

ACT 1220 Summary

Act 1220 creates a Child Health Advisory Committee that will “coordinate statewide efforts to combat childhood obesity and related illnesses and help improve the health of the next generation of Arkansans.” The Committee consists of fifteen members appointed by the Directors of the Arkansas Department of Health and the Department of Education. The committee’s purpose is to make recommendations to the State Board of Education and the State Board of Health on the following:

- Developing nutrition and physical activity standards and policy recommendations
- Setting nutrition and physical activity standards that will provide students with the skills, opportunities and encouragement to adopt healthy lifestyles
- Development of a plan to eliminate in-school access to vending machines offering food and beverages to elementary school students
- Setting criteria that will require all schools to include the amounts and specific sources of funds received and expenditures made from competitive food and beverage contracts as part of the annual report to parents and the communities
- Setting standards and developing a plan of implementation for all schools to include an annual body mass index percentile by age for each student as part of the student report card
- Development of a plan to annually provide parents with an explanation of the possible health effects of body mass index, nutrition and physical activity
- Generating criteria that requires the goals and objectives for nutrition and physical activity to be incorporated into the annual school planning and reporting process

In support of the above activities, the Act requires that every student in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade have an annual Body Mass Index assessment performed and reported to parents. While potentially controversial, this assessment will provide empirical information to support deliberation and policy development for each of the Act’s requirements listed above.

The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement with support of the Arkansas Department of Health and the Department of Education and in collaboration with the Arkansas College of Public Health, is seeking a combined \$3 million to implement this BMI assessment, reporting, and epidemiological surveillance activity over the next three years. These funds will be aggregated from local contributions, matching philanthropic funds, and state designated support (see attached draft proposed activities timeline).