



## **Resolution for Promoting Healthy Weight**

*Call for advocacy, health education and promotion activities directed toward behavioral, environmental, and policy-level factors that influence body weight.*

**Adopted by the SOPHE Board of Trustees**

**October 18, 2019**

**Whereas**, the adult obesity rate in the United States is 39.8% and continues to increase (Hales, Carroll, Fryar, & Ogden, 2017); and

**Whereas**, the childhood obesity rate in the United States is 18.5% (RWJF, 2018); and

**Whereas**, obesity rates among teens ages 12 to 19 have quadrupled from 5% to 20.6% since 1980 (RWJF, 2018); and

**Whereas**, higher rates of obesity are found in racial and ethnic minority groups in both children and adults (RWJF, 2018); and

**Whereas**, Class 3 obesity (Body mass index [BMI]  $\geq 40$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>) is the fastest growing BMI classification (Blackburn, Wollner, & Heymsfield, 2009); and

**Whereas**, there are health risks associated with being overweight/obese, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, cancer, and stroke (CDC, 2015); and

**Whereas**, type 2 diabetes is projected to increase four-fold by 2050 due to current childhood obesity rates (Imperatore, 2012); and

**Whereas**, there are genetic, behavioral (e.g. eating behaviors, physical inactivity), and environmental (e.g. food access) causes of obesity (Brehm & D'Alessio, 2014; Loos & Janssens, 2017); and

**Whereas**, the healthcare costs associated with obesity are currently estimated at \$147 billion to \$210 billion per year (RWJF, 2019); and

**Whereas**, effective community interventions to decrease or maintain body weight consist of behavioral interventions to reduce screen time for children, worksite programs, and technology-supported coaching or counseling interventions (Community Preventive Services Task Force, n.d.); and

**Whereas**, effective school-based health education and interventions to decrease or maintain body weight consist of healthier food and beverage options and physical activity interventions (Community Preventive Services Task Force, n.d.).

**Therefore, be it resolved, the Society for Public Health Education. Inc. (SOPHE) shall:**

1. Support health education campaigns that are designed to address the onset and prevention of obesity.
2. Urge federal, state, and local governments to improve the nutrition environment by developing, improving, supporting, enforcing, and/or funding policies, legislation, regulations, and government programs that promote healthy body weight, e.g.:
  - A. Policies that support breastfeeding, such as paid maternity leave, the provision of breastfeeding facilities, work-day breaks for breastfeeding mothers (CDC, 2009; WHO, 2017); and
  - B. Policies that support healthy food options in child care settings, K-12 school settings, university settings, and worksites (WHO, 2017); and
  - C. Policies that increase healthy food retail options and/or decrease fast food options in underserved areas (CDC, 2009; Harvard, n.d.); and
  - D. Policies that provide healthier children’s menus, smaller portion sizes, and calorie information on restaurant menus (Harvard, n.d.); and
  - E. Agricultural policies that support fresh produce production, increasing access to locally grown food (Harvard, n.d.; CDC, 2009); and
  - F. Regulation of marketing and taxing of high-calorie, low-nutrient-density foods and beverages (CDC, 2009).
3. Urge federal, state, and local governments to improve the physical activity environment by developing, improving, supporting, enforcing, and/or funding policies, legislation, regulations, and government programs that promote healthy body composition, e.g.:
  - A. Regulations for increasing physical education in child-care institutions and schools while increasing the amount of time children are required to be physically active during physical education (WHO, 2017); and
  - B. Regulations reducing screen time in child-care settings, at school, and during after-school activities (CDC, 2009); and
  - C. Regulations for designing the built environment as safe, physically active friendly communities (CDC, 2009).

#### **Internal Activities:**

1. SOPHE will enhance awareness of obesity among health education specialists by offering and promoting continuing education activities.
2. SOPHE will support partner organization efforts that focus on weight management, physical activity, nutrition, and food access.
3. SOPHE will advocate for obesity reduction policies in nutrition and physical activity-focused health education programs at the federal level.

#### **References**

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