

September 18, 2007

The Honorable George Miller  
Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2181 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Howard McKeon  
Ranking Member, Committee on Education and Labor  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2101 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Miller and Congressman McKeon:

On behalf of the National Association of County and City Health Officials, I urge you to promote physical activity for children in the reauthorization of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Obesity among children is rising at an alarming rate. According to the Office of the United States Surgeon General, overweight among adolescents has nearly tripled in the past two decades. Encouraging physical activity can counteract obesity and overweight and prevent chronic diseases associated with these conditions. The nation's local health departments work every day in their communities to encourage healthy nutrition and exercise and to create conditions that promote healthy choices. We urge you to take action to address this growing epidemic.

In order to promote more options for physical activity in schools, I encourage you to include provisions from the Fitness Integrated with Teaching (FIT) Kids Act (H.R. 3257) 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.

Provisions included in HR 3438 would also help to promote physical activity in schools. This bill would promote safe passage to and from schools on foot and by bicycle; support programs outlined by the Safe Routes to School Program; and encourage participation in regular physical activity and the development of habits promoting life-long physical fitness.

Both of these bills would help to combat the rising tide of obesity among America's children. On behalf of the nation's local health departments, I urge you to include these provisions in the No Child Left Behind Act reauthorization.

Sincerely,



Patrick M. Libbey  
Executive Director

