

HEALTH AFFAIRS

.....
7500 Old Georgetown Road
Suite 600
Bethesda, Maryland 20814-8133
<http://www.healthaffairs.org>

May 1, 2009

Request for Abstracts

Health Affairs theme issue on Childhood Obesity, March 2010

Requirements

Abstracts not to exceed 500 words

Abstracts due Friday, May 22

Submit abstracts to Don Metz, at dmetz@projecthope.org

Health Affairs theme issue on Childhood Obesity
Publication date March 2010

Background, Objectives, and Additional Details

With the support of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, *Health Affairs* is developing a thematic issue on childhood obesity, scheduled for publication in March 2010. The issue is in response to the growing recognition of the problem of childhood obesity and its long-term implications for future health and welfare. The focus will be several fold: understanding the origins of the epidemic of childhood obesity at all levels; understanding the health care implications of the epidemic; and addressing the major challenges of prevention.

Our primary goal is to present the best, most accessible collection of syntheses, research and analyses for policy makers on the topic of childhood obesity. We hope to make it a must-read, “one-stop-shopping” issue – in effect, one that policymakers at the local, state, or federal level could use to gain a comprehensive layperson’s overview of the topic and an understanding of the practical policy alternatives that could make a difference.

As part of our theme issue development process, we are issuing a request for abstracts, which are **due Friday May 22, 2009**. *Health Affairs* editors will evaluate the abstracts

and then select 10-12 of them. We will invite the authors of those abstracts to develop their topics as full papers for the thematic issue. We plan to complete the abstract evaluation process in **June 2009**, at which time we will notify authors of abstracts selected for invitation; those papers selected for invitation will be due **September 4**. Submitted papers will then be subjected to peer-review during the fall of 2009. The papers deemed appropriate by reviewers and editors will be revised and resubmitted between **November-December 2009**; copyediting and production for the issue will take place between **January-February 2010**, with publication scheduled for **early-March 2010**. A suggested topic list is provided below.

Abstract submissions should not exceed 500 words, and should include (in this order): author names and affiliations, proposed title, and abstract (along with contact information for the corresponding author).

If you wish to submit an abstract, please send it as an e-mail attachment directly to executive editor Don Metz, at dmetz@projecthope.org (he can also be reached by phone at 301-347-3907).

We thank you for your time and consideration. Please feel free to pass this invitation along to colleagues who might be interested, as well.

List of Potential Topics

With the help of a panel of expert advisors, we have identified broad topics that we hope the theme issue will address. Many of these obviously overlap. Although comprehensive, this is not an exhaustive list. We would welcome the chance to consider abstracts on other related aspects of childhood obesity with policy implications.

Please remember that authors who propose reforms should address obstacles to those reforms and how they might be overcome.

- 1 Overview papers.** Context-setting papers that define what we currently understand as the nature of the problem and identify the major policy challenges. These would
 - a. Lay out the current state of what we know about childhood obesity, discuss trends, projections, gaps in needed data, and make policy recommendations cognizant of the multifactorial nature of the problem.
 - b. Summarize the current and evolving understanding of the biological, developmental, environmental and other causes of and contributing factors to childhood obesity. Subtopics could include lipid metabolism and pathophysiology, genetics, epigenetics, social determinants, and the impact of behavioral and social norms. In terms digestible for a layperson, what is known and what isn't known in these areas? What are

recommendations for further research? What are the implications for policy of what we do know and of deficits in our knowledge base?

- 2 Papers in specific “domains”** that bear on childhood obesity. In this broad category we are interested in papers that address:
- a. Transportation policy and the built environment. Papers should explore what changes are needed in federal/state/local transportation policy to address the problem of childhood obesity.
 - b. Agriculture, Nutrition, Food Policy. Papers should discuss federal/state/local agriculture policies impacting childhood obesity and explore how such policy levers (i.e. the agriculture bill, WIC, school lunch programs, beverage taxes) could be leveraged to address the problem. Authors should also feel free to discuss food security/availability and supermarket location, and social marketing programs.
 - c. Environmental policy. Papers that explore whether, independent of food and the “built environment,” there are factors in the environment contributing to child obesity and policies that are actionable.
 - d. Clinical practice. Papers should explore the role of the clinician in addressing childhood obesity; what takes place or should take place in a medical encounter; how screening and reimbursement work (or don’t) for childhood obesity; trends in treatment, including bariatric surgery. Additional questions include the potential role of the medical home model in preventing or mitigating child obesity; how best to measure outcomes; how to apportion responsibility for actions among the clinician, patient, and family.
 - e. Child care and educational arena. These papers should explore the impact of childcare and the school setting on childhood obesity and what role these levers could play in promoting healthy behaviors. Papers can address different age groups ranging from infant/toddler child care, pre-kindergarten, elementary, and high school and include both food and beverage consumption and physical activity in these settings, as well as evidence that active children are better learners.

We welcome case studies on these topics and perspectives on how to align the different political constituencies and silos to address all the domains.

- 3 Global papers** should discuss trends in industrialized and developing countries. Additional questions include what programs have worked abroad and represent potential lessons for developed and developing countries, and the implications of a global childhood obesity epidemic for health care and the economy in the coming decades.

- 4 Ethics.** This is a catchall category for papers discussing major ethical issues in tackling childhood obesity, including defining the appropriate responsibilities of the individual, the family and society in prevention and mitigation. How do we help families and children make the right choices?

- 5 Other epidemics.** Lessons learned from other epidemics and public health/social marketing interventions that addressed them. For example, are there “take-aways” from HIV/AIDS and smoking that are applicable to fighting child obesity?

Again, we invite abstracts not to exceed 500 words by May 22, 2009.

Questions? Email Don Metz at dmetz@projecthope.org