

Highly effective and affordable weight loss program

23 March 2015, by Ryann Nickerso

A new study from the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus shows that TOPS Club, Inc., community-based program aimed at curbing obesity in older, African-American women, is highly effective when paired with researchers who can develop safe, effective weight loss protocols.

The Center for African American Health, which offers disease prevention and management programs throughout Denver, and CU Anschutz researchers recruited [study participants](#) through its Senior Wellness Initiative (SWI). Forty-eight overweight, and obese [participants](#) ages 51 to 85 joined three newly-formed [TOPS \(Take Off Pounds Sensibly\)](#) chapters at an established SWI in Denver.

After one year, 79 percent of participants had maintained their TOPS membership. One-third of them lost a clinically significant amount of weight or about five percent or more of their initial weight. And nearly half lost between zero and 4.9 percent of their initial weight.

"Not only did we see clinically significant [weight loss](#) by one-third of the participants, we were particularly intrigued by the high retention rate of the members compared with other costly commercial programs," said Nia Mitchell, MD, MPH (pictured above), and a researcher with the Center for Women's Health Research at the University of Colorado Anschutz. "As a researcher and physician, I work to help underserved populations find affordable weight loss interventions that can help them lose weight and maintain the weight loss over the long term. The findings show that this population both responded well to the peer-led group format and regularly attended the weekly meetings with individuals who may be from their own communities; ultimately, providing them the support to change their habits and maintain a more active, healthy lifestyle."

Mitchell and her CU Anschutz colleagues noted

that one of the three TOPS chapters in the study remains active even though the study ended in Aug. 2012 – demonstrating the sustainability of the program.

More information: "Innovative Care Delivery Model to Address Obesity in Older African American Women: Senior Wellness Initiative and TOPS Collaboration for Health (SWITCH)." *J Am Geriatr Soc.* 2013 Nov; 61(11): 1971–1975. doi: 10.1111/jgs.12444

Provided by University of Colorado Denver

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