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# SUMNER M. REDSTONE GLOBAL CENTER FOR PREVENTION AND WELLNESS

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Milken Institute School  
of Public Health

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

## ANNUAL REPORT

2020/2021

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

William H. Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.



Despite the ongoing stress and disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic and major shifts in the Redstone Center's personnel, 2021 was a productive year. We continued to focus on policies in the District of Columbia related to nutrition, physical activity, and obesity, and expanded our efforts to apply a sustainability lens to our work within the university, the District, and nationally. The Redstone Center also contributed to **standing up the Center for Community Resilience (CCR)**, directed by Dr. Wendy Ellis. CCR is an outgrowth of the Center for Building Community Resilience, which was originally housed within and partially supported by the Redstone Center. The rapid growth and success of CCR outgrew its location at the Redstone Center, although Redstone and CCR have maintained a close working relationship with some shared resources.

In early 2021, the attraction of influencing policy at the national level led to the departure of Jeff Hill, our Center's Policy Director, and Kate Wolff, our Senior Director of Communications, Outreach, and Engagement. Jeff became the Deputy Assistant Secretary for legislation at the Department of Health and Human Services, and Kate became a Senior Advisor in the Administration for Children and Families trying to repair the damage done by the separation of children at the Mexican border. Jeff has now moved on to become the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Administration for Children and Families. We are incredibly proud of their decisions and the positive impact that they are having on major issues confronting our country.

We have been fortunate to replace both Jeff and Kate with two outstanding new staff. **Rachel Clark, JD, our new Policy Director**, came to the Redstone Center after four years as the legislative counsel for the District of Columbia's Committee on Transportation and the Environment. In that position she drafted over 15 bills related to nutrition, environmental protection, and public health, including legislation on climate-friendly food procurement. **Kelly Whittier, our new Senior Director of Communications**, Outreach, and Engagement, came to Redstone from the office of DC Councilmember Mary Cheh, where she was the Director of Communications. Kelly has had almost 10 years of experience in that capacity and brings a deep knowledge of the Council legislative portfolio. Consistent with our goal of making D.C. the healthiest capital in the world, Rachel and Kelly strengthen our ability to promote efforts that address obesity, nutrition, physical activity, and mitigate the harmful effects of climate change within the District of Columbia.

**Our work on climate change has continued.** The Redstone Center became a member of GW's new Climate and Health Institute (CHI), led by Dr. Susan Anenberg in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. In the U.S., the medical sector contributes 8-10% of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs). Approximately half of the medical sector's GHG emissions derive from fossil fuel use. In collaboration with Dr. Neelu Tummala, an ear, nose, and throat physician at the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) and a co-director of CHI, we formed a subcommittee of CHI to **focus on GW's medical sector contribution to climate change**. The efforts of the committee have focused on potentially cost-savings strategies within the hospital and MFA related to energy use and reductions to the waste stream. On Earth Day 2022, GWU-CHI became a member of the National Academy of Medicine's Climate and Health Network to mitigate climate change and protect human health, well-being, and equity.

Redstone engaged in several presentations and public health initiatives throughout 2021. One of the most notable events was a presentation that I gave to a meeting of the Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM) entitled, "Climate to COVID, Local to Global: the Biopsychosocial Ecology of Syndemic Prevention and Response." My presentation was entitled "The global syndemic of obesity, undernutrition, and climate change, and its related syndemic of COVID-19, obesity and food insecurity." Dr. Michael Diefenbach, then president of the SBM, subsequently convened a series of working groups to explore the role that the SBM should play in addressing climate change. I co-chaired the advocacy working group, which recommended a number of steps that SBM could take to generate the political will necessary to change individual and policy initiatives to mitigate climate change, capitalizing on SBM's deep understanding of behavior and behavior change. A manuscript resulting from this work entitled "Advocacy to Support Climate and Health Policies: Recommended Actions for the Society of Behavioral Medicine" is now in press at the journal of Translational and Behavioral Medicine.

Although the pandemic and personnel shifts changed the way we operated in 2021, the year was marked with a number of successes, which you will see highlighted throughout this report. With the Center for Community Resilience now operating independently and two new key staff hires, **the Redstone Center is well-poised for 2022 to be among our busiest and most productive years to date.** In the first quarter of this year alone, I have testified before the DC Council eight times in support of legislation that will advance our public health policy goals, Rachel has been nominated by the Mayor to serve on the DC Food Policy Council, and our office was able to spur media attention on the inequitable quality and nutritional standards of meals served across the District. I am eager to see what the next year will bring, but, for now, I am proud to share our recent progress in this report.

As always, I am incredibly honored for the opportunity to lead the work of the Redstone Center, and grateful for Mr. Redstone's gift that established the center and provides ongoing support for our activities.

Sincerely,



William H. Dietz

Chair and Director, Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness





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## STRATEGIC OVERVIEW AND LOOKING FORWARD

The Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness at the **George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health** was established in 2014. The center is led by Chair and Director, William H. Dietz, MD, PhD, who served as director of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for nearly 16 years. The Redstone Center focuses on research and solutions to make Washington, D.C. the healthiest capital in the world, characterized by optimal well-being for all residents, regardless of race, gender, class, ability, or place of residence. The Center is housed within the only school of public health in the nation's capital, which provides **a unique opportunity to influence local, national, and global policy**, fostering innovation that can be replicated in other places.

The activities of the Redstone Center are driven by a growing team with exceptional expertise in policy, research, and practice. Staff for the Redstone Center include Christine Gallagher, Senior Center Administrator; Rachel Clark, Policy Director; and Kelly Whittier, Senior Director of Communications, Outreach, and Engagement. The students working with us include Dana Moskowitz, policy research assistant; Madelyn Bedard, communications assistant; and Marjanna Smith, research assistant for the STOP Obesity Alliance.

