



Leadership in the Science, Policy and Practice of Preventive Medicine

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ACPM APPLAUDS RELEASE OF PHYSICIAN COMPETENCIES FOR PRESCRIBING LIFESTYLE MEDICINE

JAMA commentary urges that physicians take responsibility for assisting patients in making health behavior changes

Washington, D.C. – The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM), a leading organization of some of the country’s top physicians committed to preventing disease and promoting health, applauds today’s public release of a set of physician competencies for prescribing lifestyle medicine. The competencies, developed by a blue ribbon panel of physician experts and representatives from leading primary care and other medical associations, were released as part of a commentary by ACPM representatives Drs. Liana Lianov and Mark Johnson published in the July 14 issue of *JAMA*.

Lifestyle medicine is defined by the expert panel as the “evidence-based practice of assisting individuals and families to adopt and sustain healthy behaviors that can improve health and quality of life.” The panel undertook the competencies development initiative to begin to address an identified gap in physician practice. While the evidence clearly shows lifestyle interventions and behavior change to be the most effective first-line of therapy for reducing chronic disease, the majority of physicians are not following these guidelines, citing lack of knowledge, skill, or confidence in counseling patients about lifestyle interventions.

While acknowledging that physicians are not the only influence of patient behavior, the authors of the *JAMA* commentary noted that physicians cannot abdicate their responsibility for effecting behavior change in their patients and for leading change within their practices. According to

Drs. Lianov and Johnson, “physicians cannot ascribe the entire responsibility for inadequate lifestyle changes to their patients, and clinicians must accept some responsibility for these current deficiencies in the quality of health care. Acknowledging the crucial role of environmental and community factors in creating and sustaining inappropriate health behaviors does not eliminate the duty for physicians to assist patients in making health behavior changes.”

“This is a landmark event. The principles of lifestyle medicine are foundational to health promotion, disease prevention and chronic disease management. Yet we believe this is the first time that a comprehensive group of physician stakeholders has met to determine what it is that physicians in primary care practice should know about this vital aspect of modern medicine,” says author and ACPM President Mark B. Johnson, MD, MPH, FACPM.

ACPM has been a leader among medical associations in promoting the concept and practice of lifestyle medicine. With support from [Lifestyle Center of America](#) and [Procter & Gamble](#), ACPM hosted the blue ribbon panel meeting in July 2009 that kicked off the competency development project. ACPM also prepared an extensive lifestyle medicine literature review, summarizing scientific evidence supporting lifestyle interventions and providing information on related topics such as definitions, reimbursement trends, related practice patterns, and relevant organizations. The review and other relevant lifestyle medicine information is available at <http://www.acpm.org/LifestyleMedicine.htm>. In addition, ACPM has just completed an agreement with the [American College of Lifestyle Medicine](#) to jointly convene the annual meetings of the two associations – *Preventive Medicine 2011* and *Lifestyle Medicine 2011* – February 16-19, 2011 in San Antonio, Texas.

ABOUT AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PREVENTIVE MEDICINE

The American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM) is the national professional society for physicians committed to disease prevention and health promotion. ACPM was established in 1954. Its 2,500 members are engaged in preventive medicine practice, teaching and research. Specialists in preventive medicine are uniquely trained in both clinical medicine and public health. They have the skills needed to understand and reduce the risks of disease, disability and death in individuals and in population groups. To learn more about the College, visit <http://www.acpm.org/>.