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Campaign Lauds IOM Recommendations for Early Childhood Obesity Prevention

Report Calls for BMI Screening, Increased Physical Activity & Access to Nutritious Foods for Young Children

WASHINGTON DC – The Campaign to End Obesity today applauded policy recommendations in a new Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Policies*. The report outlines several key policy recommendations—which have been long-supported by the Campaign—including:

- Healthcare providers should measure weight and length or height in a standardized way... as part of every well-child visit;
- Healthcare professionals should consider children’s attained weight-for-length or BMI;
- Child care regulatory agencies should require child care providers and early childhood educators to provide infants, toddlers, and preschool children with opportunities to be physically active throughout the day;
- Government agencies should promote access to affordable healthy foods for infants and young children from birth to age five in all neighborhoods, including those in low-income areas, by maximizing participation in federal nutrition assistance programs and increasing access to healthy foods at the community level.

“These recommendations represent concrete, common sense actions to prevent obesity from day one in a child’s life,” said Stephanie Silverman, senior advisor to the Campaign to End Obesity. “In recent years, our children have endured a dramatic increase in diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other obesity-related diseases — conditions once considered concerns exclusive to the adult population. Unless reforms—such as those urged by the IOM—are realized at the community and policy levels, this epidemic will follow our children throughout their lives.”

Today, nearly a third of children are overweight or obese, and rates of childhood obesity have more than tripled in the past 30 years, according to the Centers for Disease Control. In addition to the health risks posed by the epidemic, obesity-related health care spending stands to create a legacy of crippling costs for the next generation. In fact, obesity-related conditions in 2009 accounted for 9.1 percent of all

medical spending, up from 6.5 percent in 1998 — a 40 percent increase. Additionally, approximately one of every five dollars spent on healthcare in the United States will be attributable to obesity and obesity-related conditions by 2018, according to a report by UnitedHealth Foundation, the American Public Health Association and the Partnership for Prevention.

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About the Campaign to End Obesity

The effects of the nation's obesity epidemic are immense: taxpayers, businesses, communities and individuals spend hundreds of billions of dollars each year due to obesity, including an estimated \$168 billion in medical costs. By bringing together leaders from across industry, academia and public health with policymakers and their advisors, the Campaign to End Obesity provides the information and guidance that decision-makers need to make the changes necessary to reverse one of the nation's costliest and most prevalent diseases.