The Redstone Center recognizes that **obesity has a profound impact on the public's health**. It affects every system in the body, and those with the disease experience a range of health and social consequences. Pervasive stigma and bias associated with obesity exacts a high psychological toll and also impairs interactions with clinicians that can produce poor health outcomes. In 2008, Medicare and Medicaid costs of obesity approximated \$150 billion annually – roughly 10 percent of the national health care budget. Because the prevalence of obesity has increased substantially since then, the costs are likely considerably higher. Furthermore, these costs do not account for related absenteeism and impaired work performance.

To fulfill our mission, the Redstone Center is committed to becoming an anti-racist organization. In 2020, the Redstone Center developed an action agenda as a starting point to guide our work toward this goal. **We cannot ensure the health and wellbeing of all until white supremacy and its supporting racist structures are dismantled and equity is achieved for all people** and across all sectors, including health, criminal justice, economic opportunity, and education.

## Looking Forward

The Redstone Center remains committed to the prevention and treatment of obesity, improving nutrition and physical activity, and other interventions to address health disparities and inequities. Consistent with our five-year plan, our work includes:

- Engagement with policymakers and **fostering collaboration** with organizations working to improve health outcomes tied to climate change, medical care/practices, and the food system;
- Continued research and innovation in obesity prevention, care of people with obesity, promotion of coverage for evidence-based treatment, and the identification and dissemination of practices that **eliminate stigma**;
- Building the Center's **communications strategy** to promote Redstone's brand, engaging the press, and reaching the community through social media platforms;
- **Engagement with policymakers** and stakeholders to improve public health outcomes in our nation's capital;
- Continuing to **grow the Redstone Center's capacity** to identify and implement strategies to address health disparities, equity, obesity care and treatment, and public health priorities locally, nationally, and globally; and
- Implementing the Redstone Center's **anti-racist action agenda** into our research, policy work, and office practices.



# ACTIVITIES

## Milken Institute School of Public Health Activities

### Pilot Studies

To support the development of future leaders, the Redstone Center funds pilot studies for faculty and predoctoral candidates working in nutrition, physical activity, obesity, and chronic disease disparities within the D.C. metropolitan area. Since its inception, the Redstone Center has funded pilot studies proposed by junior faculty to develop the preliminary data necessary to lead to an NIH, NSF, AHA or other grant. The last pilot studies were funded in 2020, and because of the pandemic needed to be extended. These are listed below. No pilot studies were funded in 2021.

**Uriyoán Colón-Ramos**, Associate Professor, Global Health & Exercise and Nutrition Science, "*Working with Latino-serving Independent Restaurants to Replace Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Consumption with Water in the Greater D.C. Metro Area: A pilot test.*" The Redstone Center supported the Water UP@Home pilot study, the Water Up@Restaurants pilot study, and three additional follow-up grants: R21 NIDDK DK119749, funded 2018-2022; RWJF Healthy Eating Research, funded April 2021-March 2023; and the R01 FRESH TRIAL grant submitted to NCI, February 2022.

- Publications:

- i. McCarley S, López-Ríos M, Burgos Gil R, et al. Using a Community-Based Participatory Mixed Methods Research Approach to Develop, Evaluate, and Refine a Nutrition Intervention to Replace Sugary Drinks with Filtered Tap Water among Predominantly Central-American Immigrant Families with Infants and Toddlers: The Water Up @Home Pilot Evaluation Study. *Nutrients*. 2021;13(9):2942. Published 2021 Aug 25. doi:10.3390/nu13092942
- ii. Poirier L, Flores L, Rivera I, et al. Feasibility of collaborating with independent Latino-owned restaurants to increase sales of a healthy combo meal. *J Public Health Res*. 2021;11(2):2659. Published 2021 Nov 29. doi:10.4081/jphr.2021.2659

**Karina R. Lora**, Teaching/Research Assistant Professor, Exercise and Nutrition Science, "*Creating a Culturally Appropriate Nutrition and Physical Activity Weight-Loss Behavioral Intervention for Central-American Men Living in D.C.*" The second round of data collection was delayed by maternity leave and the COVID-19 lockdown but is now underway.

**Sameera A. Talegawkar**, Associate Professor, Exercise and Nutrition Science, "*Cumulative Biological Stress Among South Asian Immigrants Living in the United States.*" Application for R21 submitted but not reviewed and will not be resubmitted because of questions about the cohort that cannot be addressed.

- Publication: Talegawker SA, Jin Y, Kandula NR, Kanaya AM. Associations between cumulative biological risk and subclinical atherosclerosis in middle- and older-aged South Asian immigrants in the US. 2021:8e202104

**Cindy Liu**, Associate Professor, Environmental and Occupational Health, and of Microbiology, Immunology, and Tropical Medicine, "*Breastfeeding and the nasal and gut microbiome in African American Infants.*" In 2018, the Redstone Center funded this collaborative study between Dr. Liu and Amira Roess. The study was not completed before Dr. Roess moved to Michigan University, and the samples remained unanalyzed. The Redstone Center provided an additional allocation to complete the analyses.

