Growing Up Healthy

The Foundation's Growing Up Healthy Initiative

In 2008, the Foundation in partnership with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care will launch *Growing Up Healthy* – a five-year leadership and funding initiative with the goal of preventing childhood obesity in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine. The expectation is that by focusing on one important health issue, the Foundation can make a singular, more significant contribution to improving the health of people in its region.

The rationale for this focus on children is compelling. Approximately 30% of American children ages 6 – 11 are overweight and 15% are obese.[1] The human, educational and economic costs of the rapidly escalating numbers of overweight children are staggering. The solution is long-term cultural, behavioral and environmental changes in communities that support children and families to make healthier food choices and exercise more.

Growing Up Healthy will have three components: information, leadership development and funding to enhance or expand evidence-based programs. For each of these, the Foundation and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care will work with existing efforts and champions to maximize resources and efforts. Also, the Foundation will play an information and leadership coordination role among the efforts of the three states in which it plans to be active.

Over the five years of the initiative, the Foundation and Harvard Pilgrim Health Care expect to invest over $1 million annually, in addition to substantial in-kind contributions of executive and professional staff time.

[1] American Obesity Association, AOA Fact Sheets: Obesity in Youth, www.obesity.org