



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Family and Consumer Sciences Weighs in on the Obesity Epidemic

Family and Consumer Sciences is the New Home Economics, Offering Solutions to Today's Key Issues

Washington, D.C. – January 30, 2013 – Roughly 108 million Americans are on diets, and \$20 billion is spent annually on weight-loss products and programs in the U.S.¹ The obesity epidemic is staggering, and it seems to be getting worse. An interdisciplinary group of professionals, called family and consumer scientists, provides insights into root causes and possible solutions. Family and consumer scientists use research-based knowledge and programs to create healthy and sustainable families. In 2011 alone, family and consumer sciences obesity-related programs reached more than 4.1 million Americans.

A recent study by family and consumer scientists investigated factors that influence obese consumers' vulnerability to weight-loss advertising. The study revealed that being female, being African American, and feeling powerless to lose weight on one's own were related to a higher level of vulnerability to weight-loss advertising (Worthy et al., 2012).³ Based on their research findings, the authors recommended a variety of educational interventions, including education on deciphering advertising messages and reading nutrition labels; nutrition education targeted to obese female and African-American audiences; and nutrition education for overweight and obese individuals.

While more can still be done, family and consumer sciences programs across the country are providing essential nutrition education and healthy living skills to millions of individuals and families. Programs like Fuel Up to Play 60 and SNAP-Ed, which are implemented by family and consumer scientists, help to promote healthy eating and exercising. In a time where about two-thirds of Americans are overweight or obese², family and consumer sciences offers much-needed, actionable solutions for getting healthy.

Family and consumer sciences is not new to the world of nutrition—the field began more than a century ago as home economics. Today, it is a holistic field of study that continues to impact the lives of millions. Family and consumer sciences has evolved with society, so that its emphasis is on current issues like the obesity epidemic. Through research and programs, family and consumer sciences is providing solutions to a wide variety of crucial problems in today's world, whether it be in the areas of nutrition, finance, relationships or consumer issues, to name a few.

"Today's family and consumer sciences builds on the research-based foundation laid by home

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economics,” said Carolyn W. Jackson, CFCS, executive director of the American Association of Family & Consumer Sciences (AAFCS). “This knowledge and integrative approach is applied to content and programs that help individuals become more effective critical thinkers and problem solvers, making them better prepared to live, work, and succeed in today’s complex and diverse world.”

To learn more about family and consumer sciences, visit www.aafcs.org/AboutUs/FCS.asp or contact AAFCS at 800-424-8080 or pr@aafcs.org.

Field of Family & Consumer Sciences

Family and consumer sciences (FCS) draws from broad and diverse disciplines to develop and provide content and programs that help individuals become more effective critical thinkers and problem solvers. Through discovery and delivery of research-based knowledge, FCS professionals help individuals and families develop essential skills to successfully live and work in a complex world. Professionals in the field are uniquely qualified to speak on many critical issues affecting individuals and families, such as maintaining a healthy lifestyle, wisely managing personal and family finances, and creating supportive relationships with family members, friends, and co-workers. They are located nationwide in a variety of practice settings, including secondary schools, universities, government agencies, and businesses.

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Sources:

¹ ABC News. (2012, May 8). *100 Million Dieters, \$20 Billion: The Weight-Loss Industry by the Numbers*. From <http://abcnews.go.com/Health/100-million-dieters-20-billion-weight-loss-industry/story?id=16297197>

²Food Research and Action Center. (2012, Oct. 1). *Overweight and Obesity in the U.S.* From <http://frac.org/initiatives/hunger-and-obesity/obesity-in-the-us/>

³Worthy, S. L., Pilcher, K., Lokken, K. L., & Crump, A. (2012). Factors Influencing Consumer Vulnerability to Weight-Loss Advertising Among Obese Consumers. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 104 (4), 46-51.

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