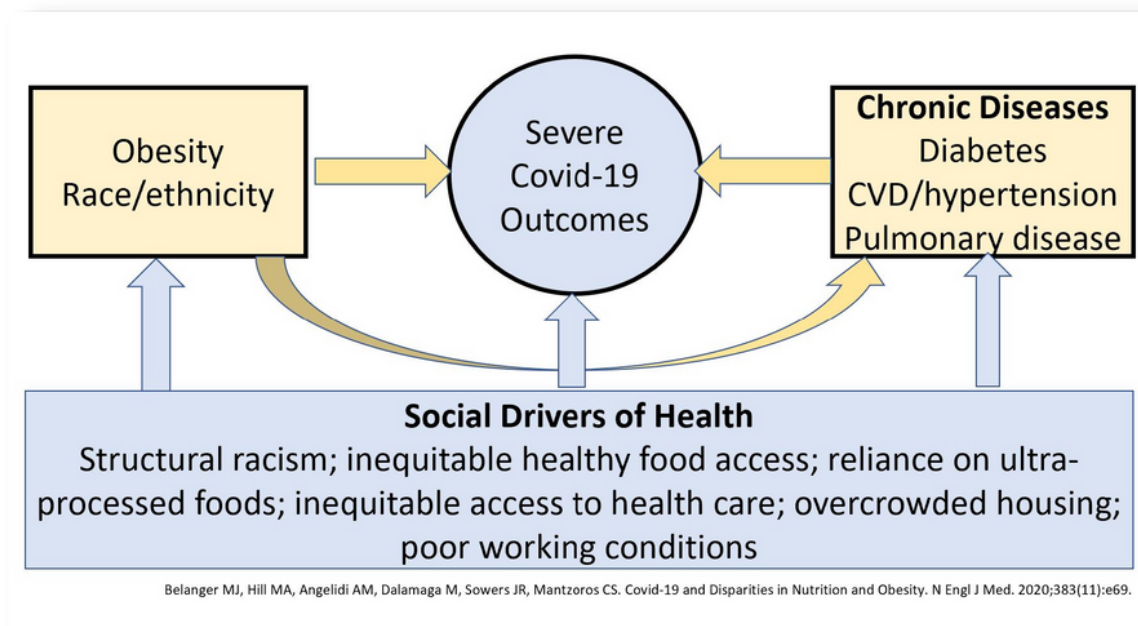
## Redstone Center Doctoral Support Grants

In 2020, the IAG suggested that the Redstone Center fund outstanding doctoral candidates to attract and retain promising students in areas that reflect the priorities of the Center. Doctoral candidate funding began in 2020, and the candidates enrolled to date are described below:

### **Sydney Pryor, 2020-2023:** Health Policy Doctoral candidate

Dr. Dietz began working with Sydney when she came to the Milken Institute School of Public Health to start her doctoral program in Health Policy and Management in the Fall of 2020. During the last year, they co-authored twin papers in *Current Obesity Reports* building on the Lancet Commission's Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition, and Climate Change. The second paper introduced and provided evidence for a new Syndemic of COVID-19, Obesity, and Food Insecurity, highlighting the inequitable impact of these concurrent pandemics on the most vulnerable populations in the U.S., including the food system workforce. The figure below demonstrates the effect of obesity on adverse COVID-19 outcomes, and the drivers that contribute to them. The paper recommends systems-level strategies to combat these "twin syndemics," which can strengthen sustainable local and regional food and agricultural systems to improve human and planetary health.

Systems and solution-oriented approaches to policy is the likely trajectory for Sydney's dissertation. This approach employs a System Dynamics Model to understand how our industrialized food system and food policy impact the nexus of human and environmental health in the U.S.. The promise of this approach is its potential to allow policymakers to understand and evaluate the impact of policy trade-offs on human and planetary health. Sydney also provides support for a number of local and national policy efforts with the Redstone Center, including collaborating with working groups, drafting testimony, developing materials for advocacy efforts, and other activities related to nutrition and diet-related disease, food security, and climate change. She is a graduate student affiliate of GW's Climate and Health Institute.



**Christie St. Pierre, 2021-2024:** Exercise Physiology and Applied Nutrition Doctoral candidate

Christie St. Pierre recently completed her first year in the Exercise Physiology and Applied Nutrition PhD program with a focus on applied nutrition and nutrition policy. She is a Registered Dietitian and holds an MPH in Public Health Nutrition from GWU. Her research areas of interest include food systems, the availability and affordability of healthy food in low-income communities, and relationships between food security, dietary quality, nutrition status, and health outcomes. Through her research, she seeks to contribute to the design of policy, systems, and environment interventions that create incentive structures for robust local and regional food systems, increase the availability and affordability of healthy foods, particularly in historically underserved communities, and that ultimately lead to improved diet quality and better health outcomes in these communities. She is the lead author of a systematic review commissioned by Healthy Eating Research examining associations between food insecurity and childhood obesity, currently in press with *Pediatrics*. Through her work on the Creating Opportunities for Adolescents through Coaching, Healthy Eating, and Sports (COACHES) project, she has published findings highlighting youth-reported food insecurity and dietary intake during the COVID-19 pandemic and a systematic review identifying the most effective models and practices for train-the-trainer approaches to youth nutrition education.

She is currently conducting a qualitative study with current and former participants in school-based wellness programs to better understand the influence of these programs on their nutrition behaviors, agency in navigating their food environment, and translation of the program to their home environment. Christie was raised on a family farm in California and this summer will cultivate the agricultural side of her food systems interest as a researcher at the USDA Agriculture Research Service Food Systems Research Unit in Burlington, Vermont.

**Upcoming - Marian Fagundes Grilo, 2022-2025:** Exercise and Nutrition Sciences Doctoral candidate





## WASHINGTON, D.C.

Our efforts to make the District of Columbia the healthiest capital in the world through nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention and treatment have continued. However, unless we address the existing social, racial, and health inequities faced by District residents, our goal of becoming the world's healthiest capital will not be achieved. As the D.C. Department of Health noted in its 2018 Health Equity Report, there are "significant differences across neighborhoods that align with disparities in health outcomes, including life expectancy, with differences of 21 years between the two ends of the spectrum." **More than half of all adults living in Washington, D.C., are overweight or have obesity;** rates climb to over 72 percent east of the river in Wards 7 and 8. In addition, over half the residents in Wards 7 and 8 may develop diabetes and its potential complications of blindness, kidney failure, and lower-leg amputation.

