

Texas Children's Mental Health Forum

Convened by Texans Care for Children and the Texas Health Institute
Tuesday, April 19, 2011

TOPIC:

Obesity and Children's Mental Health

DISCUSSION NOTES

Notes are provided to share highlights of Forum meetings with those who are interested in the topics being discussed but are unable to attend. Texans Care for Children and the Texas Health Institute strive to capture an accurate outline of the information and discussion shared during each meeting. However, these notes should not be viewed as an official or complete record of the meeting, and some inaccuracies may be contained. Please contact [Josette Saxton](#) at Texans Care for Children to report any significant errors.

PRESENTATION: "Mental Health and Pediatric Obesity"

Presented by Janie Black, M.Ed; Michele Pierson, LMSW; and Yesenia Marroquin, Doctoral Student in School Psychology, all with the Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity at the Dell Children's Medical Center

Notes from presentation:

Statistics on obesity:

- 30% of adult population are obese – double rate since 1980
- 35% of those earning <\$15,000 are obese as oppose to 24% of those earning over \$50,000 – strong correlation between socio-economic status and obesity
- 61% of Texans considered overweight and obese
- 35-40% of Texas children are overweight/obese – 1 in 6 children
- "Fattest cities" – Corpus, San Antonio, El Paso, Dallas
- 40% of calories children take in are empty calories
- Particularly prevalent in Hispanic boys and African American girls
- Growing problem in Texas since Hispanic and AA population are increasing
- Austin ISD – 1,669 students > 99th percentile

Cost of Obesity

- Projected costs for 2040 in Texas: \$39 Billion

Toxic Environment:

- Availability and affordability of high fat, high carbohydrate food (fast food, soft drinks)
- Marketing to children
- Fewer family meals
- TV/Computers/Video games
- Safety issues
- Decrease in physical education time

Mental Health Correlates of Obesity

- Depression
 - 3-4x increased prevalence of depression in obese individual compared to non-obese individual
 - Suicide attempt rates 87% - 122% higher in those with BMI > 40 than general population
 - Obesity associated with various factors that could contribute to depression in youth (social isolation; low self-esteem)
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
 - Obese girls half as likely to attend college
 - Obese girls more likely to use drugs and alcohol
 - Feeling of helplessness
- Distorted body image
 - Body image more important to girls than boys
 - Self-concept and social norms have greater effect on education on girls than boys
 - Self-conscious when changing in locker rooms
 - Uncomfortable on work-out equipment and in fitness classes
- Eating disorders
 - Binge eating disorder
 - Night eating syndrome (> 25% of daily calories consumed after dinner; Feeling need to eat before can return to sleep)
- Stigma
 - Seen as lacking willpower
 - Personality flaw
 - Personal choice
 - Discrimination

A video from the Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity was shown that poignantly illustrated stigma and weight bias students experience at home and at school:

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bCJe42LGnB4>

The Texas Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Childhood Obesity at the Dell Children's Medical Center currently operates the following two programs:

- **ACES (Activating Children Empowering Success) Clinic** provides comprehensive evaluation, psychosocial support and treatment for overweight and obese children and teens and will begin seeing patients in April 2010.
- **Healthy Living, Happy Living / Vida Sana, Vida Feliz** is an after-school, family-based obesity program. The 10-week program focuses on empowering children and their families to make **lifelong healthy changes**.

Intervention/Strategies utilized by these programs include:

- Addressing Self Esteem/Self-Worth Issues
- Goal Setting
- Recognizing patterns
- Self-monitoring
- Work with Parents

Contact Information:

Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas

Stephanie Saucedo, Patient Access Representative II, 4900 Mueller Blvd.
Austin, TX 78723; Phone: (512) 324-9999, x86437 (ACES) & x86433 (HLHL)
Fax: (512) 406-6520 ; Website: www.dellchildrens.net

Discussion of Issues:

Challenge: Affecting change associated with lifestyle choices to improve nutrition and physical activity, such as taking time to sit and eat as a family, as opposed to eating on the run/in car or walking/biking to school.

- *Recommendation:* Address structural barriers, such as unavailability of sidewalks to allow students to safely walk or bike to school, to promote healthy lifestyles

Challenge: Community level strategies to combat obesity are often one-time events (e.g., family fun runs).

- *Recommendation:* Need to have more systemic solutions to promote daily physical activity.

Challenge: Society's mental image of being overweight/obese has changed, with overweight becoming the new "norm".

Challenge: Replicating promising practices and strategies across the state.

- *Recommendation:* Conducting outcomes research helps support the expansion of efforts into more communities.

Comment: Referrals to the Dell Children's Medical Center Obesity Programs generally come from primary care providers (PCPs)

Challenge: Clinical programs are primarily supported through grants. Funding challenges lead to small-scale programs with large waiting list.

- *Recommendation:* Provide reimbursements for obesity-related services/treatments from insurers, without having to bill under another diagnosis

PRESENTATION – Opportunities to Address Obesity & Mental Health in Schools: School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs)

Presented by: Lauren Dimitry, AISD School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) member & Texans Care for Children Health Policy Associate

Notes from Presentation:

Lauren Dimitry provided an overview of School Health Advisory Councils (SHACs), laws governing SHACs and examples of SHAC responsibilities.

