

**Attachment 20**

**NCCOR Letter of Support**



April 15, 2011

S. Sonia Arteaga, Ph.D.  
Program Director  
Clinical Applications and Prevention Branch  
Division of Cardiovascular Sciences  
National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute  
National Institutes of Health  
6701 Rockledge Drive, Suite 10018  
Bethesda, MD 20892

Dear Dr. Arteaga,

In the U.S. an obesity-promoting environment has led to an overweight society of adults and children who are at increased risk of chronic disease. Consequently health-related costs exceed \$100 billion annually, with economic losses totaling an estimated \$1 trillion per year. Since the 1970s, the rate of obesity among children and adolescents has roughly tripled for those 2 to 19 years of age, and the numbers continue to rise. Given the need to address this urgent national health problem, the Healthy Communities Study (HCS) aims to assess which community programs and policies are most related to making a difference in preventing these trends from continuing. This letter is to express NCCOR's strong support for approval of the study.

A defining strength of HCS is its successful collaboration across various groups and agencies in developing a rigorous research study. Development of the HCS protocol has incorporated the work of 9 substantive subcommittees and successfully engaged more than 75 scientific experts in discussions of BMI, nutrition, physical activity, and community programs and policies and how these elements relate to childhood obesity. Additionally, support from the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) has further augmented interagency collaboration and the inclusion of various expertise. Since its launch in 2009, NCCOR has brought together four of the nation's leading research funders – the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – in a public-private collaboration to accelerate research on reversing the epidemic of overweight and obesity among U.S. youth. In addition to supporting HCS, NCCOR continues to advance the field of obesity research through a number of ongoing projects, including the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems, Measures Registry, Evaluation Forum, Envision, and more.

The extensive level of community involvement also exemplifies the unique reach and partnership involved in HCS. The study design of HCS involves the assessment of 279 communities to determine the relationship between community programs and policies and BMI, diet, and physical activity in children. This large coverage of communities will help us better understand how the relationships between policies, programs, and youth outcomes can be critically explored and recommendations of best practices discussed. The large sample size of the study, including approximately 24,000 youth age 3-15, will also ensure a high level of statistical power and validity of results.

The Healthy Communities Study is essential in determining the most effective programs and policies to successfully reduce obesity in the U.S. NCCOR fully supports this effort and highly recommends OMB to approve the study.

Sincerely,

Todd Phillips, Director