

Maine Medical Association

Resolution #4: Commitment to Promote Healthy Weight by Improving the Prevention, Diagnosis, and Management of Obesity, submitted by the MMA Public Health Committee

1 **WHEREAS**, obesity presents a health problem of unparalleled significance in this nation and in
2 Maine, with data showing that two out of three adults, and nearly one of three children, are
3 overweight or obese,
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5 **WHEREAS**, obesity is associated with serious health risks and creates a significant health burden to
6 those it affects, including having strong linkages to the most prevalent chronic illnesses such as
7 diabetes and cardiovascular disease,
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9 **WHEREAS**, obesity has created profound economic challenges for our nation and our state, with a
10 recent report estimating that the combined costs of physical inactivity, overweight and obesity in
11 Maine alone total more than \$2.56 billion/year,
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13 **WHEREAS**, while this problem clearly is complex and multi-factorial, physicians must be at the
14 forefront of action to increase awareness and help reverse this tide,
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16 **WHEREAS**, national leaders and the public for the past decade have called on physicians to take an
17 increased role in prevention and early recognition of obesity, yet significant gaps exist in ability of
18 healthcare providers to respond to this crisis,
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20 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Maine Medical Association work with**
21 **stakeholders and leaders across the state to help physicians take an active role and advocate**
22 **for policy change needed to promote healthy weight, including specifically the following**
23 **actions:**
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- 25 1. Encourage health systems and professional training programs to educate and train clinicians
26 and practice teams to regularly assess and track weight using Body Mass Index (BMI); to
27 promote healthy weight messages with patients and families related to healthy eating and
28 physical activity; and to respectfully address with patients the health issues associated with
29 overweight and obesity.
- 30 2. Encourage physicians to serve as role models to patients, families and community by being
31 physically active and promoting healthy eating - behaviors that promote a life-long
32 commitment to healthy weight.
- 33 3. Encourage physicians to leverage their influence at the community level to advocate for
34 policies and environments that promote healthy eating and physical activity, including
35 becoming active with local early-childhood providers and school governance structures (e.g.,
36 school boards & wellness councils) to serve as clinical experts and provide resources to
37 shape healthier nutritional and activity policies.
- 38 4. Promote the consistent delivery of preventive healthy weight messages (e.g. "5210") to
39 patients and communities.
- 40 5. Adopt policies within healthcare organizations that encourage physical activity and healthy
41 food choices for employees, clients and the community.
- 42 6. Urge employers and health plans to adopt healthcare benefit plans that support appropriate
43 medical services to prevent, diagnose, and treat obesity.
- 44 7. Support legislative priorities that create policy changes that promote healthy weight, (such as
45 those proposed by Health Policy Partners of Maine.