Every independent school system is required by law to have a School District Health Advisory Council; of which the majority of members must be parents who are not employed by the school district. SHACs are required to

Many school districts do not have robust SHACs. The SHAC makes recommendations to School Boards regarding the health education curriculum and coordinated school health programs addressing:

- Health education,
- Physical education,
- Nutritional services,
- Parental involvement,
- Staff wellness,
- Environmental health,
- Mental/emotional wellness, and
- Health services

Discussion of Issues:

Challenge: Not all districts have a robust SHAC.

Comment: Some state-level mechanisms exist within TEA and DSHS for information-sharing among local SHACs— monthly webinars for SHACs (Marissa Rathbone, Health and Safety, TEA); Texas State Health Advisory Council – state-level SHAC – within the Dept. of State Health Services (DSHS) which is to provide leadership in the identification and dissemination of school health best practices and resources for school policy makers.

Challenge: SHACs may address mental health issues, but they are not required to do so.

- *Recommendation:* Even when mental health issues are not on the stated agenda of a local SHAC, strategies impacting mental health can be integrated into a SHAC's work, such as can be seen in Georgetown ISD's SHAC.
- *Recommendation:* Require in statute mental health/social and emotional well-being be addressed by SHACs

Comment: DSHS School Health staff expanded into suicide prevention and coordination around mental health issues

Helpful Resources (provided by Linda Meigs, Mental Health Advocate, Georgetown TX):

To subscribe to the "School Health and Safety" Listserv, please do the following:

- Go to <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/list/>
- Click on "Select a List" for pop-up menu of listserv names
- Scroll down to select "School Health and Safety"
- Click on "Join the List"
- Enter your name and email address
- A confirmation email will be sent to the address listed
- Respond to confirmation email with "OK"

SHAC LINKS:

- Coordinated School Health Requirements & Approved Programs
<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index3.aspx?id=2812>
- 2010-2011 School Health Advisory Award Recipients

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/SHAC_2010-2011_Awards.html

- Texas School Health Advisory Committee (TSHAC) homepage
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/schoolhealth/shadvise.shtm>
- Texas Unified School Safety Standards
<http://www.txssc.txstate.edu/K12/standards>

Contact Information:

Marissa L. Rathbone
Director of Health and Safety
Division of State Initiatives
Texas Education Agency
1701 N. Congress Ave. 5-128
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 463-3064

PRESENTATION – Legislative Update

Presented by Josette Saxton, Texans Care for Children

Josette Saxton provided an update on specific bills pertaining to children’s mental health:

These two bills seem to be moving:

- SB 224 – Program to recognize schools with successful health programs
- SB 226 – Reporting individual student performance with Fitnessgram

SB 1004 by Lucio, introduced this week, would add a one-cent tax per ounce for a “carbonated or non-carbonated nonalcoholic beverage that contains natural or artificial sweeteners.”

The following two bills are up for hearing today:

- HB 1340 by Walle would assist in bringing stakeholders together to determine how to support schools in implementing School-wide Positive Behavior Supports (SW-PBIS).
- HB Require private insurance to provide coverage for early childhood intervention (ECI) (e.g., speech therapy, physical therapy).

There are a number of “bullying” bills that are being heard. There are some excellent provisions and some problematic provisions (particularly related to consequences for perpetrators of bullying).

While the Texas Integrated Funding Initiatives (TIFI) budget has been “zeroed out” in the current budget, Sen. Zaffirini has introduced a bill, SB 1817 which would fold the TIFI Consortium into the Children’s Policy Council and therefore keep this initiative alive.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Youth Mental Health Advocacy Retreat

Lauren Cohen, Youth Coordinator, Via Hope, Texas Mental Health Resource, announced a Youth Mental Health Advocacy Retreat, to be held this summer at the University of Houston, for persons aged 17-24 years. Lauren can be reached at: lcohen@namitexas.org, or 512-693-2000.

Learning Lunch Session on Children's Mental Health

The Office for the Elimination of Health Disparities Learning Lunch Series will present: "Children's Mental Health: Recognizing Signs and Symptoms"

Texas Department of State Health Services

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

DSHS Moreton Building

Room M-739

1100 W. 49th St.

Austin TX 78756

Children's Mental Health Awareness Day **May 3, 2011**

Southern Obesity Summit

October 2-5, 2011

New Orleans, LA

Attend the premier southern conference on obesity policy and community-based interventions! The 5th Annual Southern Obesity Summit will consist of 50 interactive sessions showcasing the most innovative policy and community-based initiatives from across the South, inspiring and provoking keynotes from southern and national leaders, skill building workshops including obesity prevention and health reform, southern obesity research roundtable, valuable networking opportunities and more!

<http://www.cvent.com/events/5th-annual-southern-obesity-summit/event-summary-127f68896739445f9d4c74cdd0cf1fa6.aspx>