



*The Maryland State Medical Society*

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Additional Information Contact:

Gene M. Ransom, CEO

Office: 410-539-0872 x 3305

## **SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH**

BALTIMORE, September 23, 2014 — In the past four decades, obesity rates in the United States have soared among all age groups. This rise in obesity rates has affected our youth in an alarming way. Childhood obesity has increased the most among those ages 6 to 11. More than 23 million children and teenagers in the United States ages 2 to 19 are obese or overweight. This puts nearly one third of America's children at early risk for Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and even stroke.

We can all use this month to raise awareness about the obesity epidemic and show people how they can take steps toward a solution.

- Get active outside by walking around the neighborhood, going on a bike ride, or playing sports at the park.
- Limit inactive (sitting down) screen time to 2 hours or less a day.
- Make healthy meals by buying and serving more vegetables, fruits, and whole grain foods.
- Encourage families to make small changes, like keeping fresh fruit within their children's reach or going on a family walk after dinner.
- Motivate teachers and administrators to make schools healthier by providing quality nutrition and making sure physical activity is a part of every student's day.

Sugar Free Kids' is a statewide coalition that was established in 2014. Their main goal is to lower consumption of sugary drinks. It is sugary drinks that contribute more to the obesity/type 2 diabetes epidemic than any other single factor. MedChi is a founding/lead partner of Sugar Free Kids, so Sugar Free Kids' goals are MedChi's goals.

Sugary drinks, including sodas, sports drinks, juice drinks, sweetened teas, and flavored milks, are the single greatest source of added sugar in children's diets and are the primary drivers of the obesity and diabetes epidemics.

Dr. H. Russell Wright, President of MedChi, states "There are opportunities every day to change these obesity trends. With September being Childhood Obesity Awareness month there is an extraordinary opportunity to build awareness and take action."

### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).