



Obesity in Maine: A Call to Action

Facts & Figures:

- **2.56 billion dollars:** Total annual cost (includes direct and indirect costs) to Maine due to physical inactivity, overweight and obesity.¹
- **150 million dollars:** Dollars that could be saved by Maine each year with a **5%** reduction in the percentage of Maine adults who are overweight and physically inactive. This is equivalent to funding over 4,000 new jobs!¹
- **6.1 million dollars:** Total costs associated with overweight and obesity (includes health-related and lost work time costs) to 17 Maine businesses with over 17,000 employees in 2010.²
- **Two out of every three adults** and **one out of every three children** in Maine are overweight or obese.³
- Obese children and adolescents are more likely to become obese adults, increasing their risk for adult health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease, several types of cancer, and strokes.⁴
- Obesity passed tobacco use as the **leading cause of preventable death** in the nation.⁵

Actions:

- Increase the amount of **physical education (PE)** available to children in school. A typical 2nd grade student in Maine receives an average of 36 minutes per week of PE; a typical 8th grader, 86 minutes.⁶ National guidelines recommend 150 minutes per week of instructional PE for elementary school children and 225 minutes for middle and high school students.⁷
- Ensure that all meals and snacks sold and served in schools, childcare and early childhood settings are consistent with current evidence-based **nutrition standards** as established by a leading national scientific authority.
- Include established standards for the amount and type of **physical activity** offered to children in schools, childcare and early childhood settings.
- Provide Maine people with **access to nutrition information** at chain restaurants.

¹ A Topline Report, from the study, *An Economic Cost Appraisal of Physical Inactivity, Overweight, and Obesity Among Maine Adults*. Conducted by Chenoweth & Associates, Inc. Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield, Maine and MaineHealth. 2007.

² Perry WM. Analysis of current and projected obesity-related health costs and lost work-days for Maine employers. Center for Health Policy Planning and Research, University of New England. 2010.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009. Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, 2009.

⁴ U.S. Surgeon General. *Overweight and obesity: Health consequences*. Rockville, MD. 2001.

⁵ Jia H, Lubetkin E. *Trends in quality-adjusted life-years lost contributed by smoking and obesity*. Am J Prev Med 2010;38(2):138-144.

⁶ Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs on the Physical Education Capacity of Elementary Schools. Maine, March 2010.

⁷ The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) guidelines accessed at <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/standards/nationalGuidelines/PEguidelines.cfm>