PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY – ARKANSAS INITIATIVES

Cheryl L. Reinhart
Legislative Attorney for Education
Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research
Childhood Obesity –

- “Epidemic”
- “Dramatic and disturbing trends”
- Linked to morbidity and significant diseases
- Most obese children become obese adults

Arkansas 2003

- 14th in nation
- 38.1% of children overweight or at risk
What we did …

Step 1: Enacted Legislation

- Act 1220 of 2003, 2nd Extraordinary Session
- Child Health Advisory Committee
- Focus on physical activity, school nutrition, obesity monitoring
What we did …

Step 2: Established the Child Health Advisory Committee

Committee Members:
- State Board of Health
- Department of Education
- Physicians, nurses, dieticians, other health-related associations and professions
- Food service groups
- Teachers, parent-teacher associations, education associations
What we did …

**Step 3: Implementation**

- **Measure** BMI in schools
  - Report results to parents
  - Data collected

- **Increase** physical education and physical activity

- **Address** food service, vending machines, nutrition
Arkansas Center for Health Improvement (ACHI)

Implementation of BMI measurement

- Selected equipment
- Developed protocol
- Trained and certified school nurses
- Developed data collection and entry procedures
- Analyzes data collected; Provide annual reports

http://www.achi.net/

Where we are now …

**Arkansas 2007**
- Some amendment to Act 1220

**Arkansas 2010**
- 8th in nation … BUT
- Childhood obesity remains relatively flat
- Still “crisis”
- Multiple statewide prevention efforts
Arkansas 2010

Department of Education programs

- Coordinated School Health (22 school districts)
- Wellness Centers – 9 recently awarded
- Arkansas Healthy School Board Diamond Awards
Arkansas 2010

**Tobacco settlement money**

- 56 grants to schools, based on doubled p.e. time, evidence-based curriculum, training, equipment
- Fitness assessments
- HealthTeacher – www.healthteacher.com
- PE for Life – community involvement
Arkansas 2010

Tobacco excise tax

- Joint use agreements
- Promote healthy living and physical activity
- Business, community, school partnerships
Arkansas 2010

**Delta Garden Study**
- http://www.arteengarden.com/

**Arkansas Coalition for Obesity Prevention**
- Diverse group of businesses, foundations, hospitals, health organizations, state agencies, Governor’s office
- Targets early childhood and school age children
- Growing Healthy Communities (5 project sites)
Arkansas 2010

College of Public Health at UAMS
- Evaluates BMI data each year

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity
- http://www.reversechildhoodobesity.org/
- National resource
- Located its office in Little Rock
The future ...

“If we did all the things we are capable of, we would literally astound ourselves.”

» Thomas A. Edison
Contact Information:

Cheryl L. Reinhart
Legislative Attorney
Bureau of Legislative Research
reinhartc@arkleg.state.ar.us
501-537-9338