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Georgia Southern University Announces Partnership to Fight Childhood Obesity

APRIL 29, 2009



Georgia Southern University's College of Health and Human Sciences and the Bulloch County Health Department are launching a community based initiative to fight childhood obesity.

"Obesity and physical inactivity are threatening the health and quality of life of many of our children in Bulloch County. It is imperative that our community unite to develop and implement an action plan that will focus on educating our children and families about the dangers of this growing epidemic, while also providing intervention strategies to combat this serious health risk," said Fred Whitt, dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences.

The College and the Bulloch County Health Department have organized the Bulloch County CHILD (Children's Health Improvement and Lifestyle Development) Coalition. The Bulloch County CHILD Coalition will be made up of community partners dedicated to fighting childhood obesity. Funding for the first year of the project is provided by a grant from the Georgia Division of Public Health.

The objectives of the CHILD coalition include increasing the awareness of the problem of childhood obesity, improving healthy eating habits and activities, and increasing breastfeeding rates. Faculty members from the University's College of Health and Human Sciences will bring expertise in the areas of nutrition, exercise science, child and family development, nursing, recreation, and health education and behavior to the initiative. However, Whitt believes community involvement will be vitally important.

"The success of the Coalition will only be as strong as the community partnerships we are able to develop," said Whitt. "We are excited about this initiative and our faculty members are looking forward to working collaboratively with the community and getting to work on this significant and growing healthcare problem here in Bulloch County."

Georgia has one of the highest rates of obesity in the country, and Bulloch County ranks in the top 22 percent of counties with the highest obesity rates in Georgia. Seven of ten deaths in Georgia and the vast majority of serious illnesses, disabilities, and health care costs can be attributed to obesity. The cost of obesity in Georgia is more than \$2.1 billion per year.

For more information on the Bulloch County CHILD Coalition, please go to www.georgiasouthernhealthscience.com/more-on-chhs/CHILD.html or call (912) 682-1060.

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