CHOICES Project: Leveraging Opportunities to Address Winnable Battles

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Child obesity epidemic is still a national crisis

- NHANES 1999-2014 data
- 33% children with overweight
- 17% with obesity

CHOICES Model Childhood Obesity Prevalence: NSCH 2003-2008 matched to NHANES 2005-2010

Prevalence of adult obesity (BMI ≥ 30) by state in 2013 – (a) Uncorrected vs. (b) Corrected.

http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=info:doi/10.1371/journal.pone.0150735
Consequences of childhood obesity

- Having obesity puts children at a much higher risk of having additional diseases or complications.

- Obese children are more likely to become obese adults and have more severe comorbidities.

- Incur higher healthcare costs in childhood and later adult life.
Costs of childhood obesity

Who bears the health care costs of severe obesity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Medicare</th>
<th>Medicaid</th>
<th>Private plans</th>
<th>Out of pocket</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Severe obesity health care cost</td>
<td>$21B</td>
<td>$8B</td>
<td>$18B</td>
<td>$21B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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$69 billion
Approaches to reducing childhood obesity prevalence

- Two main approaches:
  - Treating obesity after onset (example: bariatric surgery)
  - Preventing excess BMI/weight gain through policy and programmatic interventions

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Importance of preventing weight gain in childhood

- Excess weight accumulates slowly

- Adults have larger energy gap than children and harder to address in adulthood

- Interventions early in the life course have the best chance of reducing long-term obesity prevalence and related mortality and health care costs

Wang, Orleans, Gortmaker 2012; Hall et al 2013
Importance of prevention

We cannot expect to treat our way out of the obesity epidemic:

- **Treatment** of childhood obesity makes a relatively small impact on obesity prevalence – too little too late

- **Preventive strategies** are critically important for addressing the epidemic

Gortmaker et al. 2015
Policy solutions are complex

- No single solution to solve obesity epidemic in US
- Requires multiple initiatives at multiple sectors across age groups
- Decisions should be evidence-based and take into account population reach, health impact, and cost

Gortmaker et al. 2015
**ASTHO’s Role in CHOICES Partnership**

- Provide outreach and coordination to recruit states and other partner organizations (i.e. NCSL, NACCHO) to work with CHOICES team

- Advise CHOICES team on:
  - Communications strategies
  - Pilot project development and implementation
  - Measures of progress and outcomes
  - Policy-related issues