

Doctor Dishes Up Plan to Combat Obesity

February 24, 2010 11:15 AM

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When Dr. David M. Eisenberg spoke at the Tulane University School of Medicine, he posed a provocative question: "What if medical schools partnered with culinary schools to create teaching kitchens?"



Dr. David M. Eisenberg talks with medical students during his visit at Tulane School of Medicine, where he spoke about partnering medical schools with culinary schools to improve the health of patients. (Photo by Guillermo Cabrera-Rojo)

The director of the Harvard Medical School [Osher Research Center](#), Eisenberg laid out a comprehensive plan based on his collaboration with the Culinary Institute of America in developing the concept of teaching kitchens, where patients would be taught how to shop for healthy food, cook healthy and "craveable" meals and eat mindfully.

In addition, said Eisenberg, medical students and their professors would learn how to become role models of healthy lifestyle choices.

In speaking to medical school faculty members, students and board members in the DeBakey Educational Center on Monday (Feb. 22), [Eisenberg](#) proposed that Tulane — located in a city renowned for its local cuisine — become a national leader in combating obesity and obesity-related diseases such as diabetes.

According to a report he cited, if Americans continue to pack on pounds, obesity will cost about \$344 billion in medical-related expenses by 2018, eating up approximately 21 percent of health-care spending.

"I'm willing to bet the next 10 years of my life on this idea," said Eisenberg, who noted that his family comprises four generations of bakers and cooks. In 1979, under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences, Eisenberg served as the first U.S. medical exchange student to the People's Republic of China, where he studied acupuncture and anesthesia, as well as learning to prepare primarily vegetarian cuisine.

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"Research has proven that no one diet is a winner," Eisenberg said. "My bottom line is maybe diets aren't the solution. No one wants to live in deprivation."