



*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 19, 2016 — One in 3 children in the United States are overweight or obese. Childhood obesity puts kids at risk for health problems that were once seen only in adults, like type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

The good news is that childhood obesity can be prevented. In honor of National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, MedChi and their affiliate Sugar Free Kids, encourages your family to make healthy changes together.

Sugar Free Kids Maryland is a statewide coalition established in 2014 and the state's leading voice in the fight against childhood obesity and teenage diabetes. Sugar Free Kids research points to sugary drinks as the prime culprit in diseases such as childhood obesity and teen diabetes:

- Sugary drinks contribute more calories and sugar to our children's diet than any other single source.
- Drinking just one 8 oz. sugary drink per day increases a child's odds of becoming obese by 60 percent. (Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity, 2012).
- Sugary drinks contribute more calories and added sugars to our diets than any other food or beverage and daily consumption is strongly linked to higher childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes rates (Institute of Medicine, 2012).

There are other small steps that you as a family can do to help your child stay at a healthy weight:

- Make healthy meals: Buy and serve more vegetables, fruits, and whole-grain foods.
- Limit screen time: Keep screen time (time spent on the computer, watching TV, or playing video games) to 2 hours or less a day and get active outside. Walk around the neighborhood, go on a bike ride, or play basketball at the park.

“Maintaining a healthy weight is an important factor for children to grow,” said Sugar Free Kids Maryland Executive Director Shawn McIntosh. “Offering healthier drinking choices to the children of Maryland will do exactly that, giving them a better chance to live long, healthy lives as they progress through adolescence and into adulthood. It's something we need to be cognizant of 12 months a year.”

### 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).