



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

STRONG MEDICINE FOR AMERICA

February 4, 2010

The Honorable Michelle Obama  
Office of the First Lady  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Obama:

On behalf of the more than 94,700 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I wish to express our strong support of your initiative to address childhood obesity. The AAFP is pleased to join with other health, community, business, and governmental organizations to help prevent and treat childhood obesity.

Family physicians provide care for families in community settings from the urban core and their suburbs, to small towns and rural areas. We recognize the health threat that childhood and adult obesity presents for this nation. We have been active in combating this problem through a variety of programs and activities including our Americans in Motion — Healthy Initiatives (AIM-HI) program that helps family physicians and their practice staff work with families to prevent and treat obesity and overweight. In addition, we have developed continuing medical education programs, offered patient education materials on our patient-oriented Web site FamilyDoctor.org, developed a school curriculum with Scholastic called Ready, Set, FIT!, and in other ways have acted to help our members, their patients and their communities.

Most recently, we have just adopted as an AAFP Clinical Preventive Services recommendation that all children aged 6 to 18 years of age should be screened for obesity using a body mass index (BMI). Recent research reviewed by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force shows that children found to be obese through this routine screening can be helped when offered subsequent appropriate care. This recommendation is in addition to our existing recommendation that all adults should be routinely screened. We know that obesity and overweight is a family health issue that should be prevented and treated in an integrated fashion.

In response to your initiative, I am pleased to say that the AAFP will be undertaking a series of new and enhanced activities including:

- Conducting random sample surveys of our members to determine their current and changed practices for screening children and adults using a BMI. This will allow us to track the progress of implementing obesity screening guidelines.

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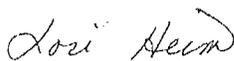
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- Working with the support of other organizations, we will expand the reach of AIM-HI to more practices and offer new resources.
- Seeking to expand the use of the Ready, Set, FIT! curriculum in more schools.
- Adding new patient education resources on FamilyDoctor.org including a tool for determining BMIs for children.
- Providing our members with Web-based tools and services to help them target their continuing medical education to address learning or practice gaps regarding childhood obesity.
- Using the Patient-Centered Medical Home as the framework for integrating the many components needed to address childhood obesity within practices.
- Continuing our research on how to improve the AIM-HI approach to increasing physical activity, healthy eating and emotional well being.
- Working with consumer health IT companies such as Google and Microsoft to increase patient engagement and collaboration with clinicians through interoperability between EHRs and consumer IT offerings.

The mission of the AAFP is to improve the health of patients, their families and their communities. Treating obesity and promoting exercise are two of our highest priorities for the health of the public. It is only natural that the AAFP is a strong supporter of your Childhood Obesity Initiative and, as the specifics evolve, I look forward to expanding our messaging to members and the public on accessing new opportunities within their communities.

Sincerely,



Lori Heim, MD, FAAFP  
President