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## **YMCA of Honolulu programs target obesity, diabetes**



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The **YMCA of Honolulu** has launched several new programs targeting obesity and related chronic diseases such as diabetes.

[Erin Berhman](#), the Y's senior healthy lifestyle director, talked story with me last week and filled me in on some of their latest outreach efforts.

GlucFitClub is one of those new programs, designed for people with diabetes or those who are pre-diabetic. Berhman said they kicked it off as a pilot program this fall at two of their branches.

"We work on everything from lowering their blood sugar levels, improving blood pressure, their weight and BMI," she said. "We chose to partner with this company (GlucFitClub) because it's taking the medical field and a fitness center and bringing it together."

The diabetes program, started by California-based Gluco Fitness Center Inc., allows the Y and other fitness clubs to partner together and go beyond the fitness aspect. Participants have access to an online health portal which tracks their progress and automatically charts and graphs results.

"Each member can meet with a Y trainer every other week and do measurements," she said. "The trainer just hooks it up to a USB port and the portal logs all of their blood readings."

Another program in the pilot phase is a childhood obesity program, called N.E.W. Kids, which stands for nutrition, exercise and weight management.

It's a three phase program in partnership with Kapiolani Medical Center for Women and Children. They have a similar program that works with obese youth in an intervention-style format, Berhman said.

"After the hospital sessions there was no where else to send the kids, so they came to the Y and asked us to partner ... Now we're getting all of their graduates," she explained.

The first phase is an extension of what the kids learned with Kapiolani, then the second phase also involves the children's parents.

"The youth will break off into a physical education activity and the parents will have a nutrition lesson," she said. "They make weekly goals as a family."

The third phase is "the graduate program" from the first two phases. Those who graduate the first two phases are rewarded with a free membership to the Y for a year.

Seven local companies and foundations — the Atherton Family Foundation, **Central Pacific Bank**, the George Wilcox Trust, the **Hawaii Community Foundation**, the **HMSA Foundation**, the Nadao & Mieko Yoshinaga Foundation and the Cooke Foundation — provided grants totaling \$150,000 to launch the childhood obesity program, Berhman said.