

Weighing Action

Introduction:

In June 2004, the Hanley Foundation focused its annual Forum on a discussion of how a Maine partnership model could be developed to speed adoption of national guidelines for obesity screening and risk factor reduction. The Forum explored how leadership by Maine's health care providers, health organizations, state agencies, communities and consumers might be leveraged to improve the link between favorable research findings and better health outcomes for Maine people. Recommended strategies included a broad list of action items, and next steps were outlined to break down barriers to change, identify how to enhance existing efforts, and increase the reach of the most promising practices. The Maine Center for Public Health was subsequently asked by the Hanley Trust and the Maine Bureau of Health to help begin this process, and in an effort to promote healthy weight across the state, the Maine Center for Public Health convened a strategic discussion on May 6th 2005 with representatives from many of the major provider organizations across Maine. The Center invited Dr. Bill Dietz, Director of the Physical Activity and Nutrition Division for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to facilitate the discussion. Specifically, Dr. Dietz provided a national perspective on this issue by identifying the strongest evidence-based strategies providers and health systems can undertake to promote improvements in the prevention, screening, and management of obesity, and provided input on how to best evaluate such efforts.

Role of the Maine Center for Public Health in this effort:

- ✚ Convene a group of action oriented key individuals with the major provider organizations in Maine to identify one or two cross cutting strategies that can be undertaken within provider organizations to begin addressing the problem of obesity
- ✚ Provide technical assistance and statewide or regional training as needed
- ✚ Identify and/or develop and distribute the best-practice provider and patient tools and materials
- ✚ Help identify key measures of success, and facilitate collection and coordination of data to evaluate efforts
- ✚ Identify funding sources to assist in moving forward action items
- ✚ Help engage community stakeholder groups

Goals of the May 6th Strategic Discussion:

1. Convene teams from major provider organizations in Maine to share what is currently being done to address the issue of obesity.
2. Identify the most promising clinical strategies to improve the health of Maine citizens and reduce the burden of obesity related illness.
3. Identify specific actions that each organization might implement within the next 12-18 months to address the epidemic of obesity.

*The resulting "Weighing Action" workgroup reached consensus on several actions needed to move forward, and **encourage all interested organizations to commit to the following:** (please see next page)*

Organizational Commitment

Name of Organization:		
Address:	City/Town:	Zip Code:
Name of Authorized Representative:		
Title/Role:	Phone:	
Email:	Fax:	

Our organization is committed to undertake and promote improvements in the prevention, screening, and management of obesity. We will:

1. Promote agreed upon, consistent healthy weight messages (attached) within our community and encourage physicians & other clinicians in our community to provide leadership utilizing those messages both locally and statewide.
2. Adopt system policies and protocols within our organization that encourage nutritional choices, physical activity and healthy weight among employees, clients and the community.
3. Identify and explore key ways for physicians to leverage their influence at the community level to build an environment in which good nutrition and regular physical activity are supported.
4. Educate & train providers to use BMI as an effective assessment tool and initiate discussion with patients to effectively address overweight.
5. Work toward development of consistent tracking of BMI & key data elements to track healthy weight.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Please forward this completed form to:

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Possible strategies to help organizations achieve their commitment might include:

- ✚ Gain organizational endorsement for the proposed healthy weight messages.
- ✚ Share the healthy weight messages at an organizational level with managers and staff.
- ✚ Include within system goals & objectives a statement of commitment to promote the healthy weight messages.
- ✚ Encourage providers to set an example by demonstrating healthy behaviors, measuring their own BMI, and utilizing weight management tools and interventions as provided to patients.
- ✚ Post the healthy weight messages system-wide in clinical settings such as waiting rooms and hospital rooms.
- ✚ Distribute healthy weight messages through system newsletters, website, in payroll stuffers and other appropriate documents.
- ✚ Offer BMI tools (e.g. BMI charts, calculator wheels) as appropriate.
- ✚ Include BMI %'ile for age/gender for children and BMI & waist circumference for adults as routine vital signs to identify patients who are at-risk for overweight, overweight or obese.
- ✚ Promote use of a standardized set of screening protocols for adults and youth that are incorporated into primary, specialty, and acute care settings
- ✚ Include obesity-related measures in quality improvement and provider incentive initiatives.
- ✚ Gain stakeholder endorsement of healthy weight guidelines & ask system leadership to promote and implement them.
- ✚ Respect the patients need for privacy, especially as they relate to the issue of weighing (do not weigh patients in a public place) and providing appropriate equipment to clinical settings as appropriate – e.g. armless chairs in waiting room; adequately sized blood pressure cuffs and examination gowns; quality scales that are accurate to at least 500 lb.
- ✚ Include fields for BMI information in hospital and payer encounter forms.
- ✚ Promote collection of data for healthy weight interventions in order to strengthen the evidence base and help to better identify interventions associated with success.
- ✚ Encourage a team approach in office system design to help incorporate BMI assessment.