



## WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH UPDATE

June 30, 2004

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1. [The National Institute for Health Care Management \(NIHCM\) Foundation highlights children's mental health initiatives at the most recent children's health forum on May 13, 2004 in Washington, DC](#)

On May 13, 2004, NIHCM Foundation held its latest child health forum, *Children's Mental Health: New Developments in Policy and Programs*. The forum brought together representatives from the public and private sectors to discuss current policy and programs in children's mental health. Panelists presented on various topics in children's mental health, including health plan and provider initiatives to address the issue.

- **Unity Health System** integrates behavioral health in primary care through a model program of culturally relevant, on-site evaluation and treatment to patients referred from primary care providers in participating practices.
- **Bright Futures in Practice: Mental Health** is a set of principals and strategies to promote the mental and emotional health and well-being of all children and adolescents. A practice guide includes chapters on development from infancy to adolescence, as well as information on specific mental health disorders. A tool kit for health professionals provides resources for screening, treatment, and education. For more information or to download a copy of the guidelines, visit <http://www.brightfutures.org/mentalhealth/> or <http://brightfutures.aap.org/web/>.
- **Kaiser Permanente** recently developed a model of care to guide early intervention, diagnosis, and treatment of children with autism spectrum disorders. A similar program has been developed for depression in children and adolescents.
- **HealthPartners** is implementing behavioral health case management for high-risk children in need of a coordinated system of treatment. The five key components are identification, enrollment, engagement, stabilization, and "soft discharge."
- **Magellan Health Services** developed the OffSpring Depression Prevention Program to identify offspring of depressed parents, emphasize early detection of depression, promote appropriate evaluation and care, and educate parents and health professionals about the risks in this population.

A background paper, *Children's Mental Health: An Overview and Key Considerations for Health System Stakeholders*, and an Action Brief summarizing the key discussion from the forum, will be available shortly.

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2. [Suicide rate among children and adolescents decreased by 25% between 1992 and 2001](#)

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide rates have decreased by 25% in children and adolescents ages 10 to 19, from 6.2 to 4.6 deaths per 100,000 during 1992 to 2001. Changes have occurred in suicidal behavior, with the rate of firearm suicide decreasing and the rate of suicide by suffocation increasing in all age groups. The report can be viewed online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5322a2.htm>.

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3. [Health plan initiatives targeting childhood obesity and mental health](#)

- In June 2004, **Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield** partnered with the Kentucky Pediatric Society to implement the Walking Works program for at-risk and overweight children 11 years of age and older. Interested pediatricians will administer the program, which includes the use of an electronic pedometer and a walking log to track progress. For more information contact Suellen Brill, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield at [suellen.brill@anthem.com](mailto:suellen.brill@anthem.com) or 502-423-2173.
- **Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield** held its third childhood obesity forum on June 23, 2004 to discuss regional strategies to combat the epidemic. Highmark has developed a resource tool kit for physicians to be distributed to more than 2,000 providers in the 29 counties in the Highmark service area. A similar tool kit for community stakeholders unveiled at the forum focuses on best-practice initiatives to improve nutrition and physical activity. For more information, visit <https://www.highmark.com/hmk/about/newsroom/viewPressRelease.jsp?articleID=2965>.
- In May 2004, **Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey** announced the Obesity Awareness and Education Initiative, in partnership with the Ernest Mario School of Pharmacy at Rutgers

University, to develop obesity intervention programs for New Jersey public schools. The first 100 schools to sign up will participate in the program, which includes age-appropriate educational programs taught by Rutgers School of Pharmacy students on topics such as obesity, exercise, and healthful eating. For more information, visit [http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/aboutus\\_press\\_releases.asp?article\\_id=425&urlsection=aboutus](http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/aboutus_press_releases.asp?article_id=425&urlsection=aboutus).

Horizon also launched the Weight Management Health Education Program in June 2004 for HMO members 12 years of age and over. The program promotes healthy eating behaviors and physical activity while teaching participants how to manage their health in cooperation with their provider. For more information, visit [http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/aboutus\\_press\\_releases.asp?article\\_id=427&urlsection=aboutus](http://www.horizon-bcbsnj.com/aboutus_press_releases.asp?article_id=427&urlsection=aboutus).

