



## AAFP LEADING THE BATTLE AGAINST OBESITY

The prevalence of overweight and obesity in the United States has soared during the past two decades. In fact, according to a report recently released by the surgeon general, the prevalence of obesity among adults grew from 13.4 percent in 1980 to 34.3 percent in 2008. The prevalence among children grew from 5 percent to 17 percent during the same period. Obesity contributes to an estimated 112,000 preventable deaths a year. It is inextricably linked to many serious health conditions, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, gallbladder disease, sleep apnea and respiratory problems, as well as to endometrial, breast, prostate and colon cancers.

Family physicians provide care for families in community settings from the urban core and their suburbs, to small towns and rural areas, and are on the front line in the fight against obesity. Family physicians understand the challenges faced by overweight and obese patients. They are among the most trusted of any health care professional, and unlike other physicians and health care providers, they take care of patients from cradle to grave, positioning them to employ a long-term, patient-centered approach to obesity and weight management issues. AAFP supports initiatives to fight obesity, both in children and adults, and promotes the Patient-Centered Medical Home as the framework for integrating the many components needed to address obesity.

AAFP is involved in a number of programs and activities to address this pressing public health issue, including:

**Americans in Motion – Healthy Initiatives (AIM-HI):** Developed by family physicians, specifically for the family medicine practice setting, the 10-year AIM –HI initiative, now in its sixth year, includes the following core elements: practice improvement and research; member education and resources; patient education; community outreach. The goal of the program is to encourage family physicians to be fitness role models, to improve family physicians' ability to positively affect the fitness of their patients, and to enhance the awareness of family physicians' unique ability to promote fitness within their communities.

- **Ready, Set, *FIT!***: AAFP's school-based program that was developed through a partnership with Scholastic, Inc. The program highlights family physicians and other healthcare professionals as valuable community resources and role models for improved fitness. Through a partnership between Aim-HI and Scholastic, *Ready, Set, FIT!* offers in-class lessons and take-home activities aimed at encouraging kids to be active, eat smart, and feel good.
- **Let's Move:** AAFP is partnering with the First Lady's initiative to help highlight the problem of childhood obesity by encouraging our members to integrate body mass index (BMI) measurement into physical exams and providing our members with tools and services to help them target their continuing medical education to address learning or practice gaps regarding childhood obesity. AAFP recommends that clinicians screen children aged 6 years and older for obesity and offer them or refer them to comprehensive, intensive behavioral interventions to promote improvement in weight status.