

## **Pediatric obesity screening and treatment guidelines: A quality improvement project**

Abstract

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**Background & Significance:** Pediatric obesity rates have doubled in the last three years, making it one of the most common pediatric chronic diseases. Childhood obesity has significant negative impacts on long term health and mental health including hyperlipidemia, non-alcoholic fatty liver, sleep apnea, etc. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) published updated guidelines in an effort to decrease rates of obesity. However, pediatric primary care centers with limited resources have found it difficult to align with best practices. As rates of obesity are on the rise, implementation of evidence-based screenings and treatment have are crucial in primary care.

**Purpose:** The aim of this quality improvement project is the standardization and implementation of an evidenced-based approach to identify and treat school aged overweight or obese children in a pediatric primary care center.

**Method:** A educational session was provided to primary care staff. The education reviewed weight terminology, weight stigma & bias, and the AAP obesity guidelines. Additionally, a clinical pathway chart with evidence-based screening and treatment guidelines was provided to staff as a reference tool for clinical practice. The Plan-Do-Check-Act quality improvement framework was used to assess and identify modifications needed.

**Results:** A descriptive analysis showed that 71% of advanced practice providers, 7% of RNs, and 21% of behavioral health staff completed the pre-survey. Nearly 29% are working full time status and nearly 65% are working part-time hours. No staff reported receiving obesity treatment certification nor obesity weight-loss continuing education training in the last 2 years. Preliminary data showed that 58% of providers are extremely likely to identify patients for whom weight-loss is recommended. Although, 42% of providers reported not feeling confident in providing adequate treatment and 50% reported as somewhat confident.

**Discussion/Conclusion:** Primary care centers, the medical home of many children must take action to standardize and implement evidence-based practices in efforts to combat increasing rates of childhood obesity. In order to move towards standardization of practice, we must work towards increasing provider confidence and knowledge of the guidelines by providing education, resources, and increasing appointment allotted time to weight management.