

Remarks of Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Vanderbilt Forum on Pediatric Obesity: Developing Unique Partnerships to Halt
the Epidemic
Wednesday, Oct. 15, 2008
Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt
Nashville, Tenn.

First, I'd like to begin by thanking my colleague, Debi Tate, for all the work she has done since coming to the Commission on the issue of childhood obesity and its intersection with the media messages that children receive. She has labored diligently to bring a national spotlight to these matters, and she has succeeded in raising the consciousness of many policymakers and industry leaders about the serious threat that obesity poses for today's youth, both now and in their adult years.

I also want to thank the people of the Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt and Dr. Shari Barkin for their hospitality and leadership in bringing us all together today. As the forum agenda makes clear, the causes of obesity among children are an intertwined mix of science and societal influences. It makes eminent sense, therefore, for professionals in science and medicine; policymakers at the federal, state, and local levels; and industry leaders in children's media to meet for serious conversation and information-sharing about the topic. I am grateful to Vanderbilt for giving us a forum where we can talk openly and share ideas that will, I hope, allow us to move forward productively.

I personally look forward to learning more about the science behind obesity in children and how media geared to youngsters can support the development of good eating and exercise habits for life. As the father of three young children, I have more than a

mere academic – or governmental – interest in the topic. I want to thank all of the forum participants for sharing their professional insights with my colleagues and me.