



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL WELLNESS PROGRAMS MAY PREVENT DISABILITY

The historical rationale for federal nutrition programs was as a “measure of national security” to safeguard the health and well being of the nations children.

A senator who was a central player for prevention and wellness proposed an initiative for strengthening the implementation of the school wellness provisions of Section 204 of the Child Nutrition Act of 2004. The section 204 provisions require schools that participate in school lunch programs to adopt school wellness policies.

Summary

School wellness plans require goals for physical activity and nutrition approved by local school boards and developed by students, school administrators, and the public. School wellness policies are required to measure outcomes of program implementation. Local wellness policies offer an opportunity to coordinate a community approach to promoting healthy childhood weight in schools. However, antidotal evidence indicates the schools do not value health of students as a high priority. Thus, it was suggested that the Institute of Medicine (IOM) develop a format to be implemented in school wellness provisions in reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. The IOM involvement in school wellness policies could assist in shifting the paradigm in America’s health care toward strategic low cost prevention efforts that could lower rates of chronic disorders that do not involve direct medical care.

Disability Prevention Issue

If the IOM suggests measurable health benefits as outcomes for school wellness programs, it could be a beginning of effective protocols for prevention of diminished health through prevention of obesity associated with chronic health conditions. Obesity is a particular problem for children because it has severe human and economic costs for individuals, families and government. Obesity which, in part, is due to insufficient physical activity and inadequate nutrition can lead to a host of chronic health disorders that may contribute to disability. There are vulnerable populations (i.e. racial and ethnic minorities, children from low income families and children with disabilities) who are prone to diminished health that can lead to disability without adequate school wellness programs that include of physical, health, nutrition, and leisure education

Intervention

A letter was sent to a Senator that supports IOM establishment of school wellness guidelines in reauthorization of Child Nutrition Act of 2004 that

commented on its significance with respect to prevention of diminished health and disability.

Recommendation

It is recommended that a template for local school districts be developed for implementation of effective protocols to prevent diminish health and/or improve wellness of children through Section 204 of the Child Nutrition Act.