

MEDIA ADVISORY
May 28, 2004

CONTACT: Lorrie Barr
501-660-7511 or 831-2239
lbarr@uams.edu

**ARKANSAS CENTER FOR HEALTH IMPROVEMENT
TO REVEAL BMI RESULTS AT TIME/ABC NEWS SUMMIT ON OBESITY**

WHAT: Arkansas, the first state in the country to require a yearly body-mass index (BMI) screening of every public school student, will release its initial results at the TIME/ABC News Summit on Obesity in Williamsburg, Va. It will be the largest assessment of BMI ever conducted in the U.S. and a milestone in America's effort to combat childhood obesity.

The press conference will be broadcast live on the Internet. The Arkansas Center for Health Improvement will host a viewing for media. Experts from across the state will be in attendance to comment on the data.

WHO: Dr. Joe Thompson, Director of the Arkansas Center for Health Improvement and a pediatrician at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, will present initial data from the screening of 450,000 students in grades K-12 during the 2003-2004 school year. Also speaking is Dr. Carden Johnston, President of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

WHEN: 2:10 p.m. CST on Thursday, June 3

WHERE: Viewing Center: Ninth Floor Board Room, Freeway Medical Building, 5800 West 10th Street, Little Rock.
The Internet address for the webcast is <http://www.rwjf.org/news/TIMEarkansas>. Media can also join the conference by phone by dialing (866) 253-6869 and entering the Conference ID number: 480359

BACKGROUND: Arkansas set a national precedent in 2003, becoming the first state to address childhood obesity and overweight through comprehensive legislation. In addition to mandated screenings, the law also: eliminated vending machines in elementary schools, required annual reports on revenue from competitive food sales in schools, established a Child Health Advisory Committee to develop nutrition and physical activity standards and policy recommendations to combat childhood obesity in the state and created a school nutrition and physical activity advisory committee in every Arkansas school district with members from the school district governing board, school administrators, food service personnel, teacher organizations, parents, students and professional groups.

ACHI is a little Rock-based health policy research center jointly supported by the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences Campus, the Arkansas Department of Health and Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield. It is responsible for calculating and analyzing the data submitted by the state's schools. ACHI is developing individual child health reports for parents with their child's height, weight and BMI as well as an explanation of BMI. If a child is overweight, a separate section of the letter offers suggestions for changing diet and activities and recommends discussing the results with the child's doctor. ACHI will also produce school and school district reports as well as a state report.

Nearly two-thirds of Americans are overweight, and almost one in three Americans is obese, according to the federal government. Obesity and overweight is second only to smoking as the most preventable cause of death in the U.S.

###