



**national association
to advance
fat acceptance**

NAAFA Newsletter

In This Issue

[Childhood Obesity Does Not Equal Child Neglect!](#)

[Letter to Governor of Puerto Rico](#)

[From the Chair](#)

[VICTORY!](#)

[Book Review: Amanda's Big Dream](#)

[Reminder: 2015 ASDAH Conference](#)

[Abundia 2015 Call for Speakers](#)

[Happy Feet](#)

[Media and Research Roundup](#)

Childhood Obesity Does Not Equal Child Neglect!



NAAFA, a civil rights organization working for Equality at Every Size, urges Puerto Rico to stop a bill that would monitor children's weight and possibly "fine" and/or refer their parents to case workers if the children do not lose weight. Any such law is discriminatory, damaging to family and doomed for failure.

A child's weight is not an indicator of health nor is it a sign of neglect. NAAFA would like to point out that New Mexico (Anamarie M.), Indiana (Dakota M.) and New York (Kayla) removed fat children from their homes, but the courts REVERSED their decisions and restored custody to the parents because the states' controlled environments made no significant changes in the size of the children. In all of these cases, terrible mental harm was done to the children and the parents. Arkansas was one of the first states to focus on trying to eliminate childhood obesity through a variety of interventions. In 2003, Arkansas Act 1220 was enacted, instituting programs that range from reducing junk food in schools and creating advisory committees to issuing BMI Report Cards. Despite their best efforts, there has NOT been a reduction in BMI levels.

"The weight-focused approach does not, in the long run, produce thinner, healthier bodies," stated Dr. Linda Bacon, author of the 2010 book, *Health at Every Size: The Surprising Truth About Your Weight*, based on research she published in top scientific journals.

Focusing on weight loss rather than health is a failing strategy. The NAAFA Child Advocacy Toolkit is a resource for people involved in the lives of children of size. It

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The Problem with Poodle Science

[March Video of the Month](#)

Last month, the Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH) launched The Problem with Poodle Science, a 3-minute video that explains the limitations of the current research on weight and health.

"Weight bias so saturates our culture; we take it as 'common sense' that being at a higher weight must cause the health problems that are more likely to occur at higher weights," says Deb Burgard, PhD, Fellow of the Academy of Eating Disorders and a psychologist in private practice in Los Altos, California, who drafted the script and provided creative input in the making of the video.

Feel free to use it when you need a debunking tool!

<http://youtube.com/watch?v=H89QQfXtc-k>

Quick Links

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is intended to help educate and inform all segments of society with regard to the effects of weight discrimination on children and provides references and tools to combat these effects using a HAES (Health At Every Size) approach. An electronic version of this premier toolkit is available at http://issuu.com/naafa/docs/naafa_childadvocacy2011combined_v04?viewMode=magazine&mode=embed

NAAFA challenges Puerto Rico to take a HAES (Health at Every Size) approach instead of suggesting such preposterous action that has no track record of success. Focus on the positive, not the destructive! Children are the future; build them up, do not tear them down!

Health At Every Size and HAES are registered trademarks of the Association for Size Diversity and Health, and are used with permission.

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Letter to Governor of Puerto Rico

In addition to the press release above, NAAFA sent the following email to the Governor and two key State Senators from Puerto Rico. The message was signed by your NAAFA Board of Directors as well as 40 HAES professionals who support NAAFA and our position on this matter.

To: The Honorable Alejandro García Padilla, Governor of Puerto Rico, Senator Eduardo Bhatia and Senator Gilberto Rodríguez Valle

Regarding: Pending legislation that requires reporting of obese children with the potential of "fining" their parents if the child does not lose weight

We, the undersigned, strongly request that the governing authority of Puerto Rico reject the Senate House Bill introduced by Senator Gilberto Rodríguez Valle requiring tracking and reporting of children's body mass index, along with the requirement for placing obese children on diets and exercise programs, or having the family penalized. This request is based on the following:

BMI screening is not evidence-based. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force found there was insufficient evidence to recommend routine screening for overweight in children and adolescents as a means to improve health outcomes. It did, however, note potential harms of screening programs, as well as obesity prevention and treatment interventions, including "labeling, induced self-managed dieting with its negative sequelae, poorer self-concept, poorer health habits, disordered eating or negative impacts from parental concerns."