**The Redstone Center continues to be a sought-after resource among local advocates and elected officials.** Center staff and Milken Institute SPH faculty appeared before the D.C. City Council in support of the city's fiscal year 2021 budget priorities to improve nutrition, increase physical activity, and further D.C. government efforts to build community resilience by addressing adverse childhood experiences in the context of adverse community environments. The Redstone Center also actively engaged the Council in the spring of 2021 in support of the Nutrition Equity Amendment Act, which would impose an excise tax of 1.5 cents per ounce on the distribution of sugary drinks. The excise tax, which has been demonstrated in other jurisdictions to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks, was one of several public health-focused initiatives outlined in the Nutrition Equity Amendment Act. The legislation would also establish nutritional standards for meals served in the District's shelter system, encourage food recovery and food donations, and designate all revenue collected by the new tax to enhance various public health and nutrition programs.

**Dr. Dietz provided testimony on the influence of sugary drink consumption on obesity and other harmful diseases,** and highlighted the adverse health effects and disease burden disproportionately faced by Black residents in Wards 7 and 8. Unfortunately, as is the case in other jurisdictions where such excise taxes are pursued, local legislators were unable to overcome the pressures of the powerful industry interests, and the legislation was withdrawn only one month after its hearing. Despite this temporary setback, the Redstone Center continues to work and organize with the grassroots health coalition Together for DC Health on strategies to reduce sugary drink consumption in the District.

In 2021, the Redstone Center also supported the passage of the Green Food Purchasing Amendment Act, which requires the District's Department of Energy & Environment (DOEE) to create a methodology to assess the estimated greenhouse gas emissions that result from the production, transportation, and disposal of foods and beverages. After this assessment is completed, DOEE will provide purchasing guidance to District agencies on how to mitigate these emissions. The law established a target emissions reduction goal of 25% by 2030. Since its passage, **the Redstone Center's Policy Director Rachel Clark has provided DOEE with technical assistance** in establishing these metrics and aims to support the agency through the law's full implementation.

The Redstone Center also joined the Good Food Purchasing Program Coalition in the fall of 2021, which specifically focuses on the successful adoption of sustainable food procurement practices within the DC Public School System. The Redstone Center is represented on the Advocate Subcommittee and the Engage Subcommittee as part of this ongoing work.

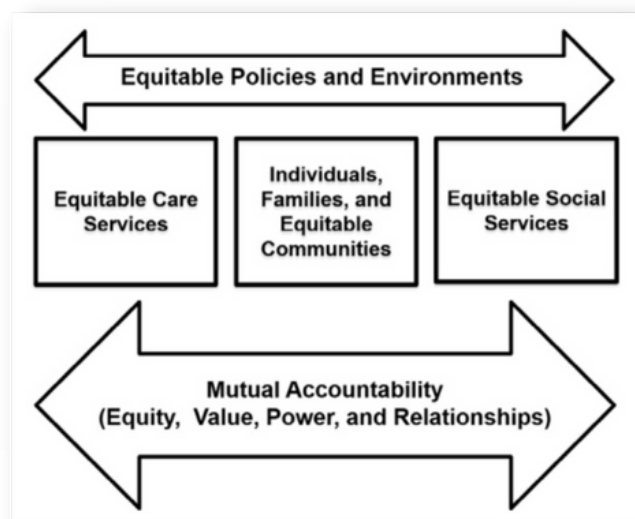
An additional area of collaboration with the local government has been **our work with the DC Food Policy Council to bring a Central Food Processing Facility (CFPF) to the District**. An assessment conducted by the DC Office of Planning and the DC Food Policy Council found that a CFPF would result in several benefits to the District, including: improving the nutritional quality of institutional foods; strengthening the local food supply chain; fortifying the District's emergency food preparedness response; supporting the local food economy; and reducing the carbon footprint of the District's food system. In a paper published this spring, **Dr. Dietz and Health Policy Doctoral candidate Sydney Pryor also identified a CFPF as one of the solutions to mitigate the syndemic of obesity, undernutrition, and climate change**. The Redstone Center's Policy Director collaborated with the DC Food Policy Council in publishing a policy brief on the benefits of a CFPF and has continued to work closely with local food/nutrition advocates to make the CFPF a budgetary priority among local legislators. A CFPF will bring the District closer toward realizing a robust regional food system, and the Redstone Center intends to pursue this solution over the next several years.

## NATIONAL

After leaving the CDC in 2012, Dr. Dietz became a consultant to the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine (NAM)) where he helped to start the **Roundtable on Obesity Solutions** (RT), and has continued as a consultant to the RT's staff and leadership. The RT consists of over 40 members representing foundations, industry, NGOs, government, and academics. The RT meets four times a year and remains the most visible and influential locus for a wide range of issues related to the prevention and management of obesity. The publications, workshops and webinars conducted by the RT are among the most downloaded and cited products of the NAM.

