

Employer Checklist: Available Strategies to Combat Child Obesity

Employers interested in strategies to combat obesity and improve child health have many options. The following checklist is provided as a review of efforts highlighted in the *Childhood Obesity: It's Everyone's Business* toolkit.

Understand Your Population & Data

- Analyze what percent of your total beneficiary population is children under age 18.
- Identify/consider child obesity rates in the states/area of the country in which your employees are located.
- If possible, analyze rates of childhood obesity or medical conditions attributed to child obesity among beneficiaries under age 18 using aggregate medical claims.

Ensure Adequate Benefits

- Review coverage policy to ensure that exclusions do not preclude treatment for the following services:
 - ❖ preventive screenings¹ to identify, document and discuss BMI with the patient and family, when appropriate;
 - ❖ office visits for a diagnosis of obesity (with or without limitation); and
 - ❖ in the context of the office visit, counseling on physical activity, nutrition and managing the food environment at home.
- Identify (directly or via health plan) providers with an integrated, multidisciplinary approach to treatment and provide an appropriate level of coverage for children identified as obese based on screening results.
- Identify community resources for appropriate non-covered services to support healthy weight for overweight children and those at risk of becoming overweight/obese.
- Require health plans to report and comply with NCQA's HEDIS measures related to BMI screening and counseling for children.
- Require health plans to coach and counsel physicians who are not meeting HEDIS standards to improve their performance.

¹ With a USPSTF evidence rating of B, child obesity screening will be required under PPACA



Offer Employee Education

- Utilize publicly available tools, such as those available from the National Business Group on Health, to educate parents on issues related to:
 - ❖ developing healthy lifestyles in the home.
 - ❖ the physical activity and diet needs of children.
 - ❖ the role child care and schools play in child health and how parents can be an engaged consumer.
 - ❖ communicating with their child's physician about weight.
- Consider implementing a program focused on family health.
- Assess the value and feasibility of offering family-oriented health coaching.
- Consider direct-to-children communications.

Leverage On-site Facilities to Promote Child Health

On-site Fitness Facilities

If your company offers on-site fitness facilities:

- Consider whether you can allow children on site to use fitness facilities after hours and under the supervision of a parent.
- Schedule personal trainers or fitness center staff to teach employees about the physical activity guidelines for children and age-appropriate fitness.
- Consider opportunities to leverage fitness facilities to engage school-aged children in physical activity during school breaks (e.g. holidays, summer months).
- NOTE: If corporate non-solicitation policy is a barrier, consider creating a carve-out for charitable purposes or making the program a corporate benefit.

On-site Health Centers

If you provide an on-site health center:

- Consider expanding the routine services offered at your on-site clinic to include children. If all services cannot be extended, consider hosting:
 - ❖ periodic opportunities for body mass index screenings and weight management support;
 - ❖ school and sports screening exams, ensuring physicians are assessing weight and speaking to parents about childhood obesity risk factors; or
 - ❖ periodic visits with dietitians or behavioral counselors.

On-site Child Care Centers

If your company offers on-site child care:

- Ensure child care centers are following standards for nutrition and physical activity that meet recommendations for health and go beyond minimal licensing requirements;
- Consider whether children can use on-site and age-appropriate fitness facilities during low-usage times.
- Teach children in child care about fruits, vegetables and exercise.
- Consider utilizing corporate fitness staff to teach classes at the child care or to provide structured physical activity breaks.
 - ❖ If corporate fitness staff are unavailable, arrange for external physical activity professionals to teach special exercise-based activities to children in child care.
- If lawn area is available, consider allowing child care participants to keep a fruit and vegetable garden to raise their interest in such foods.

Promote “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work” Day

- Leverage this day to educate children about the importance of a healthy life.
 - ❖ Utilize fitness staff or chefs at on-site cafeterias to teach specific lessons about physical activity and/or nutrition.
 - ❖ Host health promotion activities, races or other physical activity opportunities during the day.

Consider Corporate Social Responsibility/Philanthropic Opportunities

- Participate in local coalitions related to childhood obesity.
- Sponsor local, state or nationwide events related to child health.
- Support established programs and/or organizations that focus on child health, such as the Boys and Girls of America, YMCA, International Walk to School Day, etc.
- Support physical activity, sports or health programs of local schools.
- Allow employees limited paid time for volunteer work that emphasizes family or child health.
- Contribute the time/expertise of relevant professionals employed by your company (e.g. fitness trainers, RDs, RNs, psychologists or other health professionals) to family activities and/or community programs.