

## Here's an idea ... what's yours?

A recent *Economist* had a 14-page report on obesity. We all know it's a problem. It's not confined to this country. It seems worldwide the battle to maintain weight is being fought and, according to statistics, largely lost. In fact, according to the report, two-thirds of American adults are overweight – defined as a BMI of over 25. It's not just us. Worldwide the problem stands to grow as BMI appears to be correlated to GDP to some extent. As nations grow wealthier, waistlines grow. The public health conse-

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quences are obvious. The linkage of obesity with health issues is well documented. We all know on a personal level that it's easier to gain weight than lose



### Fit to Practice

it. This author formerly would simply run a few more miles a week to drop a few unwanted pounds. Now that I'm north of 40, I've discovered that in addition to not having the time, it's no longer a magic formula even if done. As so eloquently stated in one of my favorite comedies, "Bummer, dude."<sup>1</sup>

The issue eludes solutions. Even the widely regarded BMI measurement is itself a "crude proxy" of health. According to BMI, boxer Mike Tyson is morbidly obese given his height and weight. Which of us wants to deliver that news to him? We can barely deal with our own BMI number. As with any public issue, its mere existence has become politicized. Even defining the problem is itself political. We as lawyers are inherently political beings. Whether we like it or not, we are engaged in public process and policy to some extent. This article is neither partisan nor political. Rather, we are in a position to lead to some extent. Our State Bar's Wellness Committee seeks to do just that.

The news is sobering, even depressingly so if we allow it to be. We cannot solve this problem. But we can do something. Just telling people to eat healthy does not seem to work.<sup>2</sup> The good news is it's easy to get involved or active. We don't need to make ironmen of ourselves or of those around us. We just need to do something. Becoming too heavy is a lot like going broke: a little at a time, then all at once.

Getting slimmer and/or healthier is likely similar – a little at a time. Local running clubs in my area offer walker programs. Many events that used to be for runners now include walkers as well. Even volunteering for a race or walk is motivational, gets one out of the house and engaged in the community. During the last year, I've noticed communities having walks for various causes/fundraisers that encourage people to just come out and walk for a while. Imagine – talking and visiting with your peers and neighbors while walking in your area. The enthusiasm at such events is absolutely contagious. These events almost always need volunteers. In fact, as someone who has been involved on both sides of such events for years, they DO always need volunteers.

This is but one idea – what's yours? The Wellness Committee would love to hear from you. Everyone is busy. Nobody wants to feel compelled or bullied into anything. But we as lawyers can help combat what's been labeled the "intention vs. action gap." That's certainly one way of putting it. People worldwide are living longer than ever. The issue has changed from addressing early death to fighting the "alive but sick" phenomenon. Our challenge is to live well and encourage by example those around us. After all, to paraphrase someone smarter than me, doesn't what we do scream so loud that others can't hear what we're saying? Let us be leaders on what some describe as the most pressing worldwide health issue ever. 🙏

1. Referring to Lawrence's not-so-helpful advice to neighbor Peter Gibbons' legal woes in *Office Space*, 1999.  
2. I'll submit myself as Exhibit A in this regard as my diet makes even me cringe at times, particularly during the holidays.

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