



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

June 25, 2007

Dear Colleague:

Obesity is a critical problem for New York's youth. Legislation passed in spring 2007 provides for a statewide system to assess childhood obesity and places the responsibility for screening children and adolescents for weight-related disorders with children's healthcare providers. You are in the best position to assess children's weight status, counsel children and families, and arrange follow-up and/or referral, when necessary, as a part of comprehensive, ongoing health care.

The legislation recognizes Body Mass Index (BMI)-for-age percentiles as the standard for screening for childhood obesity. Healthcare providers will be screening each student and reporting their BMI and weight status category. Upon completion, the Appraisal forms and BMI information must be submitted to the school by parents at school entry and in grades K, 2, 4, 7, and 10. The five boroughs of New York City are exempt from New York State Education Law requiring Student Health Appraisals.

Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, all schools will be required to collect BMI and weight status category on the Student Health Appraisal form. Each year, a sample of schools will be selected and notified that they will be required to submit to the Department aggregate weight status data obtained by tallying information from these forms. To help schools transition to this new requirement, a pilot project of BMI screening and reporting will be conducted, so you may be asked to provide this information beginning with the 2007-2008 school year. A copy of the BMI-for-age information to be collected is attached.

If you have any questions, please contact Barbara A. Dennison, MD at 518-408-5126. We look forward to working with you on this important public health initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. F. Daines'.

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner of Health