

Top Ten Recommendations from the Arkansas Obesity Policy Summit, May 22, 2008

School Group:

1. Open school facilities after hours for community use for physical activity. For this purpose, relieve schools of liability for injuries sustained on school property.
2. Establish funded coordinated school health in every Arkansas school district.

Health Group:

1. Health Insurers should cover counseling and treatment for obesity, whether made by physicians or the allied health professionals who form part of the obesity caregiver team (e.g. registered dietitians).
2. Increase opportunities for self-management strategies against obesity and to prevent obesity, targeting chronically ill and low health literacy populations. Specifically, the Arkansas General Assembly should pass enabling legislation with funding that directs the Arkansas Department of Health to inaugurate health literacy programs as well as the evidence-based Stanford Chronic Disease Management Model.

Government Group:

1. Mandate calorie and fat labeling for chain restaurants.
2. Enact legislation to increase physical activity requirements in the school setting, encouraging variety and individualized activities. Consider redesigning or extending the schedule of the school day or eliminating other academic requirements.

Industry and Media Group:

1. Residential Subdivision Developments should include bike-paths and sidewalks with every street as well as open green space/parks for common use.
2. Restaurants should list calories, fat grams and trans fat grams on menus and calories on menu boards for all standard food offerings.

Worksite Group:

1. Legislatively mandate that any company contracting with the state of Arkansas must, as a condition of participation, agree that all its worksite vending machines must contain at least 50% healthy foods. Additionally, the company agrees that at least half of the food served to its employees and customers must be classified as healthy.
2. Through legislative mandate and funding, establish a centralized resource and clearinghouse for employers to assist them with implementation of worksite related health and wellness policies.

Other policies receiving votes:

School Group:

1. Promote Safe Route to Schools- improve infrastructure 2 miles around school
2. Improve school meals and snacks
3. Promote farm to school programs

Health Group:

1. Require BMI as a "vital sign" and use BMI with age and gender growth charts in all physician offices
2. Promote the development of comprehensive programs for long term treatment of obesity in children, adults, and families
3. Offer insurance incentives for healthy lifestyle and weight, insurance coverage for gym memberships
4. Improve obesity treatment and prevention education for health professionals
5. Emphasize obesity prevention in ADH Hometown Health Services

Government Group:

1. Authorize an interim study or Governor appointed committee to investigate the formation of a state planning office which would govern development, zoning, open-space policies, and transportation alternatives to encourage increased physical activity and a better built environment (increased property values, economic development potential, social capital improvement).

Industry and Media Group:

1. Unified Multi-Market Campaign
2. Incentives for healthy foods in neighborhood stores
3. Tax breaks to restaurants serving healthy foods, including drive-thru

Worksite Group:

1. Improve built environment to encourage physical activity
2. Incentives for participation in worksite wellness program and healthy lifestyle
3. Establish obesity prevention centers