



**Illinois Prevention Research Center**  
Institute for Health Research and Policy  
University of Illinois at Chicago (MC 275)  
1747 West Roosevelt Street, Room 558  
Chicago, IL 60608-1264  
(312) 413-3379  
<http://uic-ihrp/iprc/>



**March 22, 2006**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Media Contact: Ofelia Sandoval 312-413-3379**

### **Illinois Prevention Research Center Begins Pilot Study**

*Making the Connection: Healthy Living Program groups will meet at Holy Cross Hospital for lifestyle intervention classes aimed at diabetes prevention.*

**N  
E  
W  
S  
R  
E  
L  
E  
A  
S  
E**

The Illinois Prevention Research Center (IPRC) announces the start of a lifestyle intervention pilot program in southwest Chicago. Known as Making the Connection or ¡Conéctate!, the research study is focused on the prevention of diabetes in the African American and Hispanic communities – among populations at high risk of developing the disease. The 16-week trial program began in January.

“Starting pilot groups marks a successful first year for Making the Connection,” said Laurie Ruggiero, principal investigator and director of research for the study. “These pilot groups will shape the development of the full study, scheduled to begin sometime next year,” she said.

Pilot groups include African American and Hispanic participants from Chicago Lawn, West Lawn and Gage Park, where residents have identified diabetes to be a primary health concern. Twenty participants were recruited at schools, churches, and community centers in these areas. Enrollment for the pilot program is now closed.

“The pilot program aims to teach residents how to lose weight by eating healthy and increasing physical activity, to help lower the risk of developing diabetes,” Ruggiero said. “Over the last year, three African American and Hispanic community members have been trained as coaches to conduct weekly workshops and all are excited to share the program.”

Making the Connection: Healthy Living Program is an adaptation of the national clinical study, Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP). Making the Connection adapts the intensive-lifestyle intervention program portion of the DPP for use in the community. The intervention teaches people how to prevent overweight and obesity, known risk factors for developing type 2 diabetes. Making the Connection coaches conduct weekly

**-more-**

workshops on knowing the risks for developing diabetes, learning to make good food choices and developing healthy physical fitness habits. The workshops are held at Holy Cross Hospital, 2701 W. 68<sup>th</sup> St.

The pilot will serve as a study group to evaluate the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary impact of the intervention as currently planned.

As a community-based diabetes research initiative, Making the Connection aims to reach community residents through connecting with community partners. Community partnerships in Southwest Chicago have built the support needed to run the pilot program. The program works closely with a community advisory board to develop partnerships with local community organizations, including the Latino Organization of the Southwest. Partnerships also include local health agencies, such as Holy Cross Hospital, who are helping to facilitate the research program.

Making The Connection: Healthy Living Program is the core research project of the Illinois Prevention Research Center. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the IPRC conducts research, translates research into practice and measures the real-world effectiveness and dissemination of health promotion and disease prevention interventions.

###