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.

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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.


