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Design a toolkit to improve obesity management in primary care

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The prevalence of obesity increases health risk and adds a financial burden to our nation. In 2012, the US Preventive Service Task Force recommended obesity and overweight interventions in primary care settings. Although evidence shows patients are more likely to lose weight when they are advised to do so by their PCP, obesity patients do not receive adequate counseling in primary care settings. There is an urgent need to find simple, effective strategies for improving weight-loss counseling in primary practice. A meta-analysis showed that behavioral intervention targeting a reduced calorie diet, increased physical activity, and behavioral therapy has a statistically significant effect on

weight loss. Currently, there are no specific guidelines or recommendations for PCPs on how to intervene in the obese population. We found a scarcity of strategies for obesity management addressing clinicians' working environment and patients' average intellectual capacity for obesity prevention. Furthermore, physician compensation report in 2016 revealed PCPs frequently fail in nutrition and weight management counseling due to heavy workload, insufficient reimbursement, and lack of training in obesity management. Therefore, we designed a simplified toolkit including an obesity counseling algorithm based on Obesity Algorithm 2016-2017 of the Obesity Medicine Association and a patient education handout focus on healthy eating, portion control, and food label reading endorsed by U.S. Department of Agriculture. To explore the possibility of utilization of the toolkit, we surveyed 13

clinicians in different primary care settings. Survey reveals that 84.6% of clinicians agree or strongly agree the toolkit reflects updated and succinct information of obesity treatment guidelines. Approximately 76.9% of clinicians think the algorithm is helpful in decision making, and 84% of them are more motivated to provide obesity intervention by using the toolkit. Although 69.2% of them claim would recommend the toolkit to their colleagues, 92.3% of providers believe the patient handout will help them providing obesity counseling more efficiently or increasing patients' engagement. Our approach has the potential to improve the engagement of both providers and patients in a primary care setting to manage obesity more effectively, with the likelihood of the patient handout having extended impact if it is transferred from patients to their families and friends.