

WHAT

The Growing Epidemic: Child Overweight Rates on the Rise in California Assembly Districts analyzes children's overweight rates by California Assembly district to determine if there have been changes in the epidemic in California Assembly Districts in recent years.

WHY

Childhood overweight has reached epidemic levels and, based on the study's findings, continues to rise in California. This report invites policymakers and their constituents to understand the extent of the problem in their communities and what must be done to address this crisis.

WHEN

This report analyzes and compares overweight data from the 2004 and the 2001 California Physical Fitness Tests.

KEY FINDINGS

- The rate of California overweight children increased by 6 percent from 2001 to 2004.
- Nearly a third (28.1 percent) of California children surveyed were overweight in 2004.
- Between 2001 and 2004, the percentage of overweight children increased among all demographic groups: boys and girls; fifth, seventh, and ninth graders; and children of all racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- 89 percent (71 out of 80) of all districts saw an increase in the prevalence of overweight children.
- Only 9 out of 80 Assembly districts experienced a decrease in the percentage of children who were overweight.
- In 69 percent (55 out of 80) of all districts, at least one out of four children was overweight.
- Of the ten districts with the highest rates of overweight children, eight were in the Los Angeles area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Institute healthy food and beverage standards for all items available in pre-school, school and after-school programs.
- Ensure that all students receive physical education that meets minimum standards.
- Eliminate the advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages to children and youth.
- Establish grocery stores with produce and other fresh, healthy items in all underserved neighborhoods.
- Make school recreational facilities available for after-hours use by children and families.

WHO

The study was conducted by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) with support from a grant provided by The California Vitamin Cases Consumer Settlement Fund.

HOW

The California Physical Fitness Test conducted by the California Department of Education evaluates children (5th, 7th and 9th graders) using the *FITNESSGRAM* assessment tool, which consists of six measures of physical fitness. CCPHA focused on one of the measures, body composition, as a measure of children's weight. CCPHA analyzed the data by California Assembly District and compared the findings with those from their 2001 Fitness Study.

WHAT IS THE *FITNESSGRAM*?

In October 1995, Assembly Bill 265 established the California physical performance test and mandated that the governing board of each school district administer the test to each pupil in the fifth, seventh and ninth grades. State law also required that the physical fitness data to be collected at least every two years by the California Department of Education and that the results be reported to the Governor and Legislature at least once every two years.

FITNESSGRAM, which consists of six measures of physical fitness, is the assessment tool used to test children. The Cooper Institute of Dallas, Texas, developed *FITNESSGRAM*, a computerized, health-related fitness assessment for children and youth, in 1982 used to assess fitness nationwide in more than 6,000 schools/school districts. Last year, the test was used to evaluate more than one million California students.

The California Physical Fitness Test provides a number of options for mea-

suring each of the fitness components to assure that all students, including those with physical limitations, have the maximum opportunity to complete the test. Students are compared not to each other but to health fitness standards carefully established for each age and gender that indicate good health.

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy analyzed one of the six *FITNESSGRAM* measures, body composition, as an indicator of whether or not children were overweight. Each student's body composition was assessed on either body mass index (BMI), calculated from measured height and weight, triceps skin-fold thickness, or bioelectrical impedance. Children who exceeded the Healthy Fitness Zone were considered to be overweight.

The percentage of children who were overweight in 2004 was compared to the percentage of children who were overweight in 2001 as determined by a prior CCPHA analysis.

CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH ADVOCACY

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) raises awareness about public health issues and mobilizes communities to promote the establishment of effective health policies. Established in 1999 by California's two public health associations—Southern California Public Health Association and California Public Health Association-North — CCPHA is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization.

CCPHA uses tools of public health—health education, social marketing, epidemiology, and grassroots organizing—to design policy solutions to address public health challenges facing California today. CCPHA's strength lies in their unique approach of working simultaneously with facets of public health that are rarely combined.

In 2002, CCPHA released its first study, *An Epidemic: Overweight and Unfit Children in California Legislative Districts*. In 2004, the Center released its second study, *An Early Warning Sign: Diabetes Deaths in California Legislative Districts*. In all of these studies, findings are reported for each state legislative district to provide policy makers and the general public with a clear picture of the extent to which this epidemic affects their own communities.

