17 April 2019

Sal First Name Surname + post-nominal/s

Company

Add1

Add2

Suburb State Postcode

Via Email:

Dear [insert name]

**Urgent action required to address childhood obesity**

I am writing to you as a [physician/paediatrician] practising in [suburb or electorate]. Physicians want to reduce the serious risks of childhood obesity and improve health outcomes for our patients and communities. We need your help to do it.

A quarter of Australian children are now living with overweight or obesity. Since 2012 the proportion of children with obesity has increased by 60 percent, which means an additional 24,500 children each year are living with obesity. Kids with obesity are 5 times more likely to become obese adults and when obesity is experienced earlier in life, children grow up to face greater physical and mental health challenges and increased mortality.

If we don’t act now, we may be condemning a generation of children to serious preventable illness and early death.

Physicians and paediatricians see patients and families who struggle with obesity and related conditions every day. We know all too well that these conditions are influenced by unhealthy diets and low physical activity driven by our obesogenic environment. We recognise it is especially unfair that so many factors that make up this environment target children and adolescents. We also recognise that we as a society are not doing nearly enough to support children in leading healthy and productive lives.

[consider adding a deidentified story or case study based on your clinical experience]

I urge you and your parliamentary colleagues to take immediate steps to tackle the many harms of childhood obesity. To achieve this, Australian lawmakers must commit appropriate funding to develop and implement a national strategy on obesity with a focus on childhood, introduce an effective tax on sugar-sweetened beverages and restrict the advertising and marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks to children and young people.

From an early age, children’s exposure to advertising and marketing of unhealthy foods and drinks influences their preferences, purchasing and consumption patterns and their overall weight and health. A national ban on children and young people’s exposure to junk food and drink advertising will minimise the promotion of unhealthy diets to the most vulnerable members of our society.

The evidence to date has also shown that taxes on sugary drinks are an effective mechanism to reduce consumption of these drinks as well as providing an incentive to industry to reduce the sugar content of their products.

The Royal Australasian College of Physicians has published a fact sheet on childhood obesity and the position statement on obesity ([attached/enclosed]). These documents outline the serious implications of the increasing rates of childhood obesity for our society and the healthcare system and set out clear recommendations for tackling this critical health challenge.

As a physician/paediatrician, I want to minimise the harm that increasing levels of overweight and obesity are causing children and families in [your suburb/electorate] and across Australia. I want to ensure that our children achieve the best possible health and development outcomes and grow up to be healthy and productive Australians

[consider adding a specific ask or issue that is relevant to your local area/hospital – and the MP’s local electorate based on your clinical experience]

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you in person. I look forward to speaking to a member of your staff soon to organise a convenient meeting time.

Yours sincerely

[Your name]

Encl:

Fact sheet: Future-proofing the healthcare system – Childhood obesity

Position statements: RACP Position Statement on Obesity