



AzAAP White Paper

Recommendations for Childhood Obesity Prevention, Assessment, and Treatment

Executive Summary

Obesity in children and adolescents is increasing at an alarming rate in the United States.^{1,2} Obesity and co-morbid conditions associated with obesity are a leading cause of morbidity and mortality. Some of the co-morbid conditions associated with obesity include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension. These chronic diseases decrease the quality of life of those afflicted with them and contribute significantly to healthcare costs.³ As more young people become obese, the disease burden will increase.

The costs associated with obesity are high and will increase in the absence of effective prevention and treatment. According to a Robert Wood Johnson report in 2007, childhood obesity is responsible for \$14 billion per year in direct health costs alone. A 2009 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, along with RTI International (a nonprofit research group), found that the direct and indirect cost of obesity is as high as \$147 billion annually. Prevention and early treatment of obesity are critical to stemming the tide of the obesity epidemic. The consensus of experts is that there must be adequate support and payment for clinician services for prevention, assessment and treatment of childhood obesity.⁴

Current data available for Arizona shows that over 25 percent of Arizona youth are overweight or obese and that this trend is worsening.⁵ Additionally, surveys show that a majority of Arizona youth do not get the recommended amount of fruit and vegetable servings, and do not have adequate amounts of physical activity.⁶ Children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds have additional barriers to recommended nutrition and physical activity standards, and are at a higher risk for being overweight and having associated co-morbid conditions that can negatively affect their health and ability to succeed in school and in the workplace.^{1,2}

Pediatricians and clinicians caring for youth serve an important role in preventing and treating childhood obesity. In December, 2007, *Pediatrics* published a supplement issue dedicated to childhood obesity. Four articles were featured that summarized the recommendations of an Expert Committee for the prevention, assessment, and treatment of childhood obesity.^{7,8}

In 2008, the Obesity Committee of the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics began developing several initiatives to address childhood obesity. One accomplishment of the Committee was the development of the *5 2 1 0 AZ Way to Go!* Toolkit to assist clinicians and school nurses in implementing best practice recommendations to help children and youth achieve and maintain a healthy weight. After release of the Toolkit, the Committee then obtained a grant to study the effectiveness of the Toolkit, provide educational opportunities to clinicians, and obtain input from clinicians and school nurses on the need for additional tools and resources.

The results of the survey indicate that an overwhelming majority of clinicians perceive that:

- Insurance coverage for prevention, assessment and treatment of obesity is inadequate
- Inadequate payment for obesity-related services is a major barrier to providing optimum care.
- There are confusing and varying coverage policies and processes that clinicians must navigate to assist youth and families.

Given the significance of the childhood obesity epidemic, the Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and its Pediatric Council believe that it is critical that clinicians and allied health professionals follow established best practices for childhood obesity prevention, assessment and treatment. Thus, a panel of experts consisting of pediatricians and pediatric nurse practitioners, pediatric specialists, a nutritionist and other allied health professionals was convened to review existing best practices and standards of care to develop recommendations that will:

- Guide clinicians in adopting and following best practices for the prevention, assessment, and treatment of childhood obesity
- Advocate for adequate payment for the prevention, assessment, and treatment of childhood obesity by describing optimum coverage to public and private insurance companies/payers.

The Arizona expert panel has concluded that to safeguard best practices for prevention, assessment, and treatment of childhood obesity, public and private insurance companies should make certain that:

- Primary care providers are paid for all recommended best practice services to prevent, assess, and treat childhood obesity
- Adequate nutrition consult and follow up services are covered, and an adequate network is maintained for nutritionists who serve children
- Adequate pediatric specialty consult and follow up services are covered and an adequate network is maintained for pediatric specialists
- Policies and processes clearly describe how to obtain covered services for childhood obesity management and do not place undue burdens on primary care clinicians, specialists, and allied health professionals who try to obtain these services for patients