A 2008 study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* stated that body mass index (BMI) has been shown to be highly heritable and drew the conclusion that ". . . children come in different shapes and sizes despite having a similar upbringing. What is important is this finding means that 'blaming' parents is wrong."

For children to reduce their body size is not only extremely difficult, if not impossible, pressuring them to do so is BAD FOR THEIR HEALTH. Stigma and discrimination of children based on their physical appearance or body size is resulting in physiological reactions to this stress. A 2007 study from the Rudd Center of Yale University found that the consequences of weight bias for youth include: psychosocial consequences such as poor self-esteem, depression, poor interpersonal relationships, socio-economic status and academic performance; physical health consequences such as eating behaviors such as binge eating and chronic dieting, bulimia, unhealthy use of diet pills or laxatives, and poor cardiovascular health outcomes. [*Stigma, Obesity, and the Health of the Nation's Children*, Puhl and Latner, 2007]

A report from the C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health examines the possible association between school-based childhood obesity prevention programs and an increase in eating disorders among young children and adolescents. 82% of parents report at least one school-based intervention aimed at preventing childhood obesity within their children's schools. 30% of parents of 6-14 year-olds report at least one behavior in their children that could be associated with the development of an eating disorder. 7% of parents say that their children have been made to feel bad at school about what or how much they were eating.

Studies show that dieting, even that considered "naturalistic", among young people lead to weight cycling [*Naturalistic weight reduction efforts predicted weight gain and onset of obesity in adolescent girls*; Stice E, Cameron RP, Killen JD., et al, 2000]

It is the role of government to protect its citizenry, not penalize them.

We ask that any legislation presented support Health at Every Size (HAES) tenets, which state that healthy habits are good for EVERYONE, no matter what their size. Eat healthy, nutritious foods and enjoy occasional treats. Pay attention to your natural hunger and satiety cues. Move your body in ways that feel good rather than exercise focused solely on weight loss.

"Obesity has a strong genetic component that is expressed in environments that foster sedentary activity and eating an energy dense diet," stated Joanne Ikeda, Nutritionist Emeritus, University of California Berkeley, "We need to promote environmental changes in school settings that support enjoyable physical activity and consumption of a wide variety of nutritious, appetizing foods."

This issue is the critical need to create environments in which children and adolescents do not feel shame or guilt about their bodies but, rather, are motivated to enjoy healthful eating and active living habits regardless of their body size or shape.

You can find more information about Health at Every Size at <https://sizediversityandhealth.org/content.asp?id=152>

We appreciate your willingness to listen to the concerns of the public, and offer our assistance in referring experts who may be of service to you in finding health-based alternatives.

Signed:

The NAAFA Board of Directors

From the Chair



by Phyllis Warr

We will officially celebrate the beginning of Spring in just a few days. Yay for us! This will help those of us who endure Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) tremendously. We will have more sunlight for longer periods of time, which will cheer us up. With that change, perhaps we should do things to help the process along: going for walks, doing things that will make us feel better or doing things to help others. Of course that last one serves to help us feel better, too.



Take a look at Cinder Ernst's wonderful recommendations for making movement easier and less painful, here and in past issues (www.naafaonline.com/dev2/about/NEWSLETTERS.html), and then actually follow Cinder's suggestions. If we move better, we just may feel better. Nevertheless, doing something new will help us as we move into this new season.

I have not seen my first robin of Spring, but I have heard some birds singing, so I know there are happy birds somewhere in my neighborhood, which in the Chicago area signifies the coming of better weather. Let's all do things to welcome the greening up and cheering up of our weather and our thinking.

VICTORY!

