



NIHCM
FOUNDATION

WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH UPDATE

August 27, 2003

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1. [NIHCM Foundation Conference: "Childhood Obesity: Advancing Effective Treatment and Prevention"](#)

On April 9, 2003, NIHCM Foundation held a child health forum, "Childhood Obesity: Advancing Effective Prevention and Treatment" in Washington, D.C. Researchers, practitioners, and health care professionals presented perspectives on the most effective childhood obesity initiatives. An Action Brief will be available shortly summarizing the discussion of the rising childhood overweight epidemic as well as effective prevention and treatment programs.

An Issue Paper, "Childhood Obesity - Advancing Effective Prevention and Treatment: An Overview for Health Professionals," prepared for the meeting is available at <http://www.nihcm.org/ChildObesityOverview.pdf>.

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2. Health Plan Initiatives

The **Arkansas Blue Cross Blue Shield** "Blue & Youth Health Program" has now reached more than 480,000 youth. The program is designed to improve the health status of Arkansas citizens through wellness and prevention, starting with the young people of the state. Classroom presentations, kid's health clubs, animated music videos, student-to-student mentoring and an interactive game on CD combine to have an early impact on the health behaviors of kids ages 5-10. The "star" of the "Blue & Youth Health Program" is a big, blue sheep named BlueAnn Ewe. To find out more about the Blue & Youth Health Program, visit the Arkansas Blue Cross Web site at <http://www.arkansasbluecross.com> and click on Community Involvement, or go to <http://www.BlueAnnEwe-ark.com> to meet BlueAnn "in the wool" and view her animated musical health messages.

Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey announced the creation of the "Horizon Health Kit", a new resource designed to educate New Jerseyans about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. Horizon is distributing kits, which include a BMI chart, a pedometer, and a pocket calendar for recording activities, at health-related events throughout the state. In addition, Horizon has launched the "Horizon Walks for Health" campaign to provide educational information on how to incorporate healthy choices, like walking and eating properly, into your daily lifestyle. For more information on these and other Horizon health initiatives, please visit <http://www.horizonblue.com>.

WellPoint Health Networks, Inc., recently launched a Women's Health Program e-Newsletter, a monthly resource created especially for women. The newsletter provides information on various topics to promote women's health. Past issues have focused on heart disease, pregnancy, nutrition, communication, dental health, adult immunizations, mammograms, and cervical cancer. For access to the newsletter, please visit Blue Cross of California at <http://www.bluecrossca.com>, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Georgia at <http://www.bcbsga.com>, or Blue Cross Blue Shield of Missouri at <http://www.bcbsmo.com/home.asp>.

In addition, **WellPoint** has teamed up with the American Dietetic Association to produce a print and web-based guide, "Healthy Habits for Healthy Kids". The bilingual guide, intended to help healthcare professionals communicate with parents and families about childhood obesity, is available free in electronic format at <http://www.wellpoint.com> or <http://www.eatright.org>.

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3. [American Academy of Pediatrics \(AAP\) releases a new policy statement promoting calculating BMI for all children and adolescents](#)

As a result of the dramatic rise in childhood obesity, the American Academy of Pediatrics issued its first-ever policy statement focused exclusively on identifying and preventing the national epidemic. "Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity" recommends physicians calculate and plot BMI once a year in all children and adolescents and for physicians to use BMI as the primary diagnostic tool. The policy also includes recommendations for physicians to routinely promote physical activity, encourage parents and caregivers to promote healthy eating patterns, to encourage, support and protect breastfeeding, and to recommend limited television viewing. The new policy is published in the August issue of Pediatrics and can be found at <http://www.aap.org/policy/s100029.html> or <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/reprint/112/2/424.pdf>.

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4. [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) releases new diabetes estimates and physical activity findings](#)

A new study from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention predicts a sharp increase in the prevalence of diabetes, with one-third of people born in the U.S. in 2000 developing the disease without improvements in their diet and exercise. Currently, 17 million Americans have diabetes, a 61% increase since 1991. Based on data from the annual National Health Interview Survey of 360,000 people surveyed between 1984 and 2000, the CDC predicts between 45 million and 50 million United States residents could have diabetes by 2050. For more information about the study, please visit http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/aag/aag_ddt.htm or http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/aag/pdf/aag_ddt2004.pdf.

Also, data from the CDC Youth Media Campaign Longitudinal Survey (YMCLS) indicate that 61.5% of U.S. children ages nine to 13 do not participate in organized physical activity outside of school, with 22.6% not engaging in any free-time physical activity. Of the 77.4% involved in any free-time activity, 38.5% participate in organized sports. The CDC developed the Youth Media Campaign (YMC) as a national initiative to encourage children to engage in physical activity, and conducted its YMCLS to provide a baseline assessment of activity levels. The survey results were published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, which is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5233a1.htm>.

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5. [Metabolic Syndrome reported in almost 1 million teenagers](#)

A study published in the August issue of the Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine reported that 4.2% of American adolescents have "metabolic syndrome," a compilation of risk factors for subsequent health problems including early onset of diabetes and heart disease. Researchers from the University of Rochester and the American Academy of Pediatrics' Center for Child Health Research found that close to 30% of overweight teens have the syndrome and are considered high risk for serious problems later in life. For the article abstract and a link to the full-text option, please visit <http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/abstract/157/8/821>.

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6. [Bright Futures for Women's Health and Wellness Initiative](#)

Working to improve the health status and reduce health disparities for women, Bright Futures for Women's Health and Wellness Initiative (BFWHW) is led by the Health Resource and Services Administration, Office of Women's Health. BFWHW aims to increase awareness and the use of preventive health services for all women across their life span, building on the success of the Bright Futures for Infants, Children and Adolescents Program. For more information about BFWHW, please visit <http://www.hrsa.gov/WomensHealth/brightfut.htm>.

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7. [Health Resources and Services Administration \(HRSA\) releases "Women's Health USA 2003"](#)

"Women's Health USA 2003" is an updated statistical look at the health of America's women compiled from the most recent federal data on health and health-related indicators. The report looks at population characteristics, health status, and health services utilization, and includes a new section devoted to special populations such as immigrant, incarcerated, and older women. Gender, racial and ethnic disparities are highlighted as well as the impact on women of chronic health conditions, including heart disease, diabetes, cancer, asthma and obesity. More information about the databook and a link to the report can be found at <http://www.hrsa.gov/womenshealth/databook.htm>.

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8. [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\) develops "Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age: Checklist for Your Next Checkup"](#)

As part of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality-sponsored U.S Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Putting Prevention into Practice initiative, recommendations were developed for which health screening tests women need and when they should have them. "Women: Stay Healthy at Any Age: Checklist for Your Next Checkup" is based on scientific research and is considered the 'gold standard' for preventive services delivered in the clinical setting. The pamphlet and additional information about the fact sheet can be found at <http://www.ahcpr.gov/ppip/healthywom.htm> or <http://www.ahrq.gov/ppip/healthywom.pdf>.

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The Women's and Children's Health Update is produced by NIHCM Foundation under its cooperative agreement (5U93MC00143) with the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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