

## CHOICES: Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study

Enabling strategic decisions for public health practitioners

ASTHO is working with the Prevention Research Center on Nutrition and Physical Activity at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health to support state health agencies in your efforts to use local data to identify effective strategies, identify health and cost impact and strengthen partnerships to ensure all children have the opportunity to grow up at a healthy weight.

The [Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study \(CHOICES\)](#) Learning Collaborative Partnerships (LCPs) presents an opportunity for state health agencies to build capacity through funding, training, technical assistance and locally tailored data to help decision-makers understand and use data on health and cost impact to identify best value for money strategies to prevent childhood obesity. Through participation, [agencies will gain skills](#) in using health and cost impact analysis to identify strategies with strong evidence for effectiveness and best value for money. The CHOICES LCP offers an approach for agencies to strengthen their prioritization and planning strategies to improve physical activity, dietary intake and obesity prevention. CHOICES also offers a structured approach for [convening cross-sector partners](#) and developing communication messages and products.

Participating states will receive up to \$50,000 in funding support and the following:

- In person and virtual learning opportunities with experts, – includes travel for members of the state team to participate in workshops at Harvard;
- Technical assistance for individual health agency teams;
- Locally tailored health and cost impact results for up to 2 strategies from a menu of effective strategies to reduce childhood obesity;
- Tools to support communication of project activities and results; and
- Opportunities to learn from other health agency teams.

The CHOICES interventions are grouped into setting-specific sectors including:

- [Clinical Interventions](#)- interventions to treat children identified as obese
- [School-based Interventions](#)- policies, programs and curriculum that impact opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity during the school day
- [Child Care Interventions](#)- policies and programs that impact opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity offered by programs providing care to children ages 2-5 and to school-aged children in afterschool programs and summer camps
- [Transportation](#)- policies and programs that lead to more children and their families taking active modes of transportation
- [Community and Government](#)- policies and programs that impact government nutrition assistance programs, the food industry, and availability of opportunities for healthy eating, physical activity in the community

ASTHO has provided strategic counsel and helped convene health agencies' executive leadership to utilize the results of the CHOICES LCP to prioritize resources, guide communication strategies and inform policy language for childhood obesity related health outcomes. We hope your state health agency will consider applying for the CHOICES LCP. The RFP will be released via the [news section of the CHOICES website](#) on **August 1<sup>st</sup>**. Please submit your applications by **October 1, 2019** to be considered for this opportunity by emailing them to [choicesproject@hsph.harvard.edu](mailto:choicesproject@hsph.harvard.edu). We kindly ask that you use subject line "2019 CHOICES Learning Collaborative

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Partnership” in your correspondence. If your agency is selected, the project year will commence on **December 1, 2019**.

ASTHO’s Chronic Disease Prevention Team is happy to answer questions that you may have related to this funding announcement. Up to four health agencies will ultimately be selected to comprise the fifth cohort of CHOICES LCPs. Agencies that are interested and looking for more information can join **CHOICES’ FAQ webinar**, which will take place on **August 19 at 3:00pm ET**. More information can be found in the news section of the CHOICES website, at: [www.choicesproject.org/news](http://www.choicesproject.org/news).

#### **Additional Information:**

##### *Objectives*

The CHOICES LCP is applying cost-effectiveness analysis to identify the best value for societal investment to reverse the obesity epidemic. The analyses will be completed using comparable methods to estimate the number of children directly impacted by each intervention, the effect of each intervention on children’s BMI and the cost of implementing each intervention, as well as both short- and longer-term measures of cost-effectiveness. The CHOICES LCP enables policymakers, schools and communities to make strategic decisions on where and how to devote resources to prevent childhood obesity.

##### *Intervention Selection and Sectors*

Reducing obesity rates by changing both sides of the energy-balance equation for children (reducing calories consumed or expended) won’t be achieved with a single intervention or policy change, but will require combining a range of interventions across settings and behavioral targets, each with likely small effects. Interventions to be evaluated include policy and program-based approaches, innovative uses of media and health communication methods, clinical interventions and more traditional school curriculum- and community-based programs.

##### *Stakeholder Engagement*

The CHOICES LCP involves extensive consultation with professionals in the field of childhood obesity, physical activity and nutrition. Engagement of experts is integral to the success of the project as they:

- Ensure that project outcomes are useful to researchers and decision makers;
- Identify and prioritize strategies with the highest impact on obesity; and
- Advise on dissemination efforts, including framing and presentation of results, communication strategies, products and collaborations.

##### *Microsimulation Modeling*

The CHOICES LCP uses a microsimulation model to create a virtual US population starting in 2015 and continuing for 10 years and longer. Large national data sets (e.g. US Census, NHANES, the National Survey of Children’s Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) and statistical methods are used to create populations of virtual individuals with their own demographic characteristics (such as age, race/ethnicity and location), baseline body measures (height, weight, BMI) and relevant baseline physical activity and nutrition behaviors. The CHOICES model uses data from longitudinal studies on child and adult growth (height and weight) for each individual to project future growth for children if exposed or not exposed to the interventions assessed by CHOICES. The model incorporates population reach, effect and cost information about each intervention. Health care costs related to BMI are calculated from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. Outcomes include changes in BMI, obesity prevalence, costs, cost-effectiveness (cost per BMI unit change, cost per change in obesity prevalence), mortality and quality adjusted life years (QALYS).