrad degree at CU Boulder in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry. When she’s not studying, Andrea enjoys painting, telemarking, and teaching ecology to 3rd graders through a volunteer program with Balarat Outdoor Education Center and the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (WEBS).
LeAnn Samora joined the RMPRC on April 1, 2005 as a part-time Professional Research Assistant for the San Luis Valley (SLV) Healthy Family Project. Her primary duties include blood drawing and preparing samples for transport to the Denver branch for analysis. In addition, she does some data collection and has helped with data entry for other projects at the RMPRC. Until recently, she was a paramedic with Alamosa Ambulance for several years and also worked as a medical assistant at the SLV Physician Services (formerly the SLV Medical P.C.). LeAnn plans to eventually pursue her Bachelor’s of Science in Nursing. She enjoys any outdoor activity, especially jogging, hiking, and 4-wheeling. She has one child of the four-legged variety - a Chinese pug named Alex. LeAnn resides in Alamosa with Andrew, her significant other of almost four years.

Erin Martinez joined the RMPRC in September of 2004. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Psychology and minors in Mathematics and Philosophy from The Metropolitan State College of Denver. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science degree in Biometrics. Erin gives support in the form of data analysis and management for the Alamosa County Survey, the Integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity Program, the Parents, Advisors and Children Together Study, and the Coming Alive worksite exercise program. She will be working full time during the summer and will go back to working part time in the fall when classes begin. Erin enjoys hiking, rafting, and camping.

San Luis Valley Healthy Family Project

Do you or do members of your family have diabetes?

If the answer is yes, you may qualify for the San Luis Valley Healthy Family Project. The SLV Healthy Family Project is a research study looking at ways to help families make lifestyle changes such as eating more healthfully, increasing physical activity, attaining and/or maintaining a healthy weight and practicing good diabetes self-management skills.

Having a family member with diabetes puts other family members at risk for getting diabetes. The good news from research is that diabetes can be prevented or delayed by making lifestyle changes. These changes can also reduce or delay complications in those who already have diabetes.

The SLV Healthy Family Project is seeking families who live in the Valley and are interested in doing things together as a family, have at least one person in the household with diabetes, and will be living in the San Luis Valley for at least the next 18 months.

All participating families will be asked to attend four data collection visits at the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center in Alamosa and be offered an informational session about healthy lifestyles. Half of the participating families will take part in 16 fun, activity-filled home visits with a professional Family Lifestyle Coach who specializes in behavior change. All participants will receive free lab work and payment for their time and effort in attending clinic visits.

The SLV Healthy Family Project is a research project of the Rocky Mountain Prevention Research Center. For more information please call: Jennifer Atencio at 589-5801.

Missy Dunnahoo, RMPRC
Effectiveness of Community Academic Partnerships: A New RMPRC Project

There has been increasing use of community-based participatory research approaches to develop effective community health interventions (AHRQ review, 2004). This type of collaboratively designed community health research has been undertaken by community academic partnerships comprised of academic researchers and community members. What has been learned to date about the factors that contribute to the effectiveness and sustainable impact of those partnerships, has been largely based on retrospective case studies. The Community Academic Partnerships (CAPs) Project is a prospective, descriptive study of the factors affecting the collaborative process in partnerships that the RMPRC is involved in to improve community health outcomes. It will use a participatory evaluation process with two partnerships to study how partnership group structure and process affect aspects of: a) how the partnerships function, e.g., leadership, administration and management, use of member resources (Weiss et al., 2002); b) partnership synergy, i.e., how well members work together for “the common good” of the partnership (ibid.; Lasker et al., 2001); and c) partnership effectiveness. Indicators of partnership effectiveness are drawn from organizational development and effectiveness theory which takes into account the organization’s culture and corresponding domains of effectiveness, and is thus, multi-dimensional and dependent on an organization’s core values (Quinn, 1998; Cameron & Quinn, 1999). The development of partnership effectiveness will be further described in terms of how it is associated with indicators of sustainable policy and practice for community health initiatives.

The research design has developed over the past year by a project team, whose collaborative efforts and innovative thinking are gratefully acknowledged: John Brett (UCDHSC), Sally Davis (NM-PRC & UNM), Carrie Heltzel (facilitation and mediation consultant), Cindy Medina (environmental community activist), and Trina Rivera (PRC professional research assistant who is the project data manager).

Terry Uyeki, RMPRC

Adoption and Follow-Up of the Integrated Nutrition and Physical Activity Program (INPAP)

INPAP, a hands-on nutrition and physical activity curriculum involving cooking in the classroom and core content in literacy (e.g. reading recipes and related stories), math (e.g. fractions, graphing) and science (e.g. experiments), continues to be used at Boyd Elementary School in Alamosa. Lessons conducted increased from 81 in 2003-2004 to 146 in 2004-2005. Teachers using the curriculum report being motivated by

- concerns over the childrens’ health, especially being overweight and understanding what constitutes a healthy snack;
- lessons being conveniently packaged and easily integrated into other content they are teaching;
- hands-on features of the lessons that enhance learning and can be more relevant to adoption of life skills; and
- the children’s enthusiasm for preparing, cooking and tasting the food.

Challenges reported by those who taught fewer lessons this year included increased demands of achievement testing and core standards that needed to be covered, and classroom management issues.

In addition to studying curriculum adoption, this project is conducting annual assessments of children who received the lessons in 2nd and 3rd grade of the 2000-2002 school years and a comparison cohort one year older.

This year the project team including teachers, a curriculum specialist, and RMPRC staff, developed an innovative method for assessing 7th graders’ understanding of INPAP curriculum content. A Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) style writing assessment was developed to give students experience with this type of testing. Local teachers and students studying education at Adams State College were trained and will receive credit to grade the writing samples. A content rubric was developed to assess students’ understanding and ability to apply knowledge about healthy eating and physical activity in a real life setting. These assessments are part of a larger study evaluating INPAP’s long term effectiveness.

Julie Marshall, RMPRC
Dates to Remember.

**September 26-28:** Colorado Public Health Association (CPHA) Meeting, Snow Mass, CO.

**October:** RMPRC State & National Advisory Committee Meeting (SNAC), San Luis Valley, CO.

**October 20:** Diabetes Summit, Alamosa, CO, Adams State Luther Bean Museum.

**October 21:** The Culture of Data 2005 — Bridging the Gap Between Health and Socio-Economic Status, 8–4:30 p.m., Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada, CO.

**October 22:** Diabetes EXPO, Alamosa, CO, Adams State College Center.

**November 5-9:** American Public Health Association (APHA) Meeting, New Orleans, LA. For more information: www.APHA.org/meetings.

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