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## **Michigan Adds Obesity Tracking Component to Immunization Database**

RWJF

Michigan has announced plans to expand its electronic childhood immunization registry to include obesity rates, *Government Health IT* reports. Specifically, the state will expand upon its Web-based Michigan Care and Improvement Registry, which is currently used by 95 percent of physicians in the state to track immunizations, as well as lead levels, newborn health outcomes, hearing and vision. State officials and leaders from the Ann Arbor-based Altarum Institute Childhood Obesity Prevention Mission Project will collaborate to update the registry to collect children's height and weight measurements, according to Matt Longjohn, the project's director. The new data will allow the registry to track body mass index (BMI) measurements on each child, providing physicians and public health officials with accurate data to better identify children who are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight. Providers and public health leaders can then use the data to evaluate the success of programs designed to prevent or reduce obesity. Meanwhile, Longjohn notes that the addition of BMI tracking brings the state's immunization registry closer to becoming a more comprehensive child health information system. Health officials are currently working on the technical aspects of the project and expect it to launch in approximately nine months. Several other states have begun to collect BMI data on children, including Arizona, which has the nation's most extensive collection system operated through its school system. According to *Government Health IT*, California's San Diego County is also in the early stages of bringing physicians on board to incorporate a BMI component in their immunization registry (Mosquera, [Government Health IT](#), 5/14/09).

<http://www.rwjf.org/childhoodobesity/digest.jsp?id=10729>

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### **Michigan preps child health information system**

Mary Mosquera, *Government Health IT*, May 14, 2009

The state of Michigan is using its electronic registry of children who receive immunizations to also track their obesity rates. By adding two data fields for height and weight to the Web-based immunization registry, the state will spot trends across the state in the body-mass index (BMI) of children. Adding the data to the registry can help physicians and public health professionals identify children who are obese or at risk of being overweight and to evaluate programs to prevent or reduce it, according to Dr. Matt Longjohn, project director for the Altarum Institute Childhood Obesity Prevention Mission Project, which is working with the state on the project. The project also represents a step toward creating a more comprehensive childhood electronic health record in the state. "We're really moving toward a child health information system in Michigan, not just an immunization registry," Longjohn said at a May 13 event in Washington sponsored by the institute. Obesity threatens to increase health care costs because it is linked to other chronic diseases and conditions. Other states collect BMI data, including Arizona, which has the most extensive data collection system through its school system, but the program has been labor intensive, Longjohn said. While all states have immunization registries, not all states require providers to report immunization data, Longjohn said. Michigan requires it, so 95 percent of physicians already use the Michigan Care and Improvement Registry, a Web portal that also tracks lead levels, newborn health outcomes and hearing and vision, in addition to immunizations. In February, Michigan started collecting BMI data in pilots around the state, but a rulemaking process to expand the registry to include BMI data must be completed before it is adopted state-wide. Longjohn said he is hopeful that will happen in nine months.

"We're in the midst of doing the functional specifications, beta testing and the provider needs assessment, and

anticipate that the rulemaking process will be just the last flick of the switch,” he said. For providers, incorporating BMI data would entail re-programming their PDF popup, link to expert committee recommendations and update billing codes, Longjohg said. Providers who use electronic medical records would automatically have their system transmit data to the registry.

<http://govhealthit.com/articles/2009/05/14/mich-child-health-system.aspx>