

Ohio School Based Health Care Association

Special Alert

Thursday, June 3rd, 2010

Legislation aimed at combating childhood obesity passes Ohio House of Representatives

This morning, the Ohio House of Representatives passed Am. Sub. SB 210, otherwise known as Healthy Choices for Health Children. The bill, which OSBHCA has supported as a coalition member, was sent back to the Senate for concurrence, which was achieved this afternoon. Thus far there is no word as to when the Governor will sign the legislation. Below, please find key provisions of the legislation as passed by the House and Senate.

Key Provisions:

Nutrition Standards

- Allows districts to provide free breakfast to all children who are eligible for free and reduced price breakfast as part of the school day, if the General Assembly appropriates funds for such purpose.
- Requires districts to offer more nutritious foods and beverages in vending machines and through a la carte menus.

Physical Education

- Increases high school students' knowledge about healthy living by including education about physical activity and nutrition as part of the health curriculum.
- Ensures that students receive quality physical education by requiring newly hired physical education teachers to have a PE license.
- Improves accountability for quality physical education by requiring the Ohio Department of Education to develop an indicator of student success in meeting the benchmarks contained in the PE content standards adopted by the state board of education.

Physical Activity

- An amendment adopted in House Health Committee increases physical activity levels of Ohio students in grades K-12 through a physical activity pilot program. Districts opt-in to get children moving for 30 minutes each day - through classroom activity, physical education courses, and before or after school activities. This program exempts career tech, PSEO, drop-out recovery/prevention and e-schools to allow for broader participation by districts that may have these types of programs.

Body Mass Index

- Increases parental awareness by measuring students' body mass index (BMI) upon school entry, 3rd, 5th and 9th grades and sending information home confidentially to parents/guardians about their child's health status, associated health risks, and appropriate local health care resources. Parents/guardians may opt out if they do not wish to have their individual child participate in a district's BMI screening program. In addition, as determined locally, districts may opt out of the BMI screening requirements included in the bill.

- Informs public policy related to children's health by using BMI information collected statewide to produce an annual report on aggregate county-level BMI information. Aggregate data from individual districts will be protected to encourage more school districts to participate.

Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Council and Best Practices Clearinghouse

- Creates a council of public and private sector experts to make recommendations to the Ohio Department of Education related to best practices in physical activity, nutrition and BMI screenings in Ohio schools.
- Creates a best practices clearinghouse of resources in the areas of student nutrition, physical activity for students, and body mass index screenings that schools may use to promote student health.

The viewpoints expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the OSBHCA. The information is compiled and presented as an update to our members, in order to keep them informed about current legislative issues in Ohio.