



Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey

Making Healthcare Work.



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AUSTIN REGIONAL CAMPUS

“Healthy U” = Healthier Children Year-One Results Show Positive Health Improvements

“Healthy U” the nation’s largest, evidence-based after-school program designed to combat childhood obesity is making a significant overall impact on the health of the 18,000 children taking part in the initiative. **A year-one evaluation of Healthy U conducted by evaluators from The University of Texas, School of Public Health, shows improvements in key health measurements including increased physical activity and healthier eating.**

Highlighted year-one Healthy U results:

- Increases in moderate to vigorous physical activity: Activity level rose from **46.4** percent at the start of the program to **62.73** percent at the end of year-one.
- Increases in the number of times children drank plain or flavored water: Consumption increased from **1.54** times per day at the start of the program to **1.65** times per day at the end of year-one.
- Increases in the number of times children ate fruit or vegetables: Consumption increased from **2.11** times per day at the start of the program to **2.38** times per day at the end of year-one.
- Increases in parents supporting healthy eating outside of the program: **64.7** percent at the start of the program to **67.4** percent at the end of year-one.

Healthy U, a partnership between The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey and the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance is a four-year program designed to lower obesity rates by 10 percent in children taking part in the program. **For complete information on Healthy U, and the year-one evaluation, please visit www.HorizonBlue.com/HealthyU.**

“Healthy U, in only its first full year, has demonstrated the ability to change behavior and improve the health of children,” said Larry Altman, Executive Director of the Horizon Foundation for New Jersey. “Over the next three-years we hope to see hard data that will show we are reaching our goal of lowering obesity rates by 10 percent.”

“These results show that the YMCAs’ implementation of Healthy U is working and that children taking part in the program are healthier due to Healthy U,” said William Lovett, CEO Metuchen Edison Woodbridge YMCA. “Healthy U encompasses everything that we stand for at the YMCA - building strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.”

For more information contact Daniel Emmer, Horizon BCBSNJ, at 973-466-4805.

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About Healthy U:

- Healthy U is made possible by a \$1 million grant from The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey.
- **Healthy U uses the [Coordinated Approach To Child Health \(CATCH\)](#) program developed by the University of Texas Science Center School of Public Health.**
- **The CATCH program is a national, award winning program with over 15 years of research documenting the program's success in reducing the rate of childhood obesity.**
- Healthy U is an after-school program, administered by the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance which is comprised of 42 YMCA member Associations throughout New Jersey, and 380 YMCA sites.
- Healthy U is open to children ages 5-12 enrolled in a YMCA after-school program.
- Healthy U has three distinct components – Physical Education, Nutrition Education and Parental Involvement.
 1. Physical education is evidence based and incorporates fitness, skill, competency and cognitive understanding about the importance of physical activity with an emphasis on non-elimination games and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity.
 2. The nutritional education component teaches children how to identify, adopt and practice healthy eating habits. The program encourages changes in behavior that support healthy eating patterns.
 3. Parental involvement is an important component of the Healthy U program. Parents are informed of the program's objectives and encouraged to support their child's participation.

Fast Facts About Childhood Obesity:

- Obesity among children ages 6 to 11 more than doubled in the past 20 years, to 17.0% in 2006. The rate among adolescents ages 12 to 19 more than tripled, to 17.6 percent.
- Twenty percent (20%) of sixth-graders evaluated in New Jersey were obese, and another 18% were overweight according to a 2005 survey.
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of New Jersey middle school students evaluated in 2005 had a Body Mass Index that would classify them as either overweight or at risk for being overweight.

About The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey:

The Horizon Foundation for New Jersey promotes health and an improved quality of life across our state by supporting charitable community organizations. For more information about the Foundation visit www.HorizonBlue.com/foundation. Healthy UTM is a trademark of the Foundation.

About the New Jersey YMCA State Alliance:

The New Jersey Alliance of YMCA's is a not-for-profit association made up of 42 YMCA's from the state of New Jersey serving over a half a million New Jersey residents. We bring the independent YMCA's of New Jersey together to collaborate and work on areas of mutual benefit in order to strengthen and enhance our individual YMCAs and the collective strength of NJ YMCA's to better serve the people of New Jersey.

About the University of Texas, School of Public Health:

The University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) is one of eight institutions of [The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston](#). UTSPH is accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) and offers the quality graduate education needed for public health careers.

The main campus, located in the heart of the [Texas Medical Center](#) in Houston, offers [MPH, MS, DrPH and PhD degrees](#). Five [regional campuses](#), each established to meet the public health education and research needs of its community, are located throughout Texas. Regional campuses have their own resident faculty and offer MPH degrees via traditional classes, interactive television (ITV), and web-based learning.

[Research](#) is an important part of the mission of UTSPH. Faculty and students engage in research in areas such as health promotion, environmental health, and disease control.

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