

ADVOCACY NEWS

ADVOCACY ACTION

What is being done about the rising *childhood obesity* epidemic?

- The OAC details two important advocacy initiatives and encourages each of you to get involved to help drive change.

In today's society, the awareness of childhood obesity has become more and more apparent. Perform a simple Google News or Yahoo! News search with the term "childhood obesity," and you will receive thousands of results featuring articles discussing this disease. But, what is being done about childhood obesity? Well, that's a good question.

As awareness builds, more and more organizations, states and well, just about everyone else, are beginning to target this disease with more passion and dedication. The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC), for instance, has been involved in many childhood obesity activities and initiatives. It has always been the OAC's school of thought that "you must first educate before you advocate." The OAC has taken great pride in developing its childhood obesity resources, all available online at www.obesityaction.org. Okay, so we have the first part of the equation, the educational materials, finished. But, what about the advocacy?

Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment to the Farm Bill

Recently, the OAC signed on to the Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment to the Farm Bill, which tried to establish the types of food and beverage products that may be offered for sale in schools. The Amendment sought to ensure that healthier food and beverages were offered for sale in schools across the country.

Unfortunately, the school nutrition standards through the Harkin/Murkowski School Nutrition Amendment were not included in the Farm Bill.

More than 100 organizations and thousands of individuals across the country signed on to support the school nutrition amendment. The dedication and persistence of all those involved created a strong consensus of support throughout the Senate and House of Representatives for future efforts and initiatives. It is our hope that this legislation will be passed during a future legislative session.

Fitness Integrated with Teaching Kids Act (FIT Kids Act)

In addition, the OAC also signed on to the American Heart Association's (AHA) FIT Kids Act. The Federal legislation would integrate regular physical education into the No Child Left Behind Act.

In early August, AHA endorsed federal legislation that addresses the nation's childhood obesity epidemic by putting more emphasis on quality physical education (PE) and physical activity for all public school children. The FIT Kids Act would better integrate PE into the No Child Left Behind Act by encouraging schools to work towards the national goal of 150 minutes of PE per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for students in middle and high schools.

It would also require that all schools, districts and states include the quantity and quality of PE in the "report cards" currently sent to parents. The FIT Kids Act was introduced in the House by Representatives Ron Kind (D-WI), Zach Wamp (R-TN) and Jay Inslee (D-WA).

The FIT Kids Act would also amend existing federal programs to get all parents, educators, counselors and administrators involved in teaching children healthy lifestyles. The bill also supports professional development for teachers and principals to promote children's healthy lifestyles and physical activity and would fund research and a pilot program to study effective ways to improve healthy living and physical activity for all children.

As you can see, childhood obesity is a serious issue, and education, advocacy initiatives and legislation are all part of combating this disease; however, this fight requires proactive participation on the part of you – the parent, the caregiver, the school teacher, the doctor, the dentist... all of us. After all, if we cannot ensure the quality of health and life of **OUR** children, then **OUR** future is at stake.

To learn more about the AHA's FIT Kids Act, please visit the association's Web site at www.americanheart.org. To learn more about childhood obesity or keep up to date on the latest childhood obesity initiatives and activities, please visit www.obesityaction.org.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

info@obesityaction.org

(800) 717-3117 | (813) 872-7835 | Fax: (813) 873-7838



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