UMass Worcester Prevention Research Center: Partnering to Achieve Optimal Health among Worcester Residents

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To establish community, public health, health care and academic capacity to engage in equitable research partnerships for conducting applied public health research targeting physical activity, healthy eating, obesity and associated chronic conditions among Greater Worcester area residents.

Why Focus on Obesity in Greater Worcester?

Obesity is a concern in Central Massachusetts. In Worcester, obesity rates among elementary school children and adults exceed state averages and fall short of the Healthy People 2020 target. The Worcester Division of Public Health (WDPH) prioritizes healthy eating, physical activity, and obesity as concerns, and targets them in the Great Worcester Health Improvement Plan.

Research Areas

- Health Equity
- Child & Adolescent Health
- Obesity & Mental Health
- Optimal Health
- Worksite Health Promotion
- Built Environment & Policy
- Community-Clinical Linkages

Research Examples

- **What helps women lose weight gained during pregnancy?**
  - The Fresh Start Trial
  - *UMass* Stephenie Lemon, PhD
  - Milagros C. Rosal, PhD
  - Community: MDPH, WDPH, 3 health centers

- **What helps adolescents lose weight?**
  - School Nurse Intervention and Exercise Program for Overweight Teens
  - *UMass* Lori Pbert, PhD
  - Community: MDPH
  - School Health Clinics

Our Mission

Our Team

We are part of the Division of Preventive and Behavioral Medicine, Department of Medicine, UMass Worcester. We build partnerships between university-based researchers & community agencies for health promotion efforts. Our Principles of Community Engaged Research and our community-academic Steering Committee guide our work.

Steering Committee members include:
- Joanne Calista
  - Central MA Area Health Education Center
- Derek Brindisi
  - Worcester Division of Public Health
- Clara Savage, Common Pathways, CHNA 8
- Antonia McGuire
  - Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Ctr.
- Cathy O’Connor
  - MA Department of Public Health
- Stephanie Lemon (PI), Milagros Rosal (Co-PI), Suzanne Cashman, Wenjun Li, Judith Ockene, Sherry Pagoto, Lori Pbert, Monica Wang, Amy Borg, Barbara Estabrook, Karen Ronayne
  - UMass Medical School
- Monica Lowell, UMass Memorial Health Care

Visit our website: [www.umassmedmed.prc](http://www.umassmedmed.prc)

We are a member of the Prevention Research Centers (PRC) Program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 5-U48-DP-001933. The PRC Program supports a network of over 37 centers to bring together academic researchers, public health agencies, and community members to conduct applied research in disease prevention and control.