**Obese Children at Risk**

To the Editor:

Re “Blacks Suffer Heart Failure More Than Whites, Study Finds” (news article, March 19):

Thank you for drawing attention to this alarming health disparity.

The findings of this study should be a wake-up call for the importance of reversing the childhood obesity epidemic. Today’s obese children are tomorrow’s unhealthy adults.

Children who are obese are receiving diagnoses of conditions previously considered adult illnesses, like Type 2 diabetes and hypertension, and they are at a higher lifetime risk for a host of other serious problems, including heart disease, stroke, asthma and some forms of cancer.

The harsh reality is that unless we act now to reverse the epidemic of childhood obesity, we may raise the first generation of Americans who will live sicker and die younger than their parents.

Risa Lavizzo-Mourey
President and Chief Executive
The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Princeton, N.J., March 19, 2009