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Obesity Fact Sheet

in support of increasing support, coordination and funding for obesity prevention

Extent of the problem:

- Nationally, nearly two out of every three Americans were overweight or obese in 1999.¹
- Nationally, 13% of children aged 6 to 11 years and 14% of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years were overweight, according to BMI for age, in 1999. This prevalence has nearly tripled for adolescents in the past two decades.¹
- In SLO County, 55% of adults were overweight or obese (BMI > 25) in 2003; a similar rate as California overall.²
- In SLO County, 11.7% of infants were born overweight.³
- In SLO County, on average 37.8% of low-income children, 3-5 years old, in Headstart, WIC, and CHDP programs are at-risk of overweight or are overweight.⁴
- In SLO County, 29.1% of 5th graders and 31.3% of 9th graders are at-risk of overweight or are overweight in 2004-05, slightly less than California: 5th graders, 33.6%, and 9th graders, 33.1%.⁵
- In SLO County, Latino 5th graders (41.2%) are nearly twice as likely to be overweight compared to white 5th graders (23.5%), a comparable disparity as California overall.⁵

Severity of the problem:

- Is the fastest-growing cause of disease and death in America.
- One out of every eight deaths in America is caused by an illness directly related to overweight and obesity, with the risk of death rising with increasing weight.
- Obesity is associated with:
 - diabetes; over 80 percent of people with diabetes are overweight or obese.
 - elevated triglycerides (blood fat) and decreased HDL cholesterol ("good cholesterol"), high blood pressure and the incidence of heart disease.
 - some types of cancers, such as colon, prostate, kidney and postmenopausal breast cancer.
 - pregnancy complications, including increased risk of gestational diabetes, maternal high blood pressure, need for caesarean section due to high birth weight, and death to mother and baby.
- Risk factors for adult chronic disease now more frequently affects youth:
 - the rate of Type 2 diabetes as increased dramatically among children and adolescents.
 - overweight children and adolescents more frequently have high cholesterol and high blood pressure – factors for heart disease – compared to healthy weight children.
- Overweight adolescents have a 70-80 percent chance of becoming overweight or obese adults.¹

Economics of the problem:

- The cost of obesity in the United States was about \$117 billion in 2000.¹
- In California, estimated 2005 costs of obesity and inactivity were \$28.7 billion in healthcare expenses,

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General; www.surgeongeneral.gov, 2005

² 2003 CHIS, UCLA Institute for Health Policy Research, 2005

³ CA Department of Health Services, Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance, 2003

⁴ Data obtained from local Headstart and WIC programs, 2005, and CHDP, 2003.

⁵ California Department of Education, Physical Fitness Test, data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest, 2005

injuries and lost productivity; 32 percent more than five years ago¹.

Causes of the problem¹:

- Overweight and obesity result from an imbalance involving excessive calorie consumption and/or inadequate physical activity.
- For each individual, body weight is the result of a combination of genetic, metabolic, behavioral, environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic influences.
- Behavioral and environmental factors are large contributors to overweight and obesity and provide the greatest opportunity for actions and interventions designed for prevention and treatment.
- Overweight in children and adolescents is generally caused by lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of the two, with genetics and lifestyle both playing important roles in determining a child's weight.
- Our society has become very sedentary. Television, computer and video games contribute to children's inactive lifestyles.
- Nationally, 43% of adolescents watch more than 2 hours of television each day. In SLO County, 58.2% of adolescents watch more than 2 hours each day².
- Children, especially girls, become less active as they move through adolescence.

¹Chenoweth, et al., *The Economic Costs of Physical Inactivity, Obesity and Overweight in California Adults: Health Care, Workers' Compensation, and Lost Productivity*, 2005.

² 2001 CHIS, UCLA Institute for Health Policy Research, 2005