

MSUE “I Know MI Numbers” Program Summary

## Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Education to Reduce Obesity

Obesity is a major contributor to chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer and diabetes. Michigan is currently ranked as the tenth most obese state in the United States. In 2010, 31.7 percent of adults in Michigan were considered obese, compared to 27.5 percent of U.S. adults.

The focus of Michigan State University Extension’s Obesity Reduction Target Program is to provide nutrition education programs associated with obesity prevention in Saginaw and Genesee Counties. These counties were chosen because their residents show some of the highest rates of obesity in the state. In Saginaw County alone, 34 percent of the adult population is considered obese – the highest percentage in the state. The goal was to get program participants to eat a healthier diet and increase their physical activity.



### Mission

Michigan State University helps people improve their lives through an educational process that applies knowledge to critical issues, needs and opportunities.

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Between January 1 and October 31, 2011, MSU Extension staff members reached 6,764 Saginaw and Genesee county residents with nutrition education classes aimed at obesity reduction. This number includes 4,121 adults and 2,643 youth who attended classes targeted at the improving dietary quality and physical activity of participants. Residents attended classes through such programs as the 10-week, adult-focused “I Know MI Numbers” and “Eating Right is Basic” educational series, and a 6-week healthy weight educational series aimed at young people.

Statistical analyses of surveys taken by participants both before and after a series suggest that participants who completed the program demonstrated positive changes in healthy eating habits and physical activity. For example:

- » There was a statistically significant increase in the frequency of certain healthy eating habits, including consumption of vegetables, fruit and whole grain foods.
- » There was a statistically significant decrease in the frequency of unhealthy eating habits, such as drinking calorie-containing beverages (such as regular soda, sweetened tea or sports drinks).
- » Statistical analyses suggested a modest but statistically significant decrease in sedentary behavior and a modest but statistically significant increase in physical activity.

It is important to note that these changes in healthy lifestyle behaviors translated into improved health and reduced obesity among participants. Statistical analysis of anthropometric measurements taken with participants in the “I Know MI Numbers” healthy weight series suggested a modest but statistically significant decrease in weight, waist circumference and body mass index.

MSU Extension has nutrition education programs in every county in the state aimed at increasing dietary quality, physical activity and caloric balance in children, youth and adults.