

A MESSAGE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF OF OBESITY PREVENTION OR TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Obesity is said to have reached epidemic proportions, posing drastic threats to public health, increasing morbidity, mortality and health care costs, and lowering quality of life. These concerns have spawned obesity prevention and treatment efforts by many well-intentioned and caring people.

However, scientific research shows that these common assumptions just don't hold up to the evidence. For example, dozens of studies indicate that weight doesn't adversely affect longevity for the vast majority of people—and less than a handful of studies suggest otherwise. And when factors such as activity, nutrition, dieting and weight cycling history, and socioeconomic status are considered, the relationship between weight and disease disappears or is significantly reduced. Studies also show that biologic safeguards prevent most people from maintaining weight loss, despite vigilant dieting and exercise.

Trumpeting obesity concerns and admonishing people to lose weight is not just misguided, but downright damaging. It leads to repeated cycles of weight loss and regain, to food and body preoccupation, self-hatred, eating disorders, weight discrimination, and poor health. Few of us are at peace with our bodies, whether because we're fat or because we fear becoming fat. Every time you make fat the problem, these are side effects, however unintended they may be.

This is an important turning point in history. The weight of the evidence clearly trumps the assumptions of the current paradigm. I urge you: Be part of the solution, not the problem. The price society pays when you do not challenge yourself is too high.

Excerpt from *Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth
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There is an evidence-based, compassionate alternative to the war on obesity. It's called *Health at Every Size*. It involves switching your focus from weight to health and supporting your patients in doing the same. Everyone can benefit from good health behaviors.

For more information:

- Check out the book, *Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight* (www.HAEbook.com); the website includes many free downloads.
- The (free) HAES Community Resources (www.HAESCommunity.Org) helps you find resources and individuals supporting HAES and allows you to register your voice.
- Consider joining the Association for Size Diversity and Health (www.sizediversityandhealth.org), an organization for professionals committed to HAES values.

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