

Healthy Food Retail Working Group

About the Healthy Food Retail Working Group

The Healthy Food Retail (HFR) Working Group is a team of HFR researchers and leaders committed to improving the health of children and their families through improved research, evaluation and dissemination of healthy food retail strategies. The working group is a collaborative effort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Healthy Eating Research (HER) program and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Nutrition and Obesity Policy Research and Evaluation Network (NOPREN). Membership in the working group is open to all with an interest in obesity and nutrition research in the food retail setting focused on shifting consumer purchases toward healthier, lower-calorie foods and beverages, and to increase demand for these options. The primary population of interest is children, ages 0 to 18, and their families, especially in lower-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Settings of focus include a variety of retail outlets, e.g., supercenters/big box stores, supermarkets, grocery stores, corner stores, bodegas/tiendas, convenience stores, farmers' markets, dollar stores, drug stores, and online food shopping. The working group is also interested in the role of retail food sources in relationship to other aspects and levels of the food system (e.g., wholesalers, manufacturers).

Working Group Mission

The mission of the HFR Working Group is to build a network of researchers and leaders from academia, non-profit organizations, government, and other funding agencies focused on increasing the quantity and quality of research in the area of childhood obesity and nutrition in the food retail setting to:

- influence purchases by children and their families toward healthier, lower-calorie foods and beverages by increasing demand for these options;
- improve access to healthier foods and beverages by working directly with retailers; and
- facilitate the development and implementation of evidence-informed policies.

Special emphasis is placed on equity and addressing the needs of the lower-income and racial/ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity.

Working Group Goals

Overall Goal: To identify the most effective strategies to shift consumers away from purchasing and consuming higher-calorie, energy-dense foods and beverages, and instead toward purchasing and consuming healthier, lower-calorie foods and beverages, by designing, conducting, and disseminating research in the food retail setting on how to increase access to and demand for healthier options.

Shorter-Term Goals:

1. Build a network of researchers, practitioners, and leaders with an interest in HFR
 - a. Recruit and support new investigators through collaboration in working groups, mentorship, networking, and other opportunities
 - b. Create opportunities for learning, collaboration and productivity (e.g., commissioned research projects, grants, publications, presentations)

- c. Share information and resources among working group members (e.g., tools, methods, intervention materials)
2. Develop 2-4 subgroups and recruit subgroup leaders; each subgroup will
 - a. Identify one or more collaborative projects which may include presentations, joint or multi-site research/evaluation project, networking, grant application, manuscript, conceptual model, etc.
 - b. Identify a funding source (if appropriate) for conducting the collaborative project
 - c. Engage members of the subgroup in the collaborative project
 - d. Subgroup progress to be reported at a national conference in Spring 2016
 - e. Disseminate findings through published products
3. Identify and promote funding and resources for HFR research

Longer-Term Goals:

1. Develop a research agenda in the HFR arena to facilitate desirable changes in the food retail environment to improve the availability, accessibility, appeal, affordability, image of, and demand for healthy products
2. Generate interest in HFR research by documenting and making the case for its relevance to overall obesity and related chronic disease prevention and control efforts
3. Build evidence to support changes to HFR policies, environments, and practices
4. Increase funding for HFR research
5. Increase the number and capabilities of HFR researchers
6. Increase the amount and quality of HFR research
7. Affect change in national, state, local, and tribal policies to improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages purchased by children and their families
8. Increase access to and sharing of measurement tools and surveillance data/systems through (e.g., web-based platforms, NCCOR's Catalogue of Surveillance Systems - <http://tools.nccor.org/css>, NCI's Measures of the Food Environment - <http://appliedresearch.cancer.gov/mfe>)

HFR Working Group Co-Chairs

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