



For Immediate Release  
June 8, 2011  
Contact: Sarah Coppersmith  
[news@healthieramerica.org](mailto:news@healthieramerica.org)  
(202) 842-9001

## **PHA and Bright Horizons Announce Groundbreaking Child Care Commitment to Prevent Childhood Obesity**

**WASHINGTON** – The Partnership for a Healthier America (PHA), First Lady Michelle Obama and Bright Horizons Family Solutions announced today that Bright Horizons has made a commitment to serve as an open model as they continue to focus extraordinary effort on promoting healthy habits for the more than 70,000 children they care for every day.

Bright Horizons is committing to continue advancing their nutritional, physical activity and long-standing screen time policies and practices with the goal of having their nearly 600 U.S. child care centers and schools pass a public evaluation and serve as an example for child care centers nationwide. Bright Horizons is the first private child care company to commit to public evaluation of their commitment to healthy practices. The standards Bright Horizons will meet are taken in large part from the Early Childhood Settings guidelines developed last year in conjunction with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Public Health Association and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“Everyone is going to see that these small changes can make a big difference. If our kids get into the habit of getting up and playing, if their palates warm up to veggies at an early age, and if they’re not glued to a TV screen all day, they’re on their way to healthy habits for life,” said First Lady Michelle Obama, who also serves as the honorary chair of PHA. “That’s why I’m so excited about Let’s Move Child Care – because I know that childcare facilities and home-based providers can be a real building block for an entire generation of healthy kids.”

“It is an honor to stand with the First Lady as advocates for children and their health – now and in the future,” said Bright Horizons CEO David Lissy. “We applaud her for raising awareness about this issue and for highlighting how incredibly critical a child’s early years are for establishing life-long habits. Our founding principles at Bright Horizons rely on dynamic opportunities for nutritional learning and physical activity. We are proud to serve as a model for other child care centers across the country, and we look forward to continuing to develop programming that supports the objectives of the Partnership for a Healthier America.”

James R. Gavin III, M.D., Ph.D., chairman of the PHA's board of directors, said, "I commend Bright Horizons for continuing to lead the fight against childhood obesity in child care centers. Commitments like this one – with targeted and achievable results – will help us reach our goal of curbing childhood obesity within a generation. Perhaps most importantly, it's a commitment that will improve our children's health without asking already busy parents to do anything more than they're doing right now."

PHA is mobilizing the private sector to make meaningful commitments that improve our children's health and further the goal of solving childhood obesity within a generation. Bright Horizons adds itself to PHA's current partners who include: Walmart, the Healthy Weight Commitment Foundation and All-Clad Metalcrafters.

"This commitment continues Bright Horizons' leadership to providing a healthy setting for the children they care for every day, and will make a meaningful and measureable impact on the childhood obesity epidemic by helping teach our children healthy habits from day one," said Lawrence A. Soler, CEO of PHA. "With more than 12 million children under the age of 5 in a child care setting, for approximately 29 hours a week, we encourage parents to ask their child care centers if they will follow Bright Horizons' laudable example."

Every company that works with PHA is required to participate in a third party evaluation, and Bright Horizons has agreed to undergo an evaluation process with PHA that will be released to the public when completed.

The evaluation will be created and carried out by independent researchers, Marlene Schwartz and Kathryn Henderson, who work at the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at Yale University.

The evaluation will include:

- Allowing for independent verifiers to analyze its corporate policies and center practices to ensure they are in compliance,
- Opening up centers for direct observation, and
- Releasing results and best practices halfway through the commitment (18 months) and at the end of the commitment (36 months).

In addition to the evaluation, Bright Horizons has signed an agreement with PHA that states that within three years – and in some cases sooner – 95 percent of their child care centers will serve as an open model for the early childhood settings. Bright Horizons will:

Continue to focus on nutrition, by:

- Following their long-standing family-style eating practices,
- Ensuring that fruits and vegetables are served with every meal,
- Ensuring that only low-fat or non-fat milk is served to all children over age 2,
- Ensuring a maximum of one 4-6 oz. serving of 100 percent fruit juice per day, and
- Providing resources to ensure that all mothers are aware of their ability to breastfeed at their centers.

Continue to focus on physical activity, by:

- Further promoting their physical activity and nutrition information education programs for children: *Well Aware and Movement Matters*,
- Continuing to provide a minimum of 1-2 hours of physical activity per day,
- Maintaining their policy of no screen time for children under age 2,
- Providing a maximum of one hour of educational, curricula-based screen time for children over 2 years and maintaining their founding principle of no television in their centers, and
- Providing resources that encourage parents and caregivers to limit screen time for children outside the center to no more than 1-2 hours per day.

Additionally, within 18 months, the report will confirm that all Bright Horizons centers:

- ALWAYS provide access to water during meals and throughout the day,
- NEVER serve fried foods at meals, and
- NEVER serve sugar-sweetened beverages.

Head Start, the Department of Defense and the General Services Administration joined Bright Horizons today in making a pledge to implement policies to help end childhood obesity in their child care centers.

Any child care center that wants to join PHA in their effort to create a healthier America by solving childhood obesity is encouraged to go to [www.ahealthieramerica.org](http://www.ahealthieramerica.org) to see how they can get involved.

### **About the Partnership for a Healthier America**

The *Partnership for a Healthier America* is an independent, nonpartisan organization that will mobilize broad-based support for efforts to solve the childhood obesity challenge. Core activities of the Partnership will include:

- Developing a strong membership network of leaders across sectors with commitment to scaling meaningful and measurable solutions;
- Convening members annually to affirm, align, and announce commitments;
- Promoting broad understanding among all sectors about the role healthy food, physical activity, and the environment play in reversing the childhood obesity epidemic;
- Facilitating and measuring the impact of members' commitments against clear and transparent targets; and
- Connecting potential partners in the private and nonprofit sectors to each other and to the correct points of contact in government to ensure efficient leveraging of actions, and sharing of knowledge and lessons learned at the community, state, and national levels.

The Partnership emerged out of a series of conversations between The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, Nemours, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, which is a partnership with the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation. SNR Denton LLP has provided

valuable pro-bono operational and legal support in establishing the Foundation. The Brookings Institution has also contributed thought leadership to the effort.

For more information about the Partnership for a Healthier America, please visit [www.aHealthierAmerica.org](http://www.aHealthierAmerica.org) and follow PHA on Twitter @PHAnews.

### **About Bright Horizons Family Solutions**

Bright Horizons Family Solutions® ([www.brighthorizons.com](http://www.brighthorizons.com)) is the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, early education, and work/life solutions. Bright Horizons® serves more than 800 employer clients across the U.S., Europe, and Canada, with programs including child care and early education, back-up care, elder care, college counseling, and work/life consulting. The company operates more than 700 child care and early education centers. Bright Horizons was recently named for the 12<sup>th</sup> time as one of FORTUNE magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work for in America."