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 OAC

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a non-profit patient organization dedicated to educating and advocating on behalf of those affected by obesity, morbid obesity and childhood obesity. The OAC distributes balanced and comprehensive patient educational materials and advocacy tools.

The OAC believes that patients should first be educated about obesity and its treatments and also encourages proactive patient advocacy. The OAC focuses its advocacy efforts on helping patients gain access to the treatments for morbid obesity. As a membership organization, the OAC was formed to bring patients together to have a voice with issues affecting their lives and health. To learn more about the OAC, visit www.obesityaction.org or contact us at (800) 717-3117.

OAC Resources

The OAC provides valuable resources for patients, as well as professionals. All OAC resources are complimentary and may be ordered in bulk. To request materials, please contact the OAC National Office at (800) 717-3117 or send an email to info@obesityaction.org.

Newsletters
- Obesity Action Alert - the OAC’s free monthly electronic newsletter
- OAC News - OAC’s quarterly education and advocacy newsletter

Brochures/Guides
- Are you living with Obesity? Brochure
- Advocacy Primer: Your Voice Makes a Difference
- BMI Chart
- OAC Insurance Guide
- State-specific Advocacy Guides
- Understanding Obesity Series
  - Understanding Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Obesity Poster
  - Understanding Morbid Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Childhood Obesity Brochure
  - Understanding Childhood Obesity Poster
  - Understanding Obesity Stigma Brochure

OAC Membership

The OAC was founded as the “patient voice” in obesity. As a membership organization, the OAC exists to represent the needs and interests of those affected by obesity and provide balanced and comprehensive education and advocacy resources. Membership in the OAC is integral in strengthening the voice of the millions affected by obesity. Various membership levels are available and each is accompanied with several valuable benefits such as:

- Official membership card/certificate
- Annual subscription to OAC News – OAC’s quarterly educational and advocacy newsletter
- Subscription to Obesity Action Alert – monthly e-newsletter distributed on the 1st of each month
- Access to valuable educational resources and tools
- Patient representation through advocacy, in addition to information on advocacy issues concerning patients

Yes! I would like to join the OAC’s efforts. I would like to join as a/an:

- Patient/Family Member: $20
- Professional Member: $50
- Physician Member: $100
- Surgeon Member: $150
- Institutional Member*: $500 (Surgery centers, doctors’ offices, weight-loss centers, etc.)
- OAC Chairman’s Council*: $1,000 +

* These membership levels have exclusive benefits.

Mail to: OAC
4511 North Himes Ave., Ste. 250
Tampa, FL 33614
(813) 873-7838

Or Fax to:

Name: ____________________________
Company: ____________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City: __________ State: ______ Zip: ___________
Phone: _______ Email: ____________________________

Payment Information

Enclosed is my check (payable to the OAC) for $ __________.

Please charge my credit card for my membership fee:

- Discover®
- MasterCard®
- Visa®
- Amex®

Credit Card Number: ____________________________
Expiration Date: ______ Billing Zip Code: ____________________________