

May 18, 2008

Editors: Thank you for your article "Children Pay High Price for Obesity" that appeared on the front page of your Sunday May 18, 2008 issue of The Honolulu Advertiser.

"An epidemic of obesity is compromising the lives of millions of American children,..." and thousands of Hawaii's children.

There is much that is happening in Hawaii to address our childhood overweight epidemic. The DOE is implementing the Wellness Program; The DOH through the Healthy Hawaii Initiative is working on the Physical Activity & Nutrition Plan. The John A. Burns School of Medicine Department of Pediatrics recently held a mini-retreat to review the pediatric overweight research needs for our State.

Through a HMSA Foundation grant, the Pediatric Foundation of Hawaii is working with the Hawaii Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics to offer a statewide training for health care professionals in The Hawaii Pediatric Weight Management Toolkit. This locally written toolkit is focused on helping pediatric health care providers implement recent national expert recommendations concerning evaluation and treatment of overweight children and adolescents.

Unfortunately these efforts are stymied because health plans do not pay for doctor or dietitian services when evaluating and formulating treatment plans for overweight and obese children. Families then must spend their own out of pocket money to access these needed medical services.

The time to act is now. Employers, health insurance plans and mutual benefit societies: join the rest of the health care community and work with us as we move our community forward in efforts to protect our children from the ravages of obesity. The children of Hawaii need your help now.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Galen Chock".

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