

10th Annual Maine Harvard Prevention Research Center Conference
Starting Young: Improving the Nutrition and Physical Activity
Environment for Pre-School Aged Children

January 21, 2011
Senator Inn, Augusta, Maine

Conference Speakers

Joanne Burns, RD

Joanne Burns is a Registered, Licensed Dietitian and is employed as the Health & Nutrition Manager for Kennebec Valley's Community Action Program's (KVCAP) Child & Family Services where she has been for 11 years. The KVCAP program offers child care, Head Start, Early Head Start and preschool programs for children birth to age five. She began in the nutrition field about 18 years ago, working for a nursing home and hospital as a Dietetic Technician and then completed her degree as a Dietitian.

Ranae L'Italien

Ranae L'Italien is the Director of the Kennebec Valley YMCA's Child Care program, a multi-campus Learning Center with infant, toddler and preschool classrooms as well as after school and child watch programs. She has been at the Y for about 5 years. Ranae has earned a B.S. in Education from the University of Maine at Farmington and is a mother of a preschooler and a toddler.

Dawn Littlefield

Dawn has worked in Public Health at both an educator and at the administrative level. She has a bachelor degree in Nutrition and is a practicing Lifestyle Weight Management Consultant. Currently she is at the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Physical Activity Nutrition and Healthy Weight Management Program as a Program Specialist focusing on Priority Populations.

Meredith Reynolds, Ph.D.

Commander Meredith Reynolds, PhD is responsible for leading CDC's Obesity Branch Guidelines Development and Recommendations team. Her team works to identify and translate effective policy and environmental interventions to combat obesity and promote health through improved nutrition, increased physical activity and decreased sedentary behaviors. She leads projects focused on policy and practice changes for the childcare, healthcare, and workplace settings. She began her work at CDC in 1999, as an Epidemic Intelligence Officer, and has worked in the areas of country-level demographic and health surveys, reproductive health surveillance, and immunization. She co-leads the HHS Healthy Weight Early Childhood Workgroup.

Dianne Stanton Ward, Ed.D.

Diane Stanton Ward, Ed.D. is a Professor of Nutrition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Gillings School of Global Public Health. Dr. Ward's research focuses on the prevention of obesity and the promotion of healthy diets and physical activity through interventions implemented in schools, communities, and homes. Dr. Ward has been PI for NIH- and CDC-funded research projects that test interventions to promote healthy weight behavior in children and families. An additional focus of her work is the development of measures to assess environmental factors associated with physical activity, diets, and obesity. Dr. Ward led the team that developed a policy and environmental intervention for child care called NAP SACC, the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, a highly regarded program within the public health community and used by many states for healthy weight development.

Marjorie Withers, LCPC

Marjorie Withers, LCPC, has worked in mental health and as a consultant for over 30 years. Her passions are developing systems of care, skills and supports to help families and children improve the quality of their lives. She specializes in work with infants, young children and families building on strength through collaboration. For the past decade she has focused on the development of rural and tribal collaboratives and defining authentic collaboration. Marjorie is currently serving as director of the Community Caring Collaborative in Washington County, a Project LAUNCH-funded program. Marjorie developed and now directs this 37-agency, community, and tribal collaborative in creating a seamless system of care for at-risk infants and young children and their families.

Davene Wright

Davene Wright is a fifth year doctoral student in the Harvard Health Policy PhD Program, concentrating in Decision Sciences. She earned her Bachelor's in Polymer and Fiber Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2004. Before coming to Harvard, Davene was an ORISE Fellow at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and worked as a research assistant at Mathematica Policy Research, a social policy think tank. She also spent a summer researching the impact that rising childhood obesity levels would have on future US Army recruitment at RAND in Santa Monica, CA. Her dissertation focuses on developing simulation modeling methods to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of childhood obesity interventions.