



TACIR

The Tennessee Advisory Commission
on Intergovernmental Relations



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Commission Members

FROM: Cliff Lippard *Cliff*
Executive Director

DATE: 15 September 2021

SUBJECT: Public Chapter 503, Acts of 2021 (Childhood Obesity)—Speaker

Childhood obesity has many consequences for Tennessee's health and economy. Children classified as obese are more likely to have high blood pressure and high cholesterol, impaired glucose tolerance and type 2 diabetes, breathing and joint problems, and musculoskeletal discomfort. Childhood obesity is also related to psychological problems such as anxiety and depression, low self-esteem and lower self-reported quality of life, and social problems such as bullying and stigma. For the last several years, Tennessee has consistently ranked among the states with the highest rates of childhood obesity. Public Chapter 503, Acts of 2021, requires TACIR "to perform a comprehensive evaluation on the socioeconomic impact childhood obesity has in Tennessee and its short and long-term effects."

Today the Commission will hear from Dr. Shari Barkin, the Chief of General Pediatrics and the Director of Pediatric Obesity Research in the Diabetes Center at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Her research focuses on childhood obesity and the effectiveness of family-based, community-centered interventions during critical windows of early childhood development. Beyond her clinical research, Dr. Barkin has also supported public policy initiatives in the state and was a key adviser to the Tennessee Obesity Taskforce and for its creation in 2010 of a statewide nutrition and physical activity plan to help reduce obesity and chronic disease in Tennessee.