

Wellness Classes Target Obesity in Kids

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UnitedHealth Group has awarded two \$1,000 grants for programs aimed at fighting childhood obesity in the community to the New Orleans Children's Health Project, a program of the Tulane University School of Medicine and the Children's Health Fund.



Dr. Alina Olteanu leads the New Orleans Children's Health Project, which received two grants from the UnitedHealth HEROES program to fight childhood obesity.
(Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The grants are part of the UnitedHealth HEROES program, a service-learning, health literacy initiative designed to encourage young people, working through educators and youth leaders, to create and implement local hands-on programs to address the issue of childhood obesity.

The New Orleans Children's Health Project delivers comprehensive primary care and mental health services to vulnerable children and families, regardless of their ability to pay. The new grants allow the program, under the leadership of its medical director, Dr. Alina Olteanu, to continue wellness classes at four New Orleans Charter Schools where a licensed behavioral therapist and a registered dietitian work with

students on the importance of good nutrition, physical activity and behavior modification.

After completing the wellness classes, the students in the sixth through eighth grades may volunteer to act as "health buddies" to mentor younger children, Olteanu says. She also is assistant professor in pediatrics at the Tulane School of Medicine.

[Childhood obesity](#) has become our nation's fastest-growing health problem and is a serious concern for the children of New Orleans, Olteanu says. "Thanks to the support of UnitedHealth Group and Youth Service America, the grants will help us continue our work to help combat this epidemic, one child at a time, in our community."