The National Summit on Legal Preparedness for Obesity Prevention and Control was conceived by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a strategic conference to review the current status of legal preparedness for obesity prevention and control, identify potential gaps, and develop specific action options for improving the contribution law can make to reduce the health threat posed by obesity. Working with the collaborating partners and planning committee, the host committee planned and modeled after the Summit CDC’s 2007 conference on public health emergency legal preparedness that resulted in the National Action Agenda for Public Health Emergency Legal Preparedness. The summit was a working meeting that offered invited participants a structured opportunity to deliberate about the laws and legal issues that impact obesity prevention and control from a public health perspective. The goal was to develop a viable tool that (1) defines the status of laws at various jurisdictional levels, (2) identifies significant legal gaps, and (3) lists law-related options that may be considered to reduce the public health threat of obesity.

This supplemental issue to the *Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics (JLME)* contains three main sections representing the summit proceedings. Section 1, the introduction, contains a Foreword and two papers that provide an overview of the science and legal issues related to obesity prevention and control. Section 1 ends with a paper that discusses broadly, the government’s role in obesity prevention and control. Section two assesses the current status of legal preparedness to address obesity prevention and control. Section 2 describes “status” in terms of assessing four core elements of legal preparedness: (1) current laws and legal authorities; (2) the current skills public health practitioners and legal professionals possess to use laws and legal authorities effectively; (3) our ability to coordinate between sectors and jurisdictions to promote efficiency; and (4) the presence of, and our ability to share information about public health law best practices. Section 3 uses the four core elements to identify strategies and action options that could be adopted by various sectors and jurisdictions to prevent and control obesity.

The summit was planned by a committee comprising 71 individuals representing federal, state, and local governments as well as academic, philanthropic, nongovernmental, private sector, community-based, school-based, and public health institutions. These

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individuals were identified for their ability to reflect a broad group of individuals and organizations involved in obesity prevention and control and the effective use of law for those purposes. In November 2007, members of the planning committee met to identify and explore high-priority topics and issues to be addressed in the 2008 summit. Committee members met both as a large group and in small groups for more tailored discussion on physical activity, nutrition, and obesity. The committee also discussed the need to identify all the sectors critical to participation in the 2008 summit, including representatives from organizations and agencies in both the public and private sectors.

More than 230 persons participated in the summit, including elected state and local officials, attorneys, and practitioners from federal, state, tribal, and local government public health agencies; health care; legal practice; insurance; food manufacturing; academia; and representatives of philanthropic and professional organizations. Participants were organized into interactive workgroups, each of which focused on gaps, needs, and opportunities for specific actions related to one of the four core elements of public health legal preparedness. Discussion focused on laws and legal issues that impact, either directly or indirectly, nutrition, physical activity, and obesity. Further discussion emphasized specific action options that may be implemented in five specific intervention settings: medical care, schools, daycares, workplaces, and communities. The summit methodology ensured that each participant had multiple opportunities to contribute actively to the formation of the final work product. In addition to working sessions, several plenary sessions included nationally recognized leaders in public health, nutrition, physical activity, and law who work directly on obesity prevention and control.

The goal of the editors has been to produce an accurate record of the summit proceedings, while at the same time providing a practical tool for use by legislators, lawyers, public health practitioners, and their partners in their efforts to develop laws, policy, and programs that have a direct or indirect effect on reducing obesity. This supplement, which reports the proceedings of the 2008 National Summit on Legal Preparedness for Obesity Prevention and Control, represents the work product from the summit planning meeting and conference but is by no means intended to be the final result of this work. The action papers are intended to serve as a catalyst for future work. It will be incumbent upon senior policymakers and practitioners to consider implementing the action options described in this supplement in a manner that is appropriate for their specific setting, jurisdiction, sector, agency, or organization before the true fruits of this endeavor will be realized. The papers printed in Sections 2 and 3 of this *JLME* supplement are the collective work of authors who are multidisciplinary experts in law and obesity prevention and control. They were specifically invited by the CDC to serve as authors because of their ability to contribute to the final product and weave in the perspectives of the Summit participants following the conference deliberations. The papers in Sections 2 and 3 are the work product of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the organizations with which the authors are affiliated. The appendixes include a table summarizing selected summit action options, as identified by the action papers, organized by topic, setting, and jurisdiction; a roster of the summit planning committee; a list of summit participants and summit collaborating organizations; a table of obesity-related resources; and a bibliography of legal resources related to obesity prevention and control.

The realization of this conference and the publication of this proceedings document benefitted from the intense dedication of the summit planning committee and of the distinguished authors, invited participants, speakers, presenters, facilitators, small group reporters, and the editing team. In particular, we thank William H. Dietz, M.D., Ph.D., Director, CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity; Janet Collins, Ph.D., Director, CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; George A. Mensah, M.D., Associate Director for Medical Affairs, CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion; Anthony Moulton, Ph.D., and Richard Goodman, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Co-Directors of the CDC's Public Health Law Program; and the staff of the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, and of the CDC's Public Health Law Program. The dedication and many contributions of all these persons and organizations ensured the success of the summit and the development of this proceedings document toward the goal of improving legal preparedness as it relates to obesity prevention and control.

References
1. Please see “Collaborating Organizations,” in Appendix.
2. Please see “Planning Committee,” in Appendix.
3. Please see “Host Committee,” in Appendix.