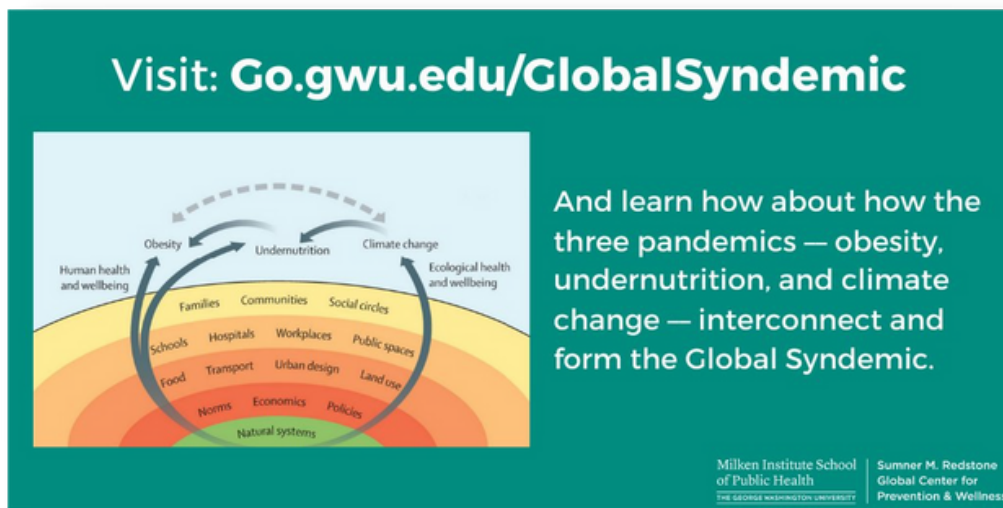
Dr. Dietz is also a member of the Integrated Clinical and Social Systems for the Prevention and Treatment of Obesity Innovation Collaborative (ICSSPMO) of the RT. **In 2021, he was the first author on a NAM perspective describing "Lessons learned for obesity prevention and care from five integrated programs."**

The figure pictured to the right is an adaptation and simplification of the original ICSSPMO illustration and demonstrates how equity permeates the framework.



## GLOBAL

Obesity is the disease of the decade, and climate change is the threat of the century. The Lancet Commission on Obesity's report published in *The Lancet* in 2019, the *Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change*, addresses the three most important pandemics that threaten the health of people and the planet. The report, ranked as one of the top 100 academic papers for 2019, is the first to definitively place and **critically examine obesity in a wider context** of the global interactions of the pandemics of obesity, undernutrition, and climate change. Efforts to reduce beef consumption, increase plant-based foods, and increase physical activity through use of public transportation, walking, and biking offer **common solutions to both obesity and climate change**. The resultant decrease in greenhouse gases improves crop yields and their micronutrient content, which reduce food insecurity and undernutrition.



The Redstone Center is developing plans to leverage communications and policy strategies that bridge current silos and address common drivers of the syndemic in the U.S. through double- and triple-duty actions.

**Mitigating the U.S. contributions to climate change through this unique, multi-sector lens will have a major impact domestically and globally while also reducing obesity and undernutrition.** Strategies in the U.S. include initial efforts to develop sustainable dietary guidelines, augment city efforts to address climate change through their procurement policies and efforts to reduce food waste, and the development of a communication strategy to mobilize policy makers and public opinion.

Activities in the past year include Dr. Dietz's plenary address entitled "The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change in the Era of Covid-19" at a Symposium on Climate Change, Nutrition and Health: Global Challenges and Potential Solutions at Heidelberg University.

In 2021, **Dr. Dietz became the chair of a World Health Organization committee** on "Management of infants and children at high risk (excessive adiposity) and children with obesity for improved health, functioning and reduced disability: a primary health care approach". This activity will build on new guidelines being developed in Canada and the U.S.

## STOP OBESITY ALLIANCE

A cornerstone of the Redstone Center's work is to develop and promote innovative strategies that can prevent excess weight gain, poor nutrition, and chronic disease and to **improve care and treatment for those living with obesity**. To carry out this mission, the Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity Alliance (STOP), created at GW in 2007, joined the Redstone Center in 2014.

Over 60 members of the STOP Obesity Alliance include health professionals, researchers, policymakers, employers, health insurers, patient advocates, and quality-of-care organizations. **Essential to STOP's success is its active and diverse coalition**, with collaborative member relationships critical to achieving shared goals and capitalizing on partnership opportunities. STOP's activities drive innovative and practical strategies that combat obesity, including **tools for primary care physicians and efforts to reduce stigma and bias**. STOP's work is currently supported by Novo Nordisk, Pfizer, Eli Lilly, WW (formerly Weight Watchers), Currax, and voluntary membership fees.

STOP develops new resources on consequential topics in obesity prevention and management, and distills them into data-driven infographics and fact sheets designed for public consumption. These resources include: the Why Weight Guide, theWeigh In Guide, Provider Competencies for the Prevention and Management of Obesity, an analysis of Obesity Coverage in Medicaid and State Employee Health Plans and a standard of care for the treatment of adult obesity. In 2021, STOP's newest resource for providers, the "Weight Can't Wait: A Guide to Discussing Obesity and Organizing Treatment in the Primary Care Setting," had over **5,000 clicks** by people visiting the website.

**STOP**  
STRATEGIES TO  
OVERCOME & PREVENT **OBESITY**  
**ALLIANCE**



## Understanding Obesity

Although obesity is highly prevalent and widely recognized, misconceptions abound and can harm those living with the disease. **To address misinformation related to obesity, we created a messaging framework entitled Understanding Obesity.** The framework features accessible and unbiased information about obesity, including information about the harms of weight bias, and guidance on destigmatizing the language used to discuss obesity. Our goal with the development of the guide is to change the narrative around obesity to have a positive impact on those living with the disease.