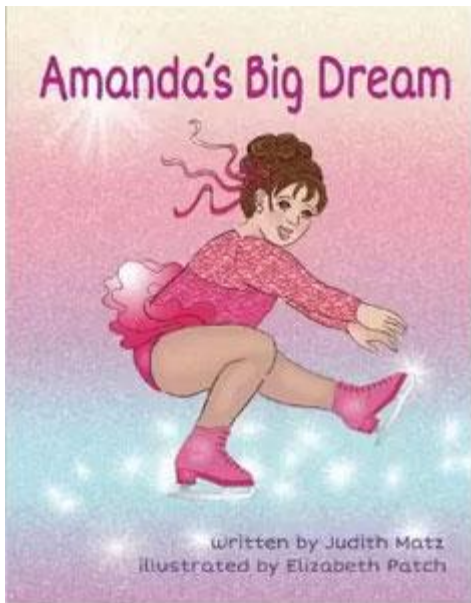
Last month we told you about the misguided and discriminatory bill being proposed in Mississippi that would penalize obese (based on BMI) Medicaid patients who refuse to sign up for an online program to help lose weight. We called on you to sign our petition to help stop Mississippi House Bill 330 before it became law.

We are happy to report that we received signatures from 1,054 supporters before our petition was forwarded to Governor Phil Bryant on February 20, 2015. Even better, on March 5, 2015, we received news that the bill died in committee!

<http://billstatus.ls.state.ms.us/2015/pdf/history/HB/HB0330.xml>

This clearly illustrates that our voices matter. When we take a stand together, we can create change!

Book Review: *Amanda's Big Dream*



*Book written by Judith Matz, LCSW
and illustrated by Elizabeth Patch
Review by Darlene Howell*

Amanda's Big Dream is a well-written and beautifully illustrated children's book about a little girl who loves to ice skate. Her dream is to have a solo in the Spring Ice Show. The book shows the influence teachers and coaches can have on the self-esteem and body image of children. Although the skating coach was proud of Amanda's progress, a comment about Amanda's weight had Amanda doubting her ability to achieve her dream.

I believe that anyone who grew up a chubby kid can relate to this tale. Thankfully, Amanda has very supportive and understanding parents who guide her back to a place of balance, in believing in

herself and her ability to accomplish whatever she puts her mind to.

The book comes from a Health at Every Size perspective and has a short "Conversation Guide" that helps parents and care givers talk with children about the book and how they relate to what Amanda feels. The book's website links to a variety of resources to assist parents, teachers or caregivers with answering questions about body image issues.

For more information on *Amanda's Big Dream*, visit <http://amandasbigdream.com> or purchase the book on Amazon.com (don't forget to use AmazonSmile.com and designate NAAFA as your charity!)

Reminder: 2015 ASDAH Conference

As announced last month, the ASDAH Conference will take place July 17-19th at the Park Plaza Hotel in downtown Boston, MA. This year's theme is Difficult Conversations, where we will lay the groundwork for moving the HAES community forward. The conference will kick off with a spectacular performance by Sonya Renee Taylor of The Body is Not an Apology; here's Sonya herself with more: <http://bit.ly/asdah-program>

Register at <http://bit.ly/asdah-registration> now and take advantage of early bird savings!

Abundia 2015 Call for Speakers

Date: November 6-8, 2015

Location: Illinois State Beach Resort in Zion, IL, between Chicago and Milwaukee. ilresorts.com

Abundia is a yearly weekend retreat for (and community of) fat women who reject body-hate, food-restriction, and diet-culture. Instead, we embrace Health At Every Size, size-acceptance, and advocacy for fat people. www.abundia.org

Call for Speakers -- Deadline is Friday, March 20, 2015

The Abundia Board of Directors is seeking speakers and workshop presenters for this year's retreat. Past workshop topics include:

- "Body Image/Body Love," Golda Poretsky
- "Finding Joy in Your Body," Ragen Chastain
- "Lose Hate, Not Weight," Virgie Tovar
- Water aerobics
- Belly dancing
- Curvy yoga
- Fat life hacks
- Medical advocacy
- Health At Every Size

We seek presenters and speakers who equip our attendees with the tools to thrive in a culture that criticizes fat women -- and inspire us to live fully and boldly. We also like to have fun! We are open to workshops of any type, provided they focus on positive fat-acceptance, Health At Every Size, or self-esteem for fat women.