CCPHA has received funding from The California Endowment, The California Vitamin Cases Consumer Settlement Fund, The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The California Nutrition Network, The California Wellness Foundation, Kaiser Permanente, the William Randolph Hearst Foundations, and donations from individuals and organizations interested in supporting their mission.



BY THE NUMBERS

The findings of this report have serious implications for the health of Californian's children as well as the well-being of the state as a whole. Children and adolescents who are overweight are at increased risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, asthma, and orthopedic problems; they are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease (such as increased blood pressure and cholesterol); and they are more likely to have behavioral problems and depression. In addition, children and adolescents who are overweight are more likely to remain so as adults. The growing levels of childhood overweight point to two of the most serious public health crises facing California today: unhealthy diets and low levels of physical activity among our children.

The repercussions of overweight children are not only personal. Increased healthcare costs, higher absenteeism and reduced worker productivity are just some of the documented consequences that the state of California and employers face in the wake of the present trend toward an increasingly overweight population suffering from related chronic diseases.

200¹

Percent increase in overweight rates in teens over the past thirty years

80²

Percentage of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes who are overweight

33³

Percentage of boys born in 2000 who will develop diabetes if current trends continue

39³

Percentage of girls born in 2000 who will develop diabetes if current trends continue

75⁴

Percentage of overweight adolescents likely to be obese as adults

\$28 billion⁶

Yearly cost of obesity to Californians in 2005 in direct medical expenses and lost productivity

95⁷

Percentage of California schools that sell fast foods

10^{8,9}

Number of chronic diseases directly associated with childhood overweight

1 Ogden CL, Flegal KM, Carroll MD, Johnson CL. "Prevalence and Trends in Overweight Among US Children and Adolescents, 1999-2000." Journal of the American Medical Association 2002, vol.288, pp. 1728-1732.

2 ADA (American Diabetes Association). Children and Diabetes. ADA website [http://www.diabetes.org/main/application/commercew/?origin=* .jsp&event=link (B4_3)].

3 Narayan, KM, et al., JAMA. 2003; 290 (14): 1884-1890.

4 Guo SS, Wu W, Cumlea WC, Roche AF. Predicting overweight and obesity in adulthood from body mass index values in adolescence. Am J Clin Nutr. 2002; 76:653-8.

5 Additional information about the Assembly district zip code files is available on-line at http://www.senate.ca.gov/ftp/sen/offices/demographics/_HOME/.

6 Chenoweth D. The economic costs of physical inactivity, obesity and overweight in California adults: health care, workers' compensation, and lost productivity. Sacramento: Cancer Prevention and Nutrition Section, California Department of Health Services; 2005.

7 Finkelstein EA, Fiebelkorn IC, Wang G. National medical spending attributable to overweight and obesity: how much, and who's paying? Health Aff. 2003; W3-219-W3-226.

8 California Teen Eating, Exercise, and Nutrition Survey. 1998.

9 USDHHS. The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity. Atlanta, CA, 2001.

CCPHA STAFF

Harold Goldstein, DrPH
Executive Director
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
530.297.6000
hg@publichealthadvocacy.org

STATE SPOKESPERSONS

Jack O'Connell
State Superintendent of Public Instruction
California Department of Education
916.319.0818

Phyllis Bramson-Paul
Director
Nutrition Services
California Department of Education
916.323.7311
PBramson@cde.ca.gov

Dianne Wilson-Graham
Physical Education Consultant
California Department of Education
916.319.0280
dwilsong@cde.ca.gov

Martin Gonzalez
Assistant Executive Director
Policy Services and Governance
California School Boards Association
916.371.4691
mgonzalez@csba.org

Gail Woodward-Lopez, MPH, RD
Associate Director
UC Berkeley
Center on Weight and Health
510.642.1599
gwlopez@nature.berkeley.edu
Bilingual

