

## **Omaha Nutrition Environment Measurement System (NEMS)**

In the spring of 2009, Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) began a *Nutrition Environmental Measures Survey (NEMS)* project in an effort to address childhood obesity and prepare for the new WIC food packages. After being trained by the Nutrition Environment Measures Survey team ([www.med.upenn.edu/NEMS](http://www.med.upenn.edu/NEMS)) a community specific tool was developed to better understand the adequacy of the retail food network and its capacity system to meet the demands of the new WIC food packages. The survey tool collected data regarding the type of food available, number of healthy choices within a food category, cost of those choices and quality of the fresh produce. The project initially identified 507 food outlets in the metropolitan area; 89 were eliminated as single food outlets as bakeries and butcher shops. Fifty trained community volunteers collected data in 385 retail food establishments in metropolitan area over a one month period. Stores with multiple healthy options in each of the five groups (fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein and grains) were mapped with a one mile radius. The results of the survey demonstrated geographic areas where the retail food system has limited ability to meet the needs of citizens and stores whose inventory had the potential improve their nutrition profile.