



Contact: Michael Jensen, MD, President (507) 284-5005

Embargoed until Thursday May 2, 2002

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NAASO URGES CONGRESS TO DOUBLE OBESITY RESEARCH SPENDING TO 2% OF NIH BUDGET**

Washington, DC - May 2, 2002 - Today Dr. Michael Jensen, President of the North American Association for the Study of Obesity testifies before the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and related agencies, urging Congress to increase obesity research spending.

"Obesity is the number two preventable cause of death in the United States yet only 1% of the National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) budget is allocated for obesity research," says Dr. Michael Jensen, President of NAASO. "This doesn't make sense. Considering that 300,000 lives are lost annually, and that 61% of the adult population is either overweight or obese, an increase in the NIH's allocation to obesity seems appropriate. How can we justify only 1% of NIH's budget to combat this problem."

"Doubling the research funding is a logical step following the Surgeon General's Call to Action," says Dr. Samuel Klein, President-elect of NAASO. "There is a need for a sustained and coordinated effort by the NIH's budget to address the problem of obesity and a 1% increase in NIH's budget, while incredibly modest, at least moves us in the right direction."

"In terms of the health care costs, if left untreated, obesity will break the bank," says Dr. Louis Aronne, Public Affairs Chairman of NAASO. "The complications of obesity, like diabetes, hypertension, and coronary artery disease are expensive to treat. A major fiscal crisis looms before us, not to speak of the genuine human suffering. We at NAASO are determined to do something about it, and we urge people to ask their representatives to support increased allocations for obesity research and intervention studies"

"Obesity in children has also become a major public health. The rate of obesity has doubled in children and tripled in adolescents (NHANES). This poses a variety of new problems that will haunt our future. The only solution is increased knowledge through research into obesity. With enough support this epidemic can be reversed," says Dr. Michael Jensen.

The North American Society for the Study of Obesity (NAASO) is the leading scientific society dedicated to the study of obesity. NAASO is committed to encouraging research on the causes, treatment and prevention of obesity as well as to keeping the scientific community and public informed of new advances in the field. Its membership is comprised of the 1500 leading scientists and clinicians in the field. Visit our web site at [www.naaso.org](http://www.naaso.org).

###