

About the Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity

The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity is a distinguished multi-disciplinary policy research center dedicated to providing high-level expertise and guidance on obesity prevention and food related policy. Recently ranked as one of the most effective organizations among all U.S. nonprofits working on nutrition policy, the Rudd Center serves as a leader in building broad-based consensus to change diet and activity patterns, while holding industry and government agencies responsible for safeguarding public health.

Since its founding, Rudd Center researchers have significantly contributed to the understanding of our food environment, the complex forces affecting how we eat, societal stigma against individuals with obesity, and how we can address these problems to optimize public health.

Through an approach called 'strategic science', the Rudd Center's research examines strategies for developing the most innovative and effective policies to improve public health. In order to galvanize policy-level change, the Rudd Center interacts with advocates and key players in the media, industry, and government.

Rudd Center research has documented the extent and impact of unhealthy food marketing on children, how changes in federal food assistance programs impact recipients, and how stigma has immediate and long-term consequences for the emotional and physical health of individuals with obesity.

The Rudd Center has received research grants from government agencies and private foundations, including the National Institute of Health, United States Department of Agriculture, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, American Heart Association, and Horizon Foundation.

Rudd Center expertise has been sought out by national health organizations like the Institute of Medicine, FTC, CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Eating Disorders Association. Rudd Center researchers have participated in meetings with the White House Task Force on Childhood obesity and have been invited to provide expert testimony in state and senate legislative hearings on proposed obesity-related laws. Rudd Center researchers are often quoted in national and international media outlets such as the New York Times, USA Today, U.S. News & World Report, and ABC's Good Morning America.

The Rudd Center is headed by four core faculty members, Marlene Schwartz, PhD, Rudd Center Director; Rebecca Puhl, PhD, Deputy Director; Jennifer Harris, PhD, MBA, Director of Food Marketing Initiatives; and Tatiana Andreyeva, PhD, Director of Economic Initiatives.

Dr. Schwartz is an expert on how federal food programs – the National School Lunch Program, (NSLP) the Child and Adult Care Food Program, (CACFP) and the Women Infants and Children Program (WIC) – can be used to improve nutrition and change societal norms. As the leading national and international expert in the field of weight bias, Dr. Puhl's research addresses weight bias and discrimination experienced by children and adults with obesity. Dr. Harris' research focuses on marketing and public health, with an emphasis on unconscious effects of food marketing on behaviors, attitudes and

motivation in children and adults. Dr. Andreyeva's current research addresses the determinants of access to healthy foods in low-income communities and the role of economic incentives in food choices and diet, including food prices and taxation, and the federal assistance and nutrition programs (particularly WIC, SNAP, and CACFP).

In addition to the core faculty and their pivotal research staff, the Rudd Center consists of experts in advocacy, public policy, and communications.

The Rudd Center will move from Yale University to UConn in January of 2015 and will be housed at the University's new city campus in Hartford.