Key stakeholders including researchers, healthcare providers, advocates, and people with obesity provided input to the guide and highlighted overarching themes to be embedded throughout the report:

- Obesity is a disease that is influenced by biology and genetics
- Obesity should not be framed as an individual choice or a “lifestyle”
- Prevention and care are synergistic
- Bias and stigma interfere with prevention and care

After releasing this guide in 2021, it has become STOP's most engaged resource:

The screenshot shows the 'Understanding Obesity' messaging framework document. It has a red header with the title and a heart icon with a plus sign. The content is organized into sections: Background, Talking About Obesity, Key Facts, and a list of topics (D-I). The 'Key Facts' section includes: A What is Obesity? (Obesity is a complex, chronic disease...), B How is Obesity Diagnosed? (Obesity is usually diagnosed by body mass index...), and C Why is Obesity Important? (Obesity increases a person's risk of chronic disease and death...). The list of topics includes: D How Prevalent is Obesity? (Obesity is very common...), E Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity (Abdominal obesity is one component of metabolic syndrome...), F Causes (Obesity is influenced by behavioral, economic, environmental, and genetic factors...), G Common Comorbidities (Obesity can affect many systems in the body...), H Obesity Management and Treatment (There are many treatments that can help a person manage obesity...), and I Personal Impact of Obesity (People with obesity are often exposed to damaging weight-related stigma and discrimination...). At the bottom, there are social media links and the STOP Obesity Alliance logo.

**Understanding Obesity**

**Background**

Obesity is a complex chronic disease that affects over 42% of adults and 19% of 2-19 year old youth in the United States. Although explicit bias against those with obesity may be decreasing in the United States, it remains one of the most robust prejudices that Americans hold. Accurate communication about obesity is essential to reduce weight bias and center obesity as a major public health priority. Ideally, clearing up misconceptions about the disease and informing providers, media, and the public about obesity will lead to an increase in the diagnosis and treatment of obesity and a decrease in the stigmatization of the disease.

**Talking About Obesity**

The language we use to describe obesity emphasizes that obesity is a disease, like cancer or diabetes. Therefore, we talk about people **with** obesity in the same way that we talk about people **with** cancer; we do not talk about a cancer person, or a diabetic person. The term "an obese person" is a label that perpetuates stigmatization and its adverse effects on physical and mental health. For example, we say, "She has obesity," not "She is obese."

**Key Facts**

**A What is Obesity?**  
Obesity is a complex, chronic disease characterized by an excessive accumulation of body fat that impairs health.

**B How is Obesity Diagnosed?**  
Obesity is usually diagnosed by body mass index, but BMI has its limitations; providers may also measure waist circumference or waist-to-hip ratios.

**C Why is Obesity Important?**  
Obesity increases a person's risk of chronic disease and death; minority populations are disproportionately affected.

**D How Prevalent is Obesity?**  
Obesity is very common; rates have risen in the past several decades and they are expected to continue to rise.

**E Metabolic Syndrome and Obesity**  
Abdominal obesity is one component of metabolic syndrome, which refers to a group of risk factors that raise a person's risk of heart disease, stroke, and other illnesses.

**F Causes**  
Obesity is influenced by behavioral, economic, environmental, and genetic factors, as well as other factors that scientists have yet to fully discover.

**G Common Comorbidities**  
Obesity can affect many systems in the body and may lead to other chronic diseases, mental illness, sleep problems, or joint pain.

**H Obesity Management and Treatment**  
There are many treatments that can help a person manage obesity, including lifestyle modifications, behavioral modification, antiobesity medications, and bariatric surgery.

**I Personal Impact of Obesity**  
People with obesity are often exposed to damaging weight-related stigma and discrimination which can be harmful to emotional and physical health.

Connect with us: @STOPobesity | @RedstoneQWSPH  
obesity@gwu.edu  
stop.publichealth.gwu.edu

**STOP OBESITY ALLIANCE**



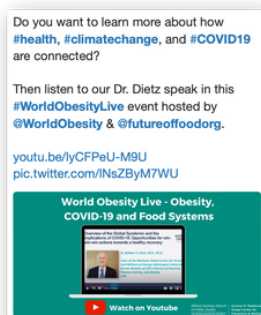
## Obesity Coverage Map 2020–2021



## APPENDIX I: SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, the Redstone Center strategically boosted social media engagement by posting content to coincide with nationally recognized public health initiatives. By linking the Redstone Center's work and research with special events, such as Obesity Care Week, **the Redstone Center's reach was amplified beyond its typical audience** and following.

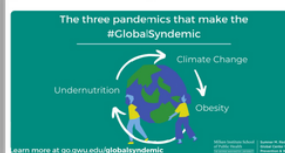
Below is a selection of highlights from 2021:



NEW! @RedstoneGWSPH's first blog post, by our Policy Director Rachel Clark, is live! This 3-part series will discuss the need for double-duty policy solutions to mitigate #ClimateChange and improve #PublicHealth in the District. Read it HERE: [go.gwu.edu/climateandhealth](https://go.gwu.edu/climateandhealth)... [pic.twitter.com/OY8cDUJqdt](https://pic.twitter.com/OY8cDUJqdt)



Want to learn more about #health and #climatechange? Then read @theLancet #GlobalSyndemic report on the overlapping pandemics of #obesity, #climatechange, and #undernutrition. [pic.twitter.com/RBM9pET8c0](https://pic.twitter.com/RBM9pET8c0)

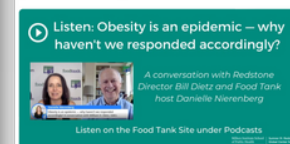


Racism is a public health crisis.

