

## **Driving Collaborative Efforts to Reduce Obesity in South Carolina- SScale Down Initiative**

### **Issue**

According to the *2017 State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America*, South Carolina is ranked as the 12<sup>th</sup> highest adult obesity rate in the nation. Nearly 33% of South Carolinians over the age of eighteen are considered to be obese. At least one out of every three children are considered overweight or obese within South Carolina. If obesity rates continue to increase as they have within the last decade, there is a very likely chance this may be the first generation of children who will have shorter lifespans than their parents due to obesity serving as one of the largest contributors to chronic diseases, including diabetes and hypertension.

### **Intervention**

Due to this large public health concern over the high rates of obesity throughout the state, the South Carolina State Obesity Action Plan was created to implement over seventy obesity-prevention related objectives in five key target settings, such as schools, communities, health care, child care, and worksites. In conjunction with the South Carolina State Obesity Action Plan, the SScale Down initiative was created to be utilized as a collective impact obesity prevention effort to guide partners and resources in completing the obesity plan's objectives.

Serving as the practicum student within SScale Down in the of Spring 2018, Sarah King was able to work alongside Shaena Rouse, SScale Down Program Manager, in managing multi-disciplinary workgroups within the SScale Down initiative through communication among partners, evaluation of South Carolina Obesity Action Plan objectives, and creation of supplementary resources to reduce rates of obesity within South Carolina.

### **Impact**

Since the start of the SScale Down initiative in 2014, 34 objectives have been completed through policy, system, and environmental changes in the five target settings throughout the state, which has impacted over 1.5 million South Carolinians. As part of the practicum experience, Sarah was able to create supplementary resources to assist in the completion of other obesity plan objectives, including the creation of a statewide Breastfeeding Inventory List with over 150 resources to encourage young mothers to engage in breastfeeding initiatives. Such resources include community support groups, Baby Friendly Hospitals®, breastfeeding centers, and certified lactation support specialists in the Upstate, Midlands, and Coastal regions of South Carolina. Sarah also served as one of the liaisons among SScale Down partners and other public health entities through both oral and written communication. Her contribution to the SScale Down Mid-point Review in partnership with the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) was a crucial component in updating South Carolinian residents on the progress that has been made within SScale Down in the reduction in obesity throughout the state.

### **Contact**

Sarah King, MPH  
Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior  
Arnold School of Public Health, University of South Carolina  
sarahbking1216@gmail.com