Arizona Expert Panel Members

Rana Ammouy, MD

Pediatric Gastroenterologist

Diamond Children's at University Medical Center
Tucson, AZ

Rene Bartos, MD, MPH

AzAAP Board of Directors

AzAAP Childhood Obesity Committee Chair

Medical Director

Medicaid Health Plan
Mesa, AZ

Karen Eynon, RN, MSN, CPNP, MATS

Preventative and General Cardiology

Arizona Pediatric Cardiology Consultants

Phoenix, AZ

Nancy Horlick, MD

Primary Care Pediatrician

Desert Sun Pediatrics

Scottsdale, AZ

A D Jacobson, MD

Primary Care Pediatrician

Phoenix Children's Hospital

Phoenix, AZ

Diana Jacobson, PhD, RN, PNP-BC

Assistant Professor

Arizona State University

College of Nursing and Health Innovation

Phoenix, AZ

Tamir Miloh, MD

Pediatric Hepatologist

Phoenix Children's Hospital

Phoenix, AZ

Jane Oski, MD, MPH

Primary Care Pediatrician

Tuba City Regional Health Care Corporation

Tuba City, AZ

Amy Shoptaugh, MD

AzAAP Board of Directors

AzAAP Pediatric Council Co-Chair

Primary Care Pediatrician

All About Kids Pediatrics

Tempe, AZ

Leno Thomas, MD

Pediatric Pulmonologist

Cardon Children's Medical Center

Mesa, AZ

J. Hunt Udall, MD

Pediatric Orthopedics

Pediatric Sports Medicine

Cardon Children's Medical Center

Mesa, AZ

Terri Verason, MS, RD

Director of Nutrition Education

Dairy Council of Arizona

Past President

Arizona Dietetic Association

Tempe, AZ

Donnie Wilson, MD

Pediatric Endocrinologist

Phoenix Children's Hospital

Phoenix, AZ

Cliff Worsham, MD

Pediatric Cardiologist

Arizona Pediatric Cardiology Consultants

Phoenix, AZ

Robert Ziltzer, MD

Medical Weight Loss Doctor

Scottsdale Weight Loss Center

Scottsdale, A

REFERENCES

1. Ogden, Cynthia, and Margaret Carroll. "Products - Health E Stats - Overweight Prevalence Among Children and Adolescents 2007-2008." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Web. 18 Oct. 2011. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_child_07_08/obesity_child_07_08.htm>
2. Ogden, C. L., M. D. Carroll, L. R. Curtin, M. M. Lamb, and K. M. Flegal. "Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in U.S. Children and Adolescents, 2007-2008." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 303.3 (2010): 242-49. Print.
3. "Obesity and Overweight for Professionals: Childhood: Basics | DNPAO | CDC." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Web. 18 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/basics.html>>.
4. Simpson, L. A., and J. Cooper. "Paying for Obesity: A Changing Landscape." *Pediatrics* 123.Supplement (2009): S301-307. Print.
5. "Child Obesity in Arizona, 2010." Arizona Department of Health Services. Web. 18 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/owch/pdf/factSheets/ChildObesityAZ2010.pdf>>
6. "2009 Arizona Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results." Arizona Department of Education. Web. 18 Oct. 2011. <<https://www.azed.gov/sa/health/matrix/2009AZBHTrendReport.pdf>>
7. Barlow, S.E, and the Expert Committee. "Expert Committee Recommendations Regarding the Prevention, Assessment, and Treatment of Child and Adolescent Overweight and Obesity: Summary Report." *Pediatrics* 120. (2007): 164-192. Print.
8. "Expert Committee Recommendations on the Assessment, Prevention and Treatment of Child and Adolescent Overweight and Obesity - 2007- - An Implementation Guide from the Childhood Obesity Action Network." *National Institute for Children's Healthcare Quality*. Web. 18 Oct. 2011. <<http://www.nichq.org/documents/coan-papers-and-publications/COANImplementationGuide62607FINAL.pdf>>

The Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AzAAP) is committed to improving the health of Arizona children and supporting the pediatric professionals who care for them.

To learn more about the AzAAP, please contact:

Arizona Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
2600 N. Central Avenue, Ste. 635
Phoenix, AZ 85004
PH: (602)532-0137 FX: (602)532-0139
AzAAPLeadership@azaap.org www.azaap.org