The draft USPSTF recommendation statement, “High Body Mass Index in Children and Adolescents: Interventions,” is a welcome reiteration of the importance of helping children and adolescents with high body mass index (BMI) lose and manage weight.

A steady decline in cardiovascular disease (CVD) mortality—still the leading cause of death in the U.S.—that began in the mid-1960s slowed considerably beginning around 2011-2012. The steadily increasing burden of obesity and type 2 diabetes beginning in the mid-1980s has been a major contributor to this deceleration.

The death rate from CVD in people ages 45-64 increased by 2% from 2011-2016. In 2016 alone, more than 130,000 people in this age group died from heart disease and stroke. Obesity is a major underlying factor contributing to the increasing prevalence of hypertension, dyslipidemia, and diabetes in young adults, adding to the cumulative burden of these risk factors over the lifespan. These trends disproportionately burden populations with a higher prevalence of high BMI (e.g., Hispanic/Latino, Native American/Alaska Native, and non-Hispanic Black children and adolescents).

The draft USPSTF recommendation is important because it provides data about interventions that will be helpful in planning interventions to control BMI in children and adolescents and provides important recommendations for research. It should be implemented along with the recommendations for additional research.

Stephen Sidney, MD, MPH, FACC, FAHA
Chief Scientific Advisor
National Forum for Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention
Chair of the Board
Marcus Plescia, MD, MPH

Immediate Past Chair of the Board
Warren A. Jones, MD, FAAFP

Secretary-Treasurer
Michael Cropp, MD, MBA

Founder Emeritus
Darwin Labatthe, MD, MPH, PhD

Directors
Juliana Crawford
Ihean E. Puia, MD, MPH, FAHA, FACC
Rosemary McGillow
Margaret Goen-Calvert
Hon. Jerome M. Adams, MD, MPH

Federal Liaisons
Lawrence J. Fine, MD, DrPH
RADM Brandon Taylor, PharmD
Walter Kowolitz, MD
Emmeline Ochiai, MPH
Janet S. Wright, MD, FACC

Executive Director
John M. Clymer