



Oxford Health Alliance Launches World's Most Comprehensive Chronic Disease Prevention Research Programme

PepsiCo Foundation Funds \$5.2 Million Grant for Implementation and Evaluation of Community-Based Interventions in China, England, India and Mexico Impacting More Than Two Million People

(London) (September 26, 2007) – The Oxford Health Alliance (OxHA), a global coalition with the aim of preventing the epidemic of chronic disease, is launching a groundbreaking public health research programme to enhance scientific knowledge about the effectiveness of community interventions in reducing the prevalence of chronic diseases. This programme, Community Interventions for Health, will determine what can be done in communities to prevent the further spread of obesity, tobacco use and related illnesses. The research will be conducted in China, England, India and Mexico, and PepsiCo Foundation is funding OxHA with a \$5.2 million grant to support the three-year research project.

The research and intervention programme will directly impact more than two million people across the four sites and is expected to affect more than 16 million people in surrounding areas through regional policy changes. It is the first time such comprehensive community-based interventions will be undertaken and then evaluated across a number of different countries.

Beginning in Spring 2008, the CIH programme will use proven, sustainable strategies, such as coalition-building and education to target schools, workplaces, health centers and community centres. The study will also employ economic and policy changes, including increased access to nutritional information and healthy food choices as well as physical activity to improve health and reduce chronic disease. It will focus on three areas: nutrition, physical activity and reduction in tobacco use.

Professor Stig Pramming, Executive Director of the Oxford Health Alliance, says, “Despite the fact that chronic diseases are by far the world’s biggest killers, they are largely overlooked by governments and donor institutions alike, which is why the CIH programme is long overdue. The real tragedy is that heart disease, diabetes, lung disease and many cancers are almost entirely preventable through lifestyle changes alone, yet they are currently pushing healthcare systems to the brink, not to mention the impact they’re having on national economies.

“In fact, the World Health Organisation predicts that in the next 10 years, China, India and the UK will lose \$558 billion, \$237 billion and \$33 billion, respectively, in foregone national income due to heart disease, stroke and diabetes.”

In each of the four intervention communities, to be specified at a later date, a number of policy changes will be implemented including:

- Smoke-free hospitals with healthy food options;
- Incentives and training for providers to screen for and prevent chronic disease;
- Affordable healthy food and drink in cafeteria and vending machines;
- Advertisement-free schools;
- 30 minutes of physical activity a day, three times per week for students;
- Affordable and accessible fruit carts or farmers markets in the local community;
- Healthy food choices at local establishments and at events;
- Safe routes for walking and bicycling;
- Health risk assessments and smoking-cessation programmes at work;
- Incentives for employees to participate in on-site and off-site physical activity.

The CIH programme will evaluate the health impacts of these interventions on 5,000 people in each community (which will be compared to a similar community), thereby providing a best practice road-map, which can be replicated in other sites around the world.

For more information about the CIH programme, visit the Oxford Health Alliance website at www.oxha.org/initiatives/cih.

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Notes to editor

Community Interventions for Health

The aim of CIH is to develop and showcase sustainable interventions in addressing poor diet, tobacco use and physical activity, demonstrating their effectiveness in a way that is both practical and scientifically rigorous. CIH has three main component parts, which are integral to the design of the interventions:

- Community coalition-building – key stakeholders work together to encourage healthy lifestyle change throughout the community, for example advocating for bicycle paths and smoke-free environments or creating farmers' markets
- Health education – disseminating health messages is vital for success, for example through training of health professionals, using mass media, social marketing or peer educators.
- Structural change – structural interventions include advocating for and implementing policy change, environmental change (for example, improving the opportunities for physical activity in schools and workplaces) and economic change (such as reducing taxes on healthy foods). These combine to create communities in which the healthy choices are the easy choices.

The Oxford Health Alliance

The Oxford Health Alliance is a public-private partnership committed to finding innovative solutions to the world's largest preventable health problem - the global epidemic of chronic diseases - by addressing the risk factors of unhealthy diet, physical inactivity and tobacco use. Particularly, OxHA brings together a cross-section of society to determine the role employers, businesses, urban planners, economists and young people can play in helping to make the healthy choices the easy choices.

PepsiCo Foundation

As early as the 1970's, the Foundation was investing in research and community-based programs to encourage healthy lifestyles. Health & Wellness is one of the Foundation's major planks: to develop and test innovative models for advancing the knowledge of how to effect positive behavior change. Its focus is on community activation, particularly in ethnic and lower socio-economic communities. Major Health & Wellness grants have been made to Tufts University, Chicago Communities in Schools, University of Florida, National Council of La Raza and the American Academy of Family Physicians.