We stand with our colleagues, students and the AAPI community in the face of on-going attacks and hate crimes fueled by white supremacist rhetoric and bigoted lies. [pic.twitter.com/G07IXyGnhq](https://pic.twitter.com/G07IXyGnhq)

**Racism is a public health crisis.**  
**We stand with the AAPI community in the face of on-going attacks and hate crimes fueled by white supremacist rhetoric and bigoted lies.**

Want to learn more about global food systems? Then listen to this episode of @FoodTank's #FoodTalk podcast in which Dr. Dietz joins host @DaniNierenberg. Listen at: [podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/188...](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/188...) [twitter.com/foodtank/status...](https://twitter.com/foodtank/status...) [pic.twitter.com/q4a6ufRslL](https://pic.twitter.com/q4a6ufRslL)



## APPENDIX II: PUBLICATIONS

### Climate Change

- Dietz WH, Pryor S. How Can We Act to Mitigate the Global Syndemic of Obesity Undernutrition and Climate Change? *Curr Obesity Reports*. 2022: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13679-021-00464-8>.
- Mendoza-Vasconez AS, McLaughlin E, Sallis JF, Maibach E, Epel E, Bennett G, Nogueira L, Thayer J, Dietz WH. Advocacy to Support Climate and Health Policies: Recommended Actions for the Society of Behavioral Medicine. *Translational Behavioral Medicine* 2022; in press

### Food insecurity

- Pryor S, Dietz WH. The COVID-19, Obesity and Food Insecurity Syndemic. *Curr Obesity Reports* 2022: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13679-021-00462-w>
- St. Pierre C, Ver Ploeg M, Dietz WH, Pryor S, Jakazi CS, Elizabeth Layman E, Noymer D, Coughtrey-Davenport T, MPH, Sackeck JM. The Relationship between Household Food Insecurity and Childhood Obesity: A Systematic Review. *Pediatrics*. In press.
- St. Pierre C, Guan W, Merrill J, Sackeck JM. Urban Youth Perspectives on Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Evidence from the COACHES Study. *Nutrients*. 2022; 14(3):455.

## Obesity

- Kopelman PG, Caterson ID, Dietz WH (eds). Clinical Obesity in Children and Adults (4th edition). London, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, 2021.
- Gallagher C, Dietz WH. Weight Can't Wait: A Guide to Discussing Obesity and Organizing Treatment in the Primary Care Setting. Obesity 2021; 29:821-24.
- Dietz WH. What can regional estimates of the prevalence of obesity tell us about what risk factors we should target? Commentary. Obesity 2021; 29:1992-1993.
- Dietz WH, Fassbender JE, Levi J, Pronk NP, Yanofski SZ, Fukuzawa DD. Lessons Learned for Obesity Prevention and Care from Five Integrated Programs. National Academy of Medicine Perspectives; Expert Voices in Health & Health Care. November 22, 2021.
- Dietz WH. Letter to the editor: "Relapse" is the word we should use to describe weight regain after weight loss. Letter to the editor. Obesity 2021; 29:1977.
- Dietz WH. Better Diet Quality in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act and WIC Package Reduced Childhood Obesity. Pediatrics 2021(3); DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2020-032375>.
- Kaidbey JH, Ferguson K, Halberg SE, Racke C, Visek AJ, Gearhardt AN, Juliano LM, Dietz WH, Satchek J, Sylvestsky AC. Stop the pop: A mixed-methods study examining children's physical and emotional responses during three days of sugary drink cessation. Nutrients 2022; 14: 1328. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu1407132>
- McCarley S, López-Ríos M, Burgos Gil R, et al. Using a Community-Based Participatory Mixed Methods Research Approach to Develop, Evaluate, and Refine a Nutrition Intervention to Replace Sugary Drinks with Filtered Tap Water among Predominantly Central-American Immigrant Families with Infants and Toddlers: The Water Up @Home Pilot Evaluation Study. Nutrients. 2021;13(9):2942. Published 2021 Aug 25. doi:10.3390/nu13092942
- Poirier L, Flores L, Rivera I, et al. Feasibility of collaborating with independent Latino-owned restaurants to increase sales of a healthy combo meal. J Public Health Res. 2021;11(2):2659. Published 2021 Nov 29. doi:10.4081/jphr.2021.2659
- Gallagher C, Hughes S, Dietz WH. Coverage for Obesity Prevention and Treatment: Analysis of State Employee Health Programs and Utilization of Benefits. Obesity. In press

## Inactivity

- Economos CD, Dietz WH, Tullie K, Sallis JF. Physical activity may mitigate COVID-19 infections in people with obesity: A call to action. Obesity 2021; 29:1987-1989.
- Chen Z, Kakoli, Fulton JE, Carlson S, Wang G, Walsh CM, Haddix AC, Dietz WH. Medical Expenditures for Cardiovascular Diseases Associated with Physical Inactivity among US Adults: Evidence from the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey 2012-2018. Submitted

## Center for Community Resilience

- Ellis W, Chen D, Dietz WH. Community Resilience: A Dynamic Model for Public Health 3.0. J Pub Health Mngmnt Practice. 2022; 28:S18-26.

## Chapters

- Dietz WH. Training and Medical Systems for Obesity Care. In Kopelman PG, ID Caterson ID, Dietz WH (eds). Clinical Obesity in Children and Adults (4th edition). London, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, in press 2021.
- Dietz WH, Baur LA. The Prevention of Childhood Obesity. In Kopelman PG, ID Caterson ID, Dietz WH (eds). Clinical Obesity in Children and Adults (4th edition). London, Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, in press 2021.
- Dietz WH, Gallagher C, Ryan DH. Best practices: Obesity and primary care providers. Handbook of Obesity Volume II: Clinical Applications. P. Katzmarzyk editor. In press.

