PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: CDC Chronic Disease Center

CDC Program Expands to Study Health Needs of Underserved Communities

Will Develop Strategies to Narrow Health Disparities

March 23, 2009—The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is awarding more than $25 million to support prevention research at academic institutions in 25 states. The recipients constitute CDC’s Prevention Research Centers Program, which studies how people and their communities can avoid or counter the risks for chronic illnesses—such as heart disease, asthma, and diabetes.

The awards are for the first year of a five-year funding period that starts a new stage in the program’s history and development. First authorized by Congress in 1984, the program is recognized for having advanced the field of participatory research in which researchers work hand in hand with communities at every research step.

“The Prevention Research Centers have reached more than 41 million people in 66 partner communities, some of which are the most underserved in the country,” said CDC Acting Director Richard E. Besser, MD. “By involving communities in designing and conducting research, the centers ensure that health strategies found to be effective can be readily applied where they are most needed.”

Two new centers will bring research to additional communities: Korean Americans and South Asian Americans in New York City at risk for diabetes, and residents of underserved neighborhoods in Cleveland, Ohio, needing increased access to affordable and healthy foods.

Five new centers will be funded to develop community partnerships and a pilot study for future research. The communities include Latino persons with diabetes in Worcester, Massachusetts; preschoolers in Columbus, Ohio, at risk for obesity as they grow up; African Americans in Prince George County, Maryland, where rates of sexually transmitted diseases are high; schoolchildren in the Arkansas Mississippi Delta lacking good nutrition and physical activity; and cardiovascular disease among people with serious mental illness in an area on the Vermont-New Hampshire border.

“Preventing chronic disease is critical to our nation’s well-being and excessive health care costs,” said Janet Collins, Ph.D., director of CDC’s National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. “Our investment in the Prevention Research Centers moves us closer to helping all Americans share the richness of good health.”
Chronic diseases account for 70% of all deaths in the United States, and almost half of all Americans live with at least one chronic condition. The medical care costs of people with chronic diseases account for more than 75% of the nation’s $2 trillion in medical care costs.

The state and host institution of the new set of Prevention Research Centers are given below. Information about the full scope of the program is available at http://www.cdc.gov/prc.

**Category 1 centers** (comprehensive organizational infrastructure, strong community relationships, and plans in place with community partners for a core research project)

- Alabama: University of Alabama at Birmingham
- Arizona: University of Arizona
- California: San Diego State University (with University of California at San Diego)
  University of California at Berkeley
  University of California at Los Angeles (with RAND Health)
- Colorado: University of Colorado at Denver
- Connecticut: Yale University
- Florida: University of South Florida
- Georgia: Emory University
  Morehouse School of Medicine
- Kentucky: University of Kentucky
- Louisiana: Tulane University
- Maryland: Johns Hopkins University
- Massachusetts: Boston University
  Harvard University
- Michigan: University of Michigan
- Minnesota: University of Minnesota
- Missouri: Saint Louis University (with Washington University)
- New Mexico: University of New Mexico
- New York: Columbia University
  New York University School of Medicine
  University of Rochester
- North Carolina: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
  **Ohio:** Case Western Reserve University
- Oregon: Oregon Health and Science University
- South Carolina: University of South Carolina
- Texas: Texas A&M University
  University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- Washington: University of Washington
- West Virginia: West Virginia University

**Category 2 centers** (will develop infrastructure and community relationships for a pilot study)

- New Hampshire: Dartmouth College
- Ohio: Ohio State University
Arkansas: University of Arkansas for Medical Services
Maryland: University of Maryland
Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Medical School

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