REGIONAL SPOKESPERSONS

SACRAMENTO REGION

Dr. Samrina Marshall
MCAH Director
Yolo County Health Department
530.402.2800
Samrina.Marshall@yolocounty.org

Karen Bellacera
School Policy Coordinator
Health Education Council
916.556.3344 office
916.247.4621 cell
kbellacera@healthedcouncil.org

SHASTA COUNTY

Terri Fields-Hosler
Director of Chronic Disease Prevention
Shasta County Public Health
530.245.6869
tfieldshosler@co.shasta.ca.us

BAY AREA

Deanna Niebuhr
Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity
Collaborative
510.645.4207 x 102 office
510.684.3864 cell
deanna.niebuhr@bayareapartnership.org

Larry Meredith, Ph.D.
Director
Department of Health & Human Services
Marin County
415.499.6924
lmeredith@co.marin.ca.us

Dr. Tony Iton
Director
Alameda County Public Health Department
510.267.8012
tony.iton@acgov.org

CENTRAL VALLEY

Kathleen Grassi, MPH, RD
Interim Assistant Director
Fresno County Department of Community
Health
559.445.3200
kgrassi@co.fresno.ca.us

Connie Conway
Chair
Tulare County Board of Supervisors
559.733.5271
cconway@co.tulare.ca.us

GOLD COAST REGION

Tom Maier, Ph.D.
Director of Community Health Services
San Luis Obispo County
Health Department
805.781.5512
tmaier@co.slo.ca.us



LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Dr. Francine Kaufman
Head of the Center for Diabetes, Endocrinology
& Metabolism
Children's Hospital of Los Angeles
323.669.4606
310.701.2780 cell
fkaufman@chla.usc.edu

Marlene Canter
Board President
Board of Education
Los Angeles Unified School District
213.241.6387
marlene.canter@lausd.net

Dr. Lynda Tigner-Weekes
St. John's Child Center
213.749.0947
lweekes@wellchild.org

Rosa Soto
Regional Director
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
626.961.1179 office
626.688.7468 cell
ccphasoto@earthlink.net
Bilingual

Jeanette Flores
Team Leader: 57th Assembly District
California Center for Public Health Advocacy
626.405.5539
jeanette.v.flores@kp.org
Bilingual

ORANGE COUNTY

Leah Fraser, PhD
Director of Policy
Latino Health Access
1717 N. Broadway
Santa Ana, CA 92706
949.690.0019 cell
lfraser@latinohealthaccess.org

SAN BERNARDINO/RIVERSIDE COUNTIES

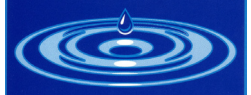
Bill Lawrence
Deputy Director
Riverside Department of Public Health
951.358.6413.
blawrenc@co.riverside.ca.us

Melodee Lopez
Public Health Nutritionist
San Bernardino Health Department
909.387.6318
mlopez@dph.sbcounty.gov

SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Naomi Butler
Public Health Nutritionist
SDSU Foundation
California Project LEAN
760.505.1831 cell
naomib@cox.net

Tanya Rovira-Osterwalder
HEAC Project Coordinator
South Bay Partnership
619.691.8801 office
619.787.3699 cell
tanyarovira@sbcglobal.net



SCIENTIFIC PANEL

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy convened a panel of nutrition, physical education and physical activity experts including:

Susan Babey, PhD
Project Director
UCLA Center for Health Policy Research

Patricia Crawford, DrPH, RD
Co-Director
Center for Weight and Health
University of California Berkeley

George Flores, MD
Senior Program Officer
The California Endowment
IOM Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children and Youth

Betty Hennessy, PhD
Consultant
Physical Education, Curriculum and Instructional Services
Los Angeles County Office of Education

Kelli McCormack Brown, PhD, CHES
Associate Professor
Department of Community and Family Health
College of Public Health
University of South Florida

Gregory Welk, PhD
Assistant Professor
Department of Health and Human Performance
Iowa State University
FITNESSGRAM Scientific Advisory Committee

Antronette Yancey, MD, MPH
Associate Professor
Department of Health Services, School of Public Health
University of California Los Angeles