



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Training Health Professionals for Obesity Care



More than one third of U.S. adults have obesity, with obesity care costing as much as \$210 billion per year.^{1,2} Nonetheless, few health professionals and trainees receive training in the prevention and management of obesity.³ For example, fewer than 30 percent of medical schools meet the minimum hours of nutrition education recommended by the National Research Council, and fewer than one fourth of physicians report feeling adequately trained to counsel their patients on healthy eating or physical activity.^{4,5} While some innovative schools and training programs in some disciplines have prioritized obesity education, no attempts have been made to standardize the minimum level of obesity-related education and training that health professionals should receive.



**MORE THAN 2/3 OF AMERICANS
ARE OVERWEIGHT OR HAVE OBESITY**

Resulting In

210,000,000,000

OF ANNUAL SPENDING ON OBESITY-RELATED DISEASE

BPC has engaged in the issue of health provider training since the first days of what is now the BPC Prevention Initiative (formerly the Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative). Since 2013, BPC has partnered with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the American College of Sports Medicine, and others to address the subpar status of nutrition-, physical activity-, prevention-, and obesity-related training that health professionals receive in the United States. BPC and its partners have put forth policy recommendations in this area and have highlighted and awarded innovative schools and organizations.



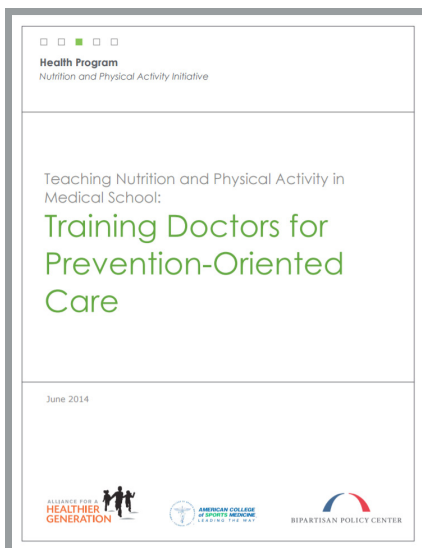
LOTS TO LOSE

In 2012, BPC Prevention Initiative Co-Chairs and former U.S. Secretaries Dan Glickman, Mike Leavitt, Donna E. Shalala, and Ann M. Veneman called for incorporation of nutrition and physical activity training into all phases of medical education in their report, *Lots to Lose: How America's Health and Obesity Crisis Threatens our Economic Future*.



SPOTLIGHTING INNOVATIVE MEDICAL SCHOOLS

BPC partnered with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (the Alliance) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) to host a 2013 event highlighting innovative approaches taken by medical schools around the country to increase nutrition and physical activity training. The event highlighted perspectives from other key organizations including insurers, licensing and certification boards, and community-based organizations.



TRAINING DOCTORS FOR PREVENTION-ORIENTED CARE

BPC, the Alliance, and ACSM continued to partner to publish a 2014 white paper, *Teaching Nutrition and Physical Activity in Medical School: Training Doctors for Prevention-Oriented Care*. The groups' policy recommendations focused on options for improving medical education and training in topics such as nutrition and physical activity that have an important role to play in the prevention and treatment of obesity and chronic diseases. The paper also addressed the need to change reimbursement policies to support health services that target lifestyle factors such as nutrition and exercise.

Provider Competencies for the Prevention and Management of Obesity

Since 2015, BPC, the Alliance, and ACSM have partnered with the Provider Training and Education Work Group, led by Dr. Don Bradley of Duke University and Dr. Bill Dietz of George Washington University, to develop a first-of-their-kind set of educational competencies for the prevention and management of obesity. These ten core competencies and 23 sub-competencies were designed for the many types of health professionals engaged in obesity prevention and management.



The competencies are intended set the bar for what schools and training programs should be teaching tomorrow's health care providers, and they can also be incorporated into licensing exams, board certifications, and continuing education for current providers.

The Provider Competencies for the Prevention and Management of Obesity were developed by the Provider Training and Education Workgroup of the Integrated Clinical and Social Systems for the Prevention and Management of Obesity Innovation Collaborative, an ad hoc activity associated with the Roundtable on Obesity Solutions at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (the National Academies). The responsibility for the content rests with the Innovation Collaborative and not with the National Academies.*

Workgroup Co-Chairs

Don Bradley, M.D., MHS-CL

Duke University

William Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.

George Washington University

Workgroup Participant Organizations

- Academy for Eating Disorders
- Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics
- Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Association of Colleges of Nursing
- American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine
- American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
- American Board of Obesity Medicine
- American Council of Academic Physical Therapy
- American Dental Education Association
- American Kinesiology Association
- American Psychological Association
- Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
- Association of American Medical Colleges
- Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- Interprofessional Education Collaborative
- National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
- Physician Assistant Education Association
- Society for Public Health Education
- Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
- The Obesity Society
- YMCA of the USA

* The competencies do not necessarily represent the views of any one organization, the Collaborative, the Roundtable, or the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, and have not been subjected to the review procedures of, nor are they a report of, the National Academies.

INNOVATION AWARD

In 2016, applications opened for the inaugural Innovation Award for Health Care Provider Training and Education. The awards were scored, in part, based on how many of the Provider Competencies for the Prevention and Management of Obesity were met by the curriculum. A panel of expert judges selected winners in three categories.

Goldring Center for Culinary Medicine at Tulane University

Category: Schools or programs offering innovative training for **future health care professionals.**



Healthy Homes, Healthy Futures home visitation curriculum Children's National Health System

Category: Schools or programs offering innovative professional development or graduate training for **current health care professionals.**



KNIGHTS Student-Run Free Clinic at University of Central Florida College of Medicine

Category: **Student-led programs** offering innovative student-led training or curricula.



Support for the development of the competencies and the Innovation Award was provided by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Foundation.

ENDNOTES

¹Ogden, C.L., Carroll, M.D., Kit, B.K., & Flegal, K.M. Prevalence of Obesity in the United States, 2009-2010. Atlanta, GA.: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2012.

Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db82.pdf>.

²Cawley, J. and Meyerhoefer, C. "The Medical Care Costs of Obesity: An Instrumental Variables Approach." *Journal of Health Economics*, 31(1): 219-230, 2012.

³Kris-Etherton, P.M., Akabas, S.R., et al. "Nutrition competencies in health professionals' education and training: a new paradigm." *Advanced Nutrition*, 6(1): 83-87, 2015

⁴Adams, K.M., Butsch, W.S., and Kohlmeier, M. "The State of Nutrition Education at US Medical Schools." *Journal of Biomedical Education*, 2015.

⁵Howe, M., Leidel, A., et al. "Patient-related diet and exercise counseling: Do providers' own lifestyle habits matter?" *Preventive Cardiology*, 12(4): 180-185, 2010.