

OBESITY PREVENTION & HEALTHY WEIGHT INITIATIVE

Resolution of the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences Approved June, 2011

WHEREAS, in 2009, no state met the *Healthy People 2010* obesity target of no higher than 15 percent of the population; and

WHEREAS, almost one-third of children in the United States are overweight or obese with obese children and adolescents at risk for health problems during their youth and as adults; and

WHEREAS, physicians and nutritionists have voiced their interest in high school students being provided formal nutrition education and sound principles of food preparation; and

WHEREAS, professionals in nutrition science, medicine, and education may have little or no knowledge of the current courses and capacity of family and consumer sciences for addressing the obesity crisis in our nation; and

WHEREAS, the general public and public policy makers may not understand the far reaching effects of not requiring all students to develop the nutrition, food purchasing, and food preparation knowledge, skills, and family practices (such as sit-down meals) to achieve and maintain healthy weight throughout their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, creative partnerships between family and consumer sciences, historically known as home economics, professionals and the medical community could open doors for imparting valuable information regarding the secondary family and consumer sciences curriculum, thereby obtaining additional advocates for high school food and nutrition programs; therefore be it

RESOLVED that AAFCS and the Affiliates, Communities and other entities within AAFCS and its members advocate the collaboration of family and consumer sciences professionals with professionals in nutrition science, medicine, and education, along with local, state and national policy makers, and other stakeholders to garner strong support for family and consumer sciences courses in secondary schools and for Cooperative Extension family and consumer sciences programs for youth and adults in order to address the obesity crisis; and be it further

RESOLVED that AAFCS advocates the development and implementation of a comprehensive national obesity prevention and nutrition education initiative by family and consumer sciences professionals in partnership with nutrition science, medicine, education professionals, and public policy makers; and be it further

RESOLVED that AAFCS and the Affiliates, Communities and other entities within AAFCS and its members utilize opportunities within their range of influence and practice to promote the development and implementation of a national obesity prevention and nutrition education program for youth and adults in our public schools and communities.

RATIONALE

AAFCS should adopt this resolution for three major reasons:

1. Throughout our history, AHEA/AAFCS and its members, especially HE/FCS educators, have taken professional and volunteer action to address social, economic, and health issues affecting the well-being of families and their members (Brown, 1984, 1985, 1993; Rader, 1987; Stage & Vincenti, 1997).
2. Other professional groups, e.g., American Medical Association, expect us to take action to address current issues affecting today's families, such as obesity and wellness of families (Lichtenstein & Ludwig, 2010).
3. AAFCS members care about the well-being of individuals and families and have the professional and public policy expertise, connections, and concern to make a positive difference on the healthy weight of youth and adults in U.S.; members need leadership and a focused commitment to collaborate with others in their states and local communities to prevent obesity and help family members to have healthy weights.
4. The AAFCS "Taking it to the Streets" Leadership Team is providing resources, support and encouragement through website (www.aafcs.org/Advocacy/obesity.asp), electronic and newsletter updates, conference presentations to members of AAFCS and partner family and consumer sciences organizations as they address the prevention of obesity in their everyday professional practice settings. Awareness of this initiative needs to be expanded.

REFERENCES

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IMPACT STATEMENT

AAFCS members include educators at the secondary and university levels who are working to sustain and increase the vitality, visibility, and value of their programs within the current economic conditions. Over half of the 2010 AAFCS attendees responding to the annual meeting evaluation have expertise in Education & Technology and almost 40 percent have expertise in Nutrition, Health, and Food—representing the largest groups of professionals attending the conference.

This initiative would use the expertise of AAFCS leaders, Community members and Committees, such as the Annual Conference Committee, to develop and implement strategies.

The benefits of this resolution to AAFCS are (1) increased participation of AAFCS members in the AAFCS “Taking It to the Streets Obesity Initiative,” (2) increased public awareness of family and consumer sciences programs and professionals, (3) the value family and consumer sciences programs bring to this healthy weight initiative, and (4) successful identification and implementation of strategies for families to improve the health of their members.

SUGGESTED IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Continue and expand participation in the AAFCS “Taking It to the Streets Obesity Initiative” to further enhance national/state partnerships with other organizations, agencies, and stakeholders concerned with the obesity crisis in our country e.g., American Medical Association, American Dietetics Association, Action for Healthy Kids, National Council on Family Relations, Centers for Disease Control, National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, Association for Career-Technical Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and First Lady Michelle Obama’s “Let’s Move” initiative.
2. Develop comprehensive national obesity prevention educational strategies to guide states and local communities, including public awareness, formal and non-formal education, and state and local public policy components.
3. Convene a family and consumer sciences teacher-education and secondary teacher conference focused on developing and refining middle school and high school family and consumer sciences curriculum that focuses on developing food purchasing and preparation understandings and skills and eating practices that will enhance healthy weight as well as strengthen families and friendships.
4. Create professional development for implementing comprehensive healthy weight/obesity prevention strategies; incorporate and promote at the AAFCS Annual Conference and state affiliate meetings.
5. Create an obesity prevention/healthy weight program/campaign for AAFCS members as role models.
6. Develop resources utilizing up-dated information from the 2005 Annual Conference that could be downloaded by members, such as a “Maintaining Healthy Weight” fact sheet, PowerPoint, and/or pamphlet and bookmarks with

healthy eating habits and the physical activity necessary (i.e., steps, and their equivalent, needed) to balance calories and maintain healthy weight over time.

7. Utilize and contribute resources identified on the "Taking It to the Streets Obesity Initiative" webpage: <http://www.aafcs.org/Advocacy/obesity.asp>
8. Participate in one or more of the AAFCS Communities to promote efforts in developing prevention/healthy weight information from their professional perspectives.
9. Attend national, state, and/or electronic meetings to learn most up-to-date healthy weight practices and what individual members can do personally and professionally to address the obesity crisis.
10. Participate in "Taking It to the Streets Obesity Initiative" and activities triggered by the AAFCS Obesity Prevention & Healthy Weight Initiative Resolution. Lead by example: make lifestyle, food purchases and preparation, and eating practice changes to achieve and maintain healthy weight for age and height.
11. Teach and advocate healthy weight practices with family members, friends, and those with whom we work.

Submitted by the Ohio Association for Family and Consumer Sciences for approval by the AAFCS Senate. Co-Sponsored by the Nutrition, Health, and Food Management (NHFM) Community.