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THE COSTS OF OBESITY

THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF OVERWEIGHT, OBESITY AND PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AMONG CALIFORNIA ADULTS - 2006

OVERVIEW. On July 9, 2009, the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA) released *The Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity and Physical Inactivity Among California Adults – 2006*. The study found that the cost of overweight, obesity and physical inactivity had climbed to \$41 billion in 2006, nearly double the amount reported in 2000. Given California's current fiscal crisis, both the private and public sectors would benefit from federal, state and local policies that make prevention a top priority and help ensure that all Californians live in communities that support people to make healthy eating and physical activity choices.

THE STUDY. Commissioned by CCPHA, this analysis builds on a [similar study](#) published in 2005 by the California Department of Health Services which described the economic costs of overweight, obesity and physical inactivity in 2000. The updated report is based on the latest available data and scientific research on the relationship between overweight, obesity and physical inactivity, and their collective impact on health care expenditures and worker productivity. The analysis estimated costs for the state as a whole and for California counties. The study was conducted by Chenoweth & Associates, Inc., the same health econometrics consulting firm that conducted the previous study. For summary information, see the [Press Release](#), [Press Kit](#), accompanying [Policy Brief](#) and [Economic Costs Associated with Overweight, Obesity, and Physical Inactivity in California Counties](#).

FINDINGS. The study found the total annual estimated cost to California for overweight, obesity and physical inactivity was \$41.2 billion – \$21.0 billion for overweight and obesity, and \$20.2 billion for physical inactivity. Health care costs totaled \$20.7 billion and lost productivity costs reached \$20.4 billion. Health care costs associated with overweight and obesity were \$12.8 billion while health care costs associated with physical inactivity totaled \$7.9 billion. Finally, lost productivity costs associated with overweight and obesity were \$8.2 billion, and lost productivity costs associated with physical inactivity were \$12.3 billion.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS. To reduce the economic burden associated with overweight, obesity and physical inactivity, policies must be established at all levels to promote healthy eating and physical activity. At the national level, public health and prevention must be core elements of national health care reform. At the state level, agencies that influence environments where Californians live, work, learn and play must promote health through their policy and funding decisions. At the city and county level, local policies must be established to ensure that California communities are places where residents can easily make healthy eating and activity choices. See this list of key [policy recommendations](#).

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Support for this project was provided by a grant from The California Endowment.

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