

July 22, 2008

The Honorable Chris Dodd
Chairman, Children and Families Subcommittee
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
132 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member, Children and Families Subcommittee
Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee
607 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Dodd and Senator Alexander:

Thank you for holding hearings on Childhood Obesity: the Declining Health of America's Next Generation on July 16 and July 23.

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO) represents nearly 3,000 local health departments and recognizes obesity and overweight as serious problems that require sustained effort and attention. These conditions can persist from childhood to adulthood and are associated with chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease, often causing preventable and premature deaths in adults, adolescents and children. Local health departments have been leaders in working toward obesity and overweight prevention among children and adults.

NACCHO encourages the federal, state and local government to allocate funding and resources to the prevention and treatment of obesity and overweight. NACCHO supports the Fitness Integrated with Teaching (FIT) Kids Act (S. 2173) and has urged its inclusion in reauthorization legislation for the No Child Left Behind Act. This bill would provide incentives for schools that meet national standards for physical education; support professional development for teachers and principals to promote healthy lifestyles and physical activity; create a pilot program studying the most effective ways to improve healthy living and physical activity outcomes; and require schools to report on the quantity and quality of physical education offered to students on student report cards.

NACCHO also supports the Healthy Places Act (S. 1067), which would allow greater access to health impact assessment and would encourage communities to consider health impacts when making land use decisions. Communities can affect the growth in obesity by engaging in community development that encourages physical activity and other healthy behaviors.

In addition, NACCHO supports:

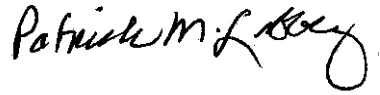
- Policies and programs that reduce obesity and overweight and improve wellness.
- A range of public health interventions to address land use, environmental, cultural, socioeconomic, and behavioral factors associated with obesity and overweight.
- The development of policies that address social injustices which contribute to the disproportionate burden of obesity and overweight among underrepresented, low-income, and socially disadvantaged populations.



- Partnerships among local and state health departments, federal agencies, community groups and private organizations in their efforts to reduce obesity and overweight.

Thank you for your attention to the problem of childhood obesity. We look forward to working with your committee to address this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick M. Libbey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

Patrick M. Libbey
Executive Director