



## **HHS Office on Women’s Health Releases Summary Report of Meeting on Eating Disorders and Obesity Messaging**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 23, 2019) – In March, the Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action joined researchers and advocates for a meeting hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office on Women’s Health (OWH) entitled, “How to Talk About Healthy Weight and Healthy Eating: A Cross-Disciplinary Dialogue on Messaging to Promote Healthy Behaviors and Positive Body Image.” This meeting was a part of the implementation of the Anna Westin Act, which passed within 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cures (P.L. 114-255). An executive summary of the meeting can be found [here](#), and a full report can be found [here](#).

The goal of the meeting was to open a dialogue between the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women’s Health and obesity/eating disorder prevention groups, educate federal agency staff on how to best include information on eating disorders into obesity messaging, and to gather input about messaging connected to weight stigma as it relates to various programs, grants, and initiatives.

Dr. Rebecca Puhl, Director for the Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity at the University of Connecticut, gave a presentation on her research related to weight stigma from a perspective of emotional/physical health. Janet Tomiyama, Associate Professor for the Department of Psychology at UCLA, followed with a discussion of her research on the relationship between weight stigma and stress. These presentations were followed by two breakout sessions, where participants discussed body image and dietary behaviors. While the dialogue in these breakout sessions was varied and expansive, generally participants came to an agreement that public health campaigns should decouple self-worth from weight, modeling is a highly effective way of promoting healthy body image and dietary choices in young people, and public health campaigns should focus on health and not weight, among other conclusions.

“This successful meeting once again demonstrates the EDC’s ability to lead and bring together key voices in the field,” said EDC Board President Chase Bannister, MDIV, MSW, LCSW, CEDS. “The meeting helped establish a cross-disciplinary dialogue between experts across the eating disorders prevention and obesity prevention fields that will help improve future public health campaigns and other related efforts.”

The EDC will continue to act as a committed partner with HHS OWH and the interagency working group on eating disorders as they identify next steps.

*The Eating Disorders Coalition for Research, Policy & Action (EDC) is a Washington, DC-based, federal advocacy organization comprised of advocacy organizations, academics, treatment providers, family/loved ones of children with eating disorders and people experiencing eating disorders nationwide. The EDC advances the recognition of eating disorders as a public health priority throughout the United States. Additional resources can also be found at [eatingdisorderscoalition.org](http://eatingdisorderscoalition.org).*

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