



**School of Public Health  
El Paso**

**Center for Community  
Health Impact**



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# Take Home Points

- Recognize obesity is a complex disease caused by the body's inability to regulate energy storage in a health range resulting in excess body fat.
- Factors extrinsic to the individual that can increase the rate or timing of the expression of the disease of obesity are contributors
- Power influences availability of, access to, and the use of solutions that address both the causes and contributors (Dr. Odoms-Young, Mr. Archer, Dr. Iton)
- Even if all Contributors went away, we would not address the millions of people who have obesity

# Take Home Points

- Focus on evidence-based treatments of the causes and contributors will drive the greatest impact on obesity at community and population level
  - Challenges & barriers for evidence-based treatment of causes
    - Diversity/variety of treatment options for the many causes – addressed through ongoing research
    - Access – addressed through
      - provider training – ~8000 specialists, >600,000 PCPs, 145million in need of treatment (Dr. Castrucci)
      - healthcare coverage – no meds received by ~12% of patients with diabetes vs. 98.7% of patients with obesity\* (Dr. Castrucci)
      - continued research focused on implementation and scalability (Dr. Cardel and Dr. Pérez-Escamilla)

\*Dolton & Tafesse, *Childhood obesity, is fast food exposure a factor?* Econ Hum Biol. 2022 Aug;46:101153.

\*Saxon, et al.. *Antiobesity Medication Use in 2.2 Million Adults Across Eight Large Health Care Organizations: 2009-2015.* Obesity (Silver Spring). 2019 Dec;27(12):1975-1981.

# Take Home Points

- Focus on evidence-based treatments of the causes and contributors will drive the greatest impact on obesity at community and population level
  - Challenges & barriers for evidence-based strategies for contributors
    - Much evidence shows contributors do not directly influence weight\*
  - Access to healthy environments will facilitate evidence-based treatment – this access is influenced by power, politics (Dr. Iton)
    - “Everyone has power” (Ms. Moskowitz Brown)

\*Dolton & Tafesse, *Childhood obesity, is fast food exposure a factor?* Econ Hum Biol. 2022 Aug;46:101153.

\*Hobbs et al. Access and quality of parks and associations with obesity: A cross-sectional study. SSM Popul Health. 2017 Aug 12;3:722-729.

\*Lam, et al. *Associations between the built environment and obesity: an umbrella review.* Int J Health Geogr. 2021 Feb 1;20(1):7

# Take Home Points

- When developing strategies to address the causes or contributors of obesity, we need to:
  - Engage members of the community that we are aiming to serve (i.e. participatory approaches) (Dr. Cardel, Dr. Okihiro, and others)
  - Use the tools of implementation science
  - Evaluate the outcomes we intend to change (Dr. Pérez-Escamilla, Dr. Okihiro)

# Take Home Points

- Take care with our communication and framing:
  - Be clear when we are targeting obesity vs when we are targeting broader or more general health
    - Are we targeting F&V intake because of overall health or to decrease obesity?
      - A focus on eating more F&V did not decrease BMI, but using it as a strategy to maintain a negative calorie balance was useful\*
  - Measure and report what we are targeting (Dr. Okihiro)
  - Importance: ensuring we don't perpetuate misperceptions about obesity.
    - Conflating contributors and causes can fuel the bias that people with obesity “choose” to have excess weight because they don't eat healthy or exercise enough (Dr. Castrucci)

\*Whigham, et al. *Increased vegetable and fruit consumption during weight loss effort correlates with increased weight and fat loss.* Nutr Diabetes. 2012 Oct 1;2(10):e48.

INTEGRATION of individual strategies that are scalable and available regardless of location, income level, race, ethnicity  
AND system-wide changes that make the individual strategies available and sustainable



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