



# Abriendo Caminos

## Clearing the Path to Hispanic Health

### **The obesity burden is particularly elevated in Hispanic and other minority communities.**

Several factors contribute to this burden, including low literacy rates, low household-income, and high prevalence of diseases like diabetes, dyslipidemia, or hypertension. A need exists to implement culturally sensitive lifestyle interventions and educational programs to decrease obesity and obesity-related metabolic diseases in Hispanic populations. A promising approach to reducing obesity risk in Hispanic families is a community-based program targeted at whole families to encourage healthy eating by incorporating elements of traditional Hispanic dietary patterns, collective family mealtimes, and culturally-tailored physical activity.

Based on the Abriendo Caminos pilot study that demonstrated an increase in healthy eating behaviors by building on elements of a traditional diet, improving family-meal quality, and increasing physical activity, the goal of this multi-function integrated project is to implement, adapt, and evaluate the effectiveness of a community workshop-based curriculum to prevent childhood obesity and promote healthy nutrition and life-style behaviors among low income, low literacy Hispanic-heritage families in five different locations: California, Illinois, Iowa, Puerto Rico, and Texas. This project will result in an effective, low-cost obesity prevention intervention that can be disseminated across the U.S.

### **KEY POINTS**

- People of Hispanic heritage living in the U.S. are at heightened risk of obesity and obesity-related health threats.
- Past interventions aimed at Hispanics, mostly school-based, have had limited efficacy.
- There is an urgent need for affordable, effective, and practical community-based interventions.
- Participation in Abriendo Caminos will significantly increase basic knowledge of nutrition and dietary health.
- The immediate beneficiaries of this obesity prevention project will be children ages 5- to 18 years-old from Hispanic-heritage families.
- We also train future professionals, specifically Spanish-speaking undergraduate students, who are involved in the Abriendo Caminos research project. These students develop intensive research skills, along with professional development skills, to help them make the most of their undergraduate education and prepare for graduate school or a health-related career.



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## FUNDING PARTNERS

This research is supported by the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative of the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture as part of the AFRI Childhood Obesity Prevention Challenge (2015-68001-23248) to the University of Illinois.

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