- **The Wellmark Foundation** awarded over \$48,000 in June 2004 to the Iowa Medical Society to assist physicians in educating young patients (ages 0-5) and their families about nutrition and physical activity. The grant includes the development of Iowa-specific recommendations to be incorporated into a physician education program, as well as the development of a clinic-based pilot program. For more information, visit [http://www.wellmark.com/news/news\\_releases/062204\\_Foundation\\_Early\\_Childhood\\_Obesity.htm](http://www.wellmark.com/news/news_releases/062204_Foundation_Early_Childhood_Obesity.htm).
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts** announced a four-year, \$7 million dollar expansion of the *Jump Up and Go!* youth wellness initiative. The expansion will help to support the development and distribution of successful childhood obesity treatment programs within community health centers and hospitals throughout Massachusetts. For more information, visit [http://www.bcbsma.com/common/en\\_US/aboutUsIndex.jsp](http://www.bcbsma.com/common/en_US/aboutUsIndex.jsp).
- **Blue Cross Blue Shield and Blue Care Network of Michigan** will provide \$180,000 in funding for community-based groups to support projects that increase knowledge of youth depression and access to community services. For more information, visit <http://www.bcbsm.com/pr040429.shtml>.

The Michigan Blues have also announced the Project Healthy Schools grant program as part of the Blues' Physical Activity and Nutrition Health Initiative. The grants will support the development of

collaborative programs to improve physical activity and nutrition among elementary and middle school students. For more information, visit <http://www.bcbsm.com/pr040325.shtml>.

- **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Rhode Island** announced *Move, Groove, & Improve*, a physical activity program for children and adolescents ages 6-18, in partnership with the Rhode Island Department of Health and Kids First. For more information, visit [http://www.bcbsri.com/BCBSRIWeb/move\\_groove/about/index.jsp](http://www.bcbsri.com/BCBSRIWeb/move_groove/about/index.jsp).

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4. [Research shows only 40% of doctors advise obese patients to lose weight. New resources developed to improve patient-physician interaction during office visits and promote healthy behaviors for children and families](#)

- In April 2004, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study indicated that the percentage of doctors advising obese patients to lose weight declined from 42.5% in 1994 to 40% in 2000, despite growing concerns over the health consequences of excess weight. In addition, obese patients were three times more likely to lose weight if they received advice from their doctors.
- To fill this information gap between patients and providers, a collaborative effort between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Discovery/FitTV created an interactive educational DVD on childhood obesity. The version for kids and families will help promote healthy lifestyles through fun, family-focused and age-appropriate information about physical activity and nutrition. An expanded version for clinicians includes information on utilizing the materials with patients and a continuing medical education (CME) component. For more information about the program, contact Dr. John Whyte, Medical Advisor and Director, Secretary's Council on Private Sector Initiatives, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, at 301-427-1487 or [jwhyte@ahrq.gov](mailto:jwhyte@ahrq.gov).
- In addition, the American Academy of Family Physicians published a guide to help providers treat overweight patients. The monograph, *Practical Advice for Family Physicians to Help Overweight Patients*, is designed to provide high quality continuing medical education on topics such as including body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference as routine vital signs, managing overweight and obesity as a chronic disease, incorporating behavioral counseling, serving as a

role model for patients and identifying opportunities for community level involvement. Visit <http://www.aafp.org/x24060.xml> for more information and to read the monograph.

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5. [High blood pressure and metabolic syndrome in children and adolescents continue to increase – National High Blood Pressure Education Program recommends screening children as young as 3 years old](#)

