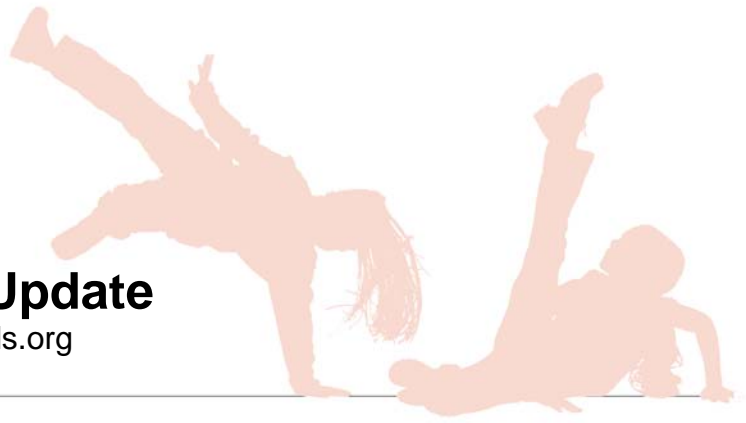




activateomahakids
Healthy Inside and Out

November 2007 Update

www.activateomahakids.org



"Each day we take a minute to find one simple and enjoyable healthy change we can make, we open the door for fit and healthy kids." Claudia Hohnbaum, MA, RD, LD, Healthy Kids Challenge Assistant Director

NATIONAL EXPERTS OFFER ADVICE TO ACTIVATE OMAHA KIDS

This fall, Activate Omaha Kids was pleased to host several national experts to help our coalition build a strategic plan to address childhood obesity in our community. Complete summaries of their remarks are available on our website.

Dr. William Dietz, Director of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

While in Omaha, Dr. Dietz not only met with our Executive Committee, but he also presented at a continuing education seminar for healthcare professionals sponsored by Alegent Health and Boys Town Pediatrics. In addition, he was the keynote speaker at a public forum held on the Boys Town campus on September 27th. The forum also included a panel discussion moderated by Adi Pour, Director of the Douglas County Health Department. The panel consisted of Mikki Frost, Activate Omaha Kids; Kerri Peterson, Our Healthy Community Partnership; Mary Balluff, Douglas County Health Department; Dr. Thomas Tonniges, Boys Town Pediatrics; Sylvia Coleman, Healthy Families North; and Dr. Sandra Hassink, Director, Childhood and Adolescent Weight Management Clinic, Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children.

Throughout his discussions, Dr. Dietz pointed out that a successful strategy to make change needs to target both the environment and policy. It is important that multi-faceted interventions be pursued and a base of evidence be built around what works.

He suggested that a social movement with grass roots involvement is necessary to initiate change. The main concern is that currently only the "elite informed" are engaged in solving the problem of childhood obesity. He gave examples of successful grass roots movements such as the civil rights movement and MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers).

He also noted that childhood obesity will not be solved at the national level, but rather it needs to be addressed at the community level. Community members need to realize that there are and will continue to be even greater lifetime costs of overweight children. Right now there is the perception that it is not "my problem." The perception of a threat needs to be created by specifically talking about the consequences and costs to the Omaha community as a whole. And, the message should be targeted to the population in which the case is made.

He attributed the three fold increase in obesity being due to two main factors: 1) changes in the nature of the food supply – more processed foods and sugar and 2) change in physical activity – less drive to exercise, decline in physical activity in schools and limited access to recreational facilities.