## APPENDIX III: 2021-2022 TESTIMONY & PUBLIC COMMENTS

Due to the lockdown and absence of personnel, the Redstone Center's engagement in testifying before the D.C. Council was limited in 2021. **Dr. Dietz provided testimony in support of the Nutrition Equity Amendment**, B24-0166, before the Committee on Human Services on May 19, 2021.

### 2022 testimony to date is included below:

- 1/10/22: Testimony before the Committees on Business & Economic Development, Judiciary & Public Safety, and Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, on Climate Resiliency Planning in the District
- 1/25/22: Testimony before the Committee on Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, Performance Oversight Hearing on the Department of Energy & the Environment
- 1/25/22: Testimony before the Committee on Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, B24-267, the Climate Commitment Act of 2021; B24-420, the Clean Energy DC Building Code Amendment Act of 2021
- 2/23/22: Testimony before the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, B24-429, the Metro for DC Amendment Act of 2021

- 3/2/22: Testimony before the Committee of the Whole, Council of the District of Columbia, Performance Oversight Hearing on DC Public Schools
- 3/14/22: Testimony before the Committee on Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, B24-566, the Walk Without Worry Amendment Act of 2021
- 4/28/22: Testimony before the Committee on Human Services, Council of the District of Columbia, B24-0600, the Give SNAP A Raise Amendment Act of 2022
- 5/5/22: Testimony before the Committee on Transportation & the Environment, Council of the District of Columbia, B24-0673, the Safer Intersections Amendment Act of 2022

## APPENDIX IV: 2021-2022 PRESENTATION HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. William H. Dietz, Chair

### Presentations

- 2/15/22: Youth Voices for Climate Health. Workshop on Diet and Food Systems for Health Climate and Planet. Panelist
- 4/13/21: Society of Behavioral Medicine. Climate to COVID, Local to Global: the Biopsychosocial Ecology of Syndemic Prevention and Response. "The global syndemic of obesity undernutrition and climate change and its related syndemic of COVID-19, obesity and food insecurity." Panelist
- 4/30/21: Cancer Center Retreat: Redstone's Policy Work in DC
- 5/5/21: Symposium on Climate Change, Nutrition and Health: Global Challenges and Potential Solutions. Heidelberg University. Keynote: "The Global Syndemic of Obesity, Undernutrition and Climate Change in the Era of Covid-19"
- 5/22/2021: American Academy of Physician Assistants: "Obesity Advocacy, Policy and Leadership"
- 5/24/2021: Columbia University Anti-Racist Approaches to Reducing Childhood Obesity Speaker Series. "How do we address the racial/ethnic disparities on childhood obesity?"
- 7/14/2021: Harvard University TH Chan School of Public Health CHOICES project. "Investing in prevention: How a clinical strategy in Denver could improve health and address health equity." Panel moderator
- 9/19/2021: Cleveland Clinic CME on Obesity and Diabetes. "Progress in Policies."
- 10/21/2021: Southby course for Military Health Care Executives. "From obesity to health"
- 10/28/2021: Roundtable on Obesity Solutions, National Academy of Medicine. "Advances and Innovation Systems and Obesity: Advances and Innovations for Equitable Health and Well-Being." Panel member

## Service

- 4/28-29/2021: Chair: WHO Management of infants and children at high risk (excessive adiposity) and children with obesity for improved health, functioning and reduced disability: a primary health care approach
- 9/22-23/2021: Chair: WHO Management of infants and children at high risk (excessive adiposity) and children with obesity for improved health, functioning and reduced disability: a primary health care approach
- 7/20/2021: Partnership for a Healthier America. Board of Directors meeting
- 10/19/2021: Partnership for a Healthier America. Board of Directors meeting
- 10/19/2021. CHOICES Advisory Committee Meeting (member)
- 11/30/2021: JPB Foundation Scientific Advisory Board (member)

## Teaching

- 4/14/2021: Lecture in SPH Course: Designing Healthy Communities. "The DC Experience"
- 4/28/2021: Lecture to GWU medical students. "The Foundations of Obesity"
- 12/1/2021: GWU second year medical students. Panel member on Climate Change and Health

## Highlighted Press

- Wen, Leana S. "The deadly covid-19 pandemic is obscuring another — obesity." Editorial. The Washington Post, 11 April 2021.

## Christine Gallagher, Senior Center Administrator

## Presentations

- 9/17/2021: MidAtlantic Business Group on Health Forum. Evidence Based Obesity Benefits. Panelist
- 11/8/2021: National Alliance for Health Care Purchasers. Workshop on Mental Health and Obesity. Panelist
- 11/5/2021: The Obesity Society. Poster presentation on findings from our review of State Employee Health Plan (SEHP) coverage of obesity treatment benefits for 2020/2021.

## APPENDIX V: COMMITTEE & BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

### Dr. Bill Dietz, Chair

- Advisory Board, Planetary Health Alliance
- Advisory Board, Global Alliance for the Future of Food
- Board of Directors, Partnership for a Healthier America
- Advisory Board, American Academy of Pediatrics Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight
- Chair (term completed in 2021), Healthy Schools Act Subcommittee on Physical Activity in Youth. Office of the State Superintendent of Schools, Washington, D.C.
- Commissioner (term completed in 2021), Healthy Schools Act Commission, Washington, D.C.
- Member and Consultant, National Academy of Medicine and NAM Roundtable on Obesity Solutions
- Advisory Board, Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost-Effectiveness Study (CHOICES), Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, MA
- Co-Chair, Michigan Organizations to Impact Obesity and Nutrition (MOTION) Coalition, Detroit, MI
- Member, National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative on Decarbonizing the US Health Sector

### STOP Obesity Alliance

- Member, Obesity Care Advocacy Network
- Founder, National Obesity Care Week



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