

# Healthy Signs



UNIVERSITY of  
**ROCHESTER**  
MEDICAL CENTER

National Center for Deaf Health Research

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## Mission of NCDHR:

To promote health and prevent disease in the Deaf and hard of hearing populations through community-participatory research.

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## Deaf Weight-Wise Project Funded Matthew Starr

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has officially awarded a second 5-year grant to the Rochester Prevention Research Center: National Center for Deaf Health Research. This enables NCDHR's efforts towards promoting health and prevent disease in the Deaf community to continue through 2014.



"One of the key strengths for achieving this major grant," asserts **Dr. Thomas Pearson**, NCDHR Director, "is our steadfast partnership with the Deaf community through our Deaf Health Community Committee."

NCDHR is a part of the Prevention Research Center (PRC) Program which currently consists of 33 centers situated throughout the country. Each center conducts population-based public health research on underserved/understudied groups. In 2004, NCDHR was awarded its first 5-year grant to develop "Deaf-friendly" surveys, including a comprehensive computer-based Deaf Health Survey

(DHS) shown in American Sign Language or English-based signing through videos and captions. This was in response to a lack of health data in the Deaf population because past public health surveys were conducted by telephone. The NCDHR confidential surveys collected information about the health of the Deaf community, not about hearing loss.

Findings from the DHS have revealed health disparities which were shared with the Deaf community during town hall meetings held in late summer of 2008. Members from the Deaf community and DHCC recommended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> 5-year grant should focus on intervention research to reduce obesity. The new grant project called, "Deaf Weight-Wise," involves taking an existing program to help people lose weight and be more active, and adapting it for the Deaf community. The existing program, developed by North Carolina PRC, has worked well there, and NCDHR wants to find out if it can be adapted to benefit the Deaf community.

The first step, which will start in October 2009, will be to take written program materials and convert them into ASL. Next, Deaf community members will be trained as program "coaches." Finally, program participants will be recruited from the Deaf community to be involved in a

test of this program. The Deaf community coaches will lead the program. Half of the community members will start the program right away. The other half will start 6 months later. NCDHR researchers will collect data throughout to find out if the program works as intended. The center hopes to begin the test sometime in 2011.

The grant also includes plans for building community partnerships, communicating research results to the community and to the academic world, for training programs for community members and students, and evaluating the center's success over time.



"We are thrilled about the prospect of collaborating with NCDHR for another five years," signed **Jess Cuculick**, Chair of the DHCC. "We have seen tremendous progress in the cross-cultural understanding between ASL users, as members of a linguistic minority, and the PRC Program since 2004."

## Save the Dates! Upcoming NCDHR Town Hall Meetings

As a community-based participatory research (CBPR) center, NCDHR works closely with the Deaf community to improve the health of Deaf people. One of the principles of CBPR is to make sure that the collaboration between the academic center and its local community is maintained for the long term.

We have all heard stories about worthwhile programs closing because its funding ran out. In order to increase the fiscal stability of a grant-funded center like ours, it is wise to plan ahead and seek more than one grant to support our long-term commitment to the community.

To continue in the spirit of CBPR, NCDHR and its community partner, the Deaf Health Community Committee, will host a series of "Town Hall Meetings," open to any and all interested individuals and organizations (dates on right). These meetings will be similar to those we held last summer, when NCDHR sought input from the Deaf community for the Prevention Research Centers' renewal application.

The goals for these meetings are to share research findings and to keep an on-going dialogue with community members to brainstorm ideas for any potential future grants.

This way, NCDHR can be ready to apply for new grants at a moment's notice!

Light dinner will be provided. For more information, please contact NCDHR at 866-901-0727 VP/Voice..

### Dates of Town Hall Meetings

**April 20**  
**6:30 - 8:30 PM**  
**120 Corporate Woods**

**May 18**  
**Time & Location: TBA**

**June 15**  
**Time & Location: TBA**

## Deaf Weight-Wise Project in ASL Jess Cuculick

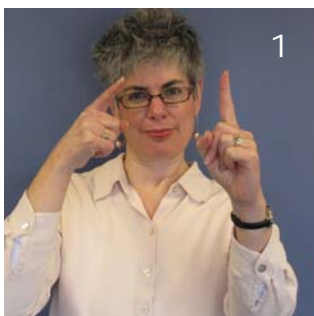


Last October 2008, the Deaf Health Community Committee (DHCC) agreed on a new sign for the Deaf Weight-Wise Project.

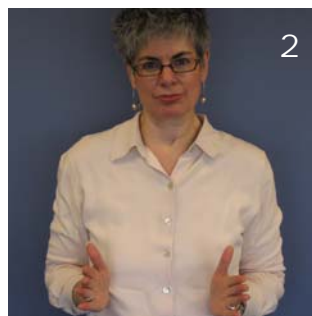
The "Deaf Weight-Wise Project" is an ASL adaptation of an existing program called WISEWOMEN and Obesity Prevention Program designed by researchers and community partners at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill Prevention Research Center. This adaptation follows a well-established research practice of replicating a proven intervention and making modifications to match the cultural and linguistic characteristics of a minority population under study. This practice is known as "evidence-based public health." In Deaf Weight-Wise, all

the materials from the North Carolina program will be translated from written English to visual ASL. Then, NCDHR will test these ASL-adapted Deaf Weight-Wise materials to a group of Deaf participants to determine if this intervention would be effective in preventing obesity in the Deaf community. NCDHR hopes to start this study in 2011.

In the meantime, after nearly an hour of fun brainstorming at the October DHCC meeting, the committee reached a consensus on how we can describe the Deaf Weight-Wise Project in sign language. Please take a look at the pictures below and let us know what you think! A video of the signing of Deaf Weight-Wise is also shown in [www.urmc.edu/ncdhr](http://www.urmc.edu/ncdhr).



Goal



Become  
Slimmer



Project