New Continuing Medical Education Course
Addresses Weight Bias and Strategies to Improve Health Care Delivery for Patients with Overweight/Obesity

Hartford, Conn. – The Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity and the University of Connecticut School of Medicine have developed an online Continuing Medical Education (CME) course for health care providers to improve the quality of care for patients with overweight and obesity, and help reduce weight stigmatization in clinical settings.

“This course responds to increasing calls for training and education to improve obesity care and prevent negative stigma toward patients with obesity. For clinicians working with this patient population, the course equips them with strategies to improve provider-patient communication, make positive changes in the medical office environment, and increase awareness of personal biases that could unintentionally compromise patient care,” said Dr. Rebecca Puhl, Deputy Director of the UConn Rudd Center, who led the course development.

The novel, free course is easily accessible and can be completed online at improveobesitycare.org

Weight Bias in Clinical Care: Improving Health Care for Patients with Overweight and Obesity is a Continuing Medical Education Course (CME) provided by the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity and UConn School of Medicine. The course is relevant for clinicians across a variety of practice settings and specialties who interact with patients with overweight or obesity.

Physicians, nurses and other health professionals self-report negative attitudes and prejudice towards patients with obesity. Research demonstrates that patients with obesity frequently feel judged and stigmatized in health care settings. Weight stigmatization during medical visits can harm the quality of provider-patient interactions, interfere with patients’ care experience, and influence decisions to avoid future medical visits and routine preventive care. With two-thirds of Americans affected by overweight or obesity, weight bias is an important clinical concern, one that no provider can afford to ignore.

As Puhl noted, “Negative bias and stigma create obstacles in efforts to effectively prevent and treat obesity. This course gives clinicians a new resource to assist them in providing respectful, compassionate care and supporting their patients to make healthy lifestyle changes.”

What are the Learning Objectives?
1) Recognize the sources of weight bias and stigmatization in health care settings.

2) Describe the adverse consequences of weight stigma on patients’ emotional and physical health.

3) Identify personal assumptions about obesity and body weight, and how these views can influence patient care.

4) Improve communication skills to facilitate productive discussions with patients about weight-related health.

5) Implement clinical strategies to help patients with obesity set appropriate goals for lifestyle behavior change.

6) Identify strategies to improve accessibility and comfort for patients with obesity in the medical office environment.

7) Educate medical students about weight bias and provide resources for further training on this topic.

As today's health providers can help align medical education with future patient needs, strategies to reduce weight stigma among medical trainees are also presented. To register and enroll, please visit: http://www.ImproveObesityCare.org/

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About the UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity
The Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut is a distinguished multidisciplinary policy research center dedicated to improving the world's diet, preventing obesity and reducing weight stigma. The Rudd Center is a leader in building broad-based consensus to change diet and activity patterns by conducting research and educating policy makers and the public. For more information, visit www.uconnruddcenter.org or follow us on Twitter at or on Facebook.

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