- Researchers indicate in the May 5, 2004 issue of *JAMA* that blood pressure has increased in children over the past decade and this increase is partially attributable to the increased prevalence of overweight. Using a nationally representative sample of children ages 8 to 17 from the third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III), the study shows a rise in mean systolic and diastolic blood pressure from 1988-1994 to 1999-2000. An abstract of the article can be viewed at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/>. (Muntner P, He J, Cutler JA, et al. Trends in Blood Pressure Among Children and Adolescents. *JAMA* May 5, 2004; 291(17):2107-2113.)
- Metabolic syndrome, a compilation of at least three of five conditions – obesity, hypertension, high blood sugar, high triglyceride levels, and low HDL – is present in 50% of severely obese children and adolescents and 39% of the moderately obese, according to research published in the June 3, 2004 issue of the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Researchers concluded that the prevalence of metabolic syndrome in children and adolescents is increasing with worsening obesity rates. An abstract of the article can be viewed at <http://www.nejm.org>. (Weiss R, Dziura J, Burgert TS, et al. Obesity and the Metabolic Syndrome in Children and Adolescents. *NEJM* June 3, 2004; 350(23):2362-2374.)
- In response to rising blood pressures in children, and the role of hypertension in obesity and metabolic syndrome, the National High Blood Pressure Education Program released new guidelines recommending blood pressure measurement in all children beginning at three years old whenever they present in health care settings (See Ingelfinger JR. *NEJM* May 20, 2004; 21(350):2123-2126.). The updated guidelines emphasize the need for intervention in children and adolescents and will be published in the July issue of *Pediatrics*, <http://www.pediatrics.org>.

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6. [One out of three non-elderly Americans uninsured during 2002-2003; over four of ten young adults can expect to be uninsured at some time during the year](#)

- In June 2004, Families USA reported approximately 82 million Americans (one out of three people under 65 years of age) were uninsured at some point during 2002-2003. The report indicates 65.3% were uninsured for at least six months, and 50.6% were uninsured for at least nine months. Of the uninsured, four out of five were in working families, including a significant portion of middle class families. The report and more information can be found at <http://www.familiesusa.org/site/PageServer>.
- The Commonwealth Fund also recently investigated the issue of the uninsured through an updated analysis also released in June 2004, *Rite of Passage? Why Young Adults Become Uninsured and How New Policies Can Help*. The report indicates 2 of 5 college graduates and half of high school graduates (who don't go on to college) will be uninsured in the first year after graduation. The authors point to targeted policy changes to extend coverage to young adults, such as extending age limits for dependents and Medicaid/CHIP coverage and implementing state mandates to help cover all full-time and part-time college students. The brief can be found at [http://www.cmwf.org/media/releases/collins649\\_release05212003.asp](http://www.cmwf.org/media/releases/collins649_release05212003.asp).

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7. [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\) announces the National Children's Study](#)

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is preparing to launch the National Children's Study, the largest-ever study of U.S. children that will follow 100,000 children from before birth to age 21. Ordered by Congress in 2000, the study is in the initial planning phase and will begin enrolling pregnant women in 2006. The ultimate goal of the study is to improve the health and well-being of children by examining environmental influences on health and development. More information about the study can be found at <http://www.nationalchildrensstudy.gov/>.

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8. [May 2004 \*Pediatrics\* supplement focuses on providing a medical home](#)

The Medical Home, a supplement to the May 2004 issue of *Pediatrics*, compiles recent research on the cost and quality of providing a medical home, successful tools and methods in eliminating barriers to care, and the American Academy of Pediatrics' policy statement in 2002 on the medical home. Abstracts of the research are available at <http://www.pediatrics.org>. (Onniges TF, Palfry JS. The Medical Home. *Pediatrics* 2004; 113(5, Part 2):1471-1548.)

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9. [New web sites announced to promote women's health from adolescence into adulthood](#)

- Powerful Bones. Powerful Girls has a new web site for parents with resources to help their daughters develop lifelong healthy habits to build and maintain strong bones. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones/parents/index.html>.
- A related web site is available for young girls to promote bone health, with creative and interactive resources to educate adolescent girls about the importance of weight-bearing physical activity and calcium. Visit <http://www.cdc.gov/powerfulbones/index3.html>.
- The 4Girls Health site is a new resource for adolescent girls to promote healthy, positive behaviors through interactive tools and useful health and relationship information. Visit <http://www.4girls.gov>.

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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.

Please send questions and comments to [nihcm@nihcm.org](mailto:nihcm@nihcm.org) or call Tracy Vidinghoff at (202) 296-4426.

NIHCM Foundation  
1225 19th Street, NW, Suite 710  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel. 202.296.4426  
Fax 202.296.4319  
<http://www.nihcm.org>