QUESTIONS ASKED AT PUBLIC FORUM BY KIDS FROM GIRLS AND BOYS TOWN

What role does heredity play in childhood obesity? *Some people are predisposed for weight issues, but environment can help or hinder.*

Do school lunches contribute to childhood obesity? *Schools purchase food based upon cost, not health. If the nutritional value of school lunches is improved it will have some effect, but we are unsure as to the scope.*

Is the "5 a day campaign" for fruits and vegetables still being promoted? *The focus is now on more fruits and vegetables because so few have five daily.*

What is the parents' role in childhood obesity? *Parents need skills. At some point, obesity is issue of parental neglect or negligence-inability to set limits.*

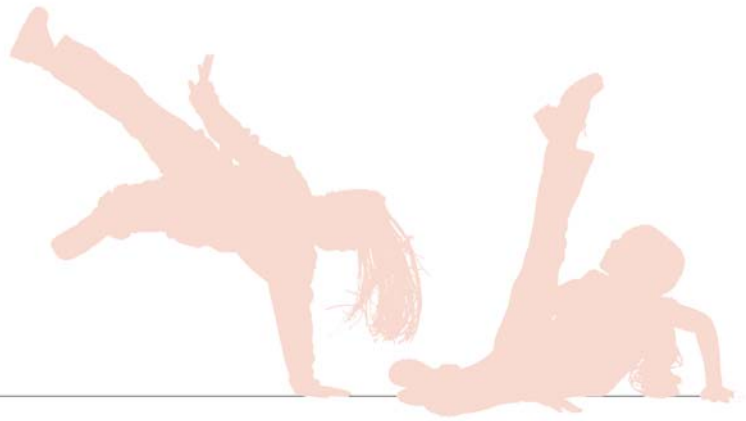
What is the relationship between obesity and pregnancy? *Pre-pregnancy weight and weight gain during pregnancy are predictors of childhood obesity.*

SEEKING

Seeking- If you are interested in more information about Activate Omaha Kids or would like to join a committee, please contact Diane Roberts at droberts@alegent.org or 572-2271.



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He pointed out, however, that it's not as useful to focus on causes, but rather it is more productive to focus on what we can do. He named the six target strategies of the CDC – 1) Increase physical activity, which reduces the likelihood of disease associated with obesity 2) Limit sugar sweetened beverages 3) Limit TV viewing 4) Encourage breastfeeding 5) Increase fruit and vegetable intake and 6) Decrease energy dense foods, such as fast foods.

Tyler Norris, Expert on building community coalitions

Tyler Norris has served as a consultant to child health leaders, such as the Robert Wood Johnson's Active Living by Design Initiative, YMCA of USA and Kaiser Permanente. Recently, he led our Executive Committee in spirited dialogue about how we can build upon the work to date to take our initiative to the next level to achieve our community vision of measurably improving the healthy eating and physical activity of our children. The group participated in discussions to envision the success of the coalition, build upon the assets in Omaha, institutionalize the leadership, engage volunteers in the coalition and coordinate the work of the committees.

Like Dr. Dietz, Tyler stressed the need to create a grassroots “distributive ownership” of the problem to engage the entire community. He also offered insights on how to build a sustainable coalition with impact. He emphasized that a movement resulting in systemic change requires the five Ps: Partnerships, Promotions, Programming, Policy Change and Physical Projects. The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has more information on creating systemic change on their website at www.rwjf.org.

Tyler offered the encouragement that we are on the right track and ahead of many communities. He felt we had laid the groundwork to begin the movement.

NEXT STEPS

Through our discussions, the Activate Omaha Kids Executive Committee identified three areas of focus for the coalition, around which a strategic plan will be built:

1. Build the case – How can we create a local urgency as to the epidemic of childhood obesity so that the community is engaged to work towards the solution?
2. Engage in Strategic Actions – How can our community strategically address the problem? What do we know that works that we should do in Omaha?
3. Build Political Will – How can we as a community come together to provide the leadership, manpower and resources to address the problem? How can we create, leverage and sustain this political will in the short term? In the long term?

REVISED MISSION

The Executive Committee also has approved the following revised “mission” of Activate Omaha Kids:

By 2011, all Omaha children will achieve measurable improvements in nutrition, physical activity, and healthy living supported by community collaboration and the environments in which they live.

STATUS OF PLANKS

All plank committees are required to submit their strategic plans by the end of the year. The plans will include: goals, strategies, measures of success, resource needs and social marketing message. In February 2008, the Executive Committee will compile all of the strategic plans to create a comprehensive business plan for the coalition that can then move towards implementation.