Compensation

Abundia is a non-profit organization. We offer negotiable compensation for speakers; but we cannot cover traveling expenses separately.

To Submit Your Workshop Proposal

We would love to consider you. Please send a one-page document in PDF format and include the following information to info@abundia.org:

- Workshop title
- Workshop description
- Workshop goal
- Workshop length
- Any special space or equipment requirements
- Relevant experience
- Your location and contact information
- Your compensation requirements

Happy Feet



by Cinder Ernst

Several people (clients and friends) mentioned foot pain to me recently. I've had that awful bottom-of-the-foot pain, the pain that kills when you first stand up! If you've had it, you know you never want it again. If you've never had it, trust me, you don't want it.

There is a simple strategy that can help prevent bottom of the foot pain. This strategy can also help it get better. I was doing this strategy last night in bed and that's what made me think of writing this for you.

Last thing before you go to sleep, flex your feet: that means move your toes in the direction of your nose then hold for a few seconds. Do the same thing when you wake up before you put your feet on the floor. I go to sleep on my back and I purposely flex my feet and let the sheet hold my feet in that position. This part only works if you tightly

tuck in the bottom of your sheet. :)

The foot flexion works because it helps stretch out your calf muscles a bit. Tight calf muscles contribute to bottom of the foot pain. Using this simple tip can also help if you get muscle cramps in your calves at night.

As always, if you need some help with joint pain or mobility or have a question, feel free to drop me a line at coach@cinderernst.com

Here's to standing strong and moving forward!

Love,
Cinder

Media and Research Roundup

by Bill and Terri Weitze

[Check <http://naafa.org> and <http://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/naafanews/conversations/topics> for the latest news.]

November 2014: Researchers review existing literature to create a model showing how the stress of weight-based stigma leads to weight gain.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24997407>

December 20, 2014: Headlines tell us that obesity is a global health issue; and yet, life expectancy globally continues to rise.

<http://rt.com/news/216279-global-life-expectancy-rises>

January 18, 2015: Researchers looking at weight gain during pregnancy find that no matter the weight of the birth mother, weight gain below the 2009 guidelines can increase the risk of preterm birth and small for gestational age (SGA).

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/obr.12238/abstract>

January 22, 2015: *Obesity Review's* February 2015 issue looks at dieting from the standpoint of various disciplines to address the notion that in the long term, dieting is making people fatter. The consensus seems to be that dieting for non-fat people can cause a whole lot of problems, but fat people are going to be fat and should diet. Huh?

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/obr.2015.16.issue-s1/issuetoc>

February 12, 2015: According to a recent study, the loss of life expectancy for people who are 60 or older due to not meeting (UK) physical activity guidelines is greater among non-overweight people than among overweight and obese people.

[http://www.obesityresearchclinicalpractice.com/article/S1871-403X\(14\)00771-6/abstract](http://www.obesityresearchclinicalpractice.com/article/S1871-403X(14)00771-6/abstract)

February 12, 2015: An article in *The Lancet* addresses why it is almost impossible to achieve long term weight loss. A media report on this recommends treatment with surgery and drugs, even though such treatment usually means only a 4% to 10% reduction in weight.

<http://www.healio.com/endocrinology/obesity/news/online/%7Bd3addbbc-6a68-4638-9dae-903f6f6aa1b7%7D/diet-exercise-alone-not-sufficient-obesity-treatment-for-most>

February 20, 2015: An opinion piece in *The New York Times* discusses why long standing dietary recommendations based on epidemiological studies are being debunked.

<http://mobile.nytimes.com/2015/02/21/opinion/when-the-government-tells-you-what-to-eat.html>

February 23, 2015: An article by Al Lewis, Vik Khanna and Dr. Jon Robison explains why corporate wellness programs are not only ineffective but just plain bad business.

