



# Prevention Research Center

FOR THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**Lisa Bailey Davis**

Senior Instructor, Department of Public Health Sciences  
Penn State College of Medicine

## **Evaluating the Impact of State-wide BMI Screening in Elementary Schools**

### **Presentation Abstract**

The development of school-based obesity screening and surveillance has been recommended by many public health groups but little is known about the effectiveness of this policy-based obesity prevention strategy. Although many questions remain regarding the effects of the policy on students, parents, and schools, fifteen states implement screening and/or surveillance policies. In this presentation, existing analyses of these surveillance data from Pennsylvania will be shared to describe multi-year trends and spatial clustering of the prevalence of obesity among elementary-aged children. These findings elucidate the disparate risk of obesity for children living in the most rural areas. In addition, an intervention that tests the feasibility of improving parent readiness to change through a modified BMI screening report will be discussed. Critical discussion will be encouraged regarding the utility of BMI screening if changes in parent readiness to modify family practices and home environments cannot be demonstrated.