<http://thehealthcareblog.com/blog/2015/02/23/weight-loss-fines-are-discriminatory-and-counterproductive>

February 23, 2015: The Association for Size Diversity and Health (ASDAH) provides a cute animated clip explaining the problems with trying to apply the same rules of health to every kind of body.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H89QQfXtc-k>

February 24, 2015: The New York Times takes a look at the marketing strategy of Shire, the manufacturer of Vyvanse, a drug recently approved by the FDA for treatment of binge eating disorder. Concerns are raised over the rush to approve the drug and because Vyvanse contains a type of amphetamine.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/25/business/shire-maker-of-binge-eating-drug-vyvanse-first-marketed-the-disease.html>

February 25, 2015: Ann E. Macpherson-Sanchez's article in *The American Journal of Public Health* finds the effects of dieting to be famine-like, and that people who are satisfied with their weight tend to have little change in their weight.

<http://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/abs/10.2105/AJPH.2014.302507>

February 27, 2015: Abundant Travel CEO Tony Harrell is interviewed by The Daily Mail on travel tips for fat people. Tony offers some general tips as well as explaining the services of his company in helping fat people plan vacations.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-2968883/Book-three-seats-stay-boutique-hotels-visit-New-Orleans-tips-overweight-travellers-company-deals-people-size.html

February 27, 2015: In a class action lawsuit settlement, a drug manufacturer is ordered to pay \$25 per box of its weight loss tablets, Akavar. Sued for deceptive advertising, the company admits no wrongdoing and is allowed to continue to market Akavar under its slogan "Eat All You Want & Still Lose Weight."
<http://www.sltrib.com/news/2231388-155/eat-all-you-want-and-lose>

March 2015: A review of existing research shows that non-diet approaches to healthcare led to significant psychological improvements and no worsening of health markers such as blood pressure, blood glucose or cholesterol. The complete paper is available for download through April 15, 2015.
<http://authors.elsevier.com/a/1Qewh5KxDNP7oX>

March 2015: A paper on intuitive eating in *Nutrición Hospitalaria* finds that a health-centered approach with no emphasis on weight may be more promising and realistic than conventional weight loss treatments. The link below is to the English translation of the paper.
http://www.aulamedica.es/gdcr/index.php/nh/article/view/7980/pdf_7876

March 5, 2015: Writing for the HAES blog, Miriam Berg explains why accessible seating in a doctor's waiting room is not just a matter of comfort and convenience. Not having seating available can lead to fat patients not seeking medical care.
<http://healthateverysizeblog.org/2015/03/05/the-haes-files-for-want-of-a-chair-standing-up-for-the-right-to-sit-down>

March 9, 2015: A fat guy happily dancing at a concert gets fat shamed, but the internet tracks down the dancer and lets him and the world know that he should be free to dance when and how he likes. Sean from London is now known as Dancing Man, and a group of ladies in Los Angeles are throwing him a big dance party with the help of some celebrities. Dance on, Sean.
<http://www.stuff.co.nz/life-style/life/67123847/Dancing-man-is-fat-shamed-by-bullies-but-world-rallies-behind-him>

March 12, 2015: Stacey Nye, PhD, FAED discusses her discomfort over weight-related compliments and why, although well meant, they are not appropriate. She offers some suggestions on how we can compliment each other as whole people.
<http://healthateverysizeblog.org/2015/03/12/the-haes-files-i-am-no-shadow>

March 13, 2015: Facebook's fat face emoji is being rebranded from "feeling fat" to "feeling stuffed" after a petition was started letting Facebook know that fat is not a feeling.
<http://www.dailytech.com/More+Than+a+Feeling+Facebook+Removes+Feeling+Fat+Emoji+Amid+Backlash/article37243.htm>

Founded in 1969, NAAFA is a non-profit human rights organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for fat people. NAAFA works to eliminate discrimination based on body size and provide fat people with the tools for self-empowerment through public education, advocacy, and member support.

On the web: <http://www.naafa.org>

NAAFA, Inc. | P.O. Box 4662 | Foster City | CA | 94404-0662