

A HEAVY BURDEN



ARE **OVERWEIGHT** OR **OBESSE** IN CLARK COUNTY

DATA SOURCE: 2019 BRFSS, 2019 YRBS

BACKGROUND

Obesity has been identified as an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In the United States, the prevalence of obesity has tripled in the past 50 years.¹ Today, 71 percent of American adults are overweight or obese.¹ The rate of unhealthy bodyweight (overweight/obese) among children and adolescents has more than doubled since the 1970s.²

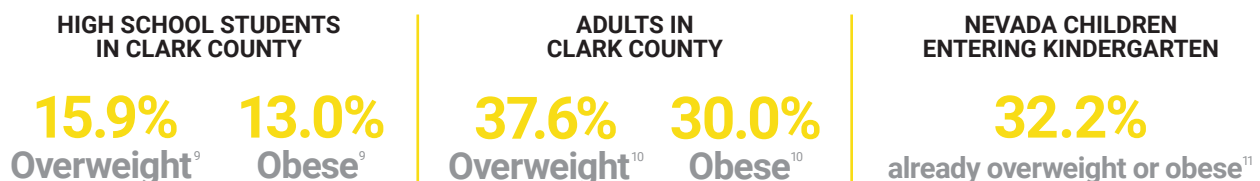
From 2014 through 2017, after an increasing trend for more than two decades, life expectancy for Americans decreased 0.3 years,³ a troubling development which could partially be attributed to the increase in obesity.^{4,5} It is well known that obesity is associated with a variety of negative health effects, such as diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, and certain types of cancer.⁶ In fact, one in three American children born in the year 2000 will develop diabetes in their lifetime because of the increase in overweight and obesity.⁷ There is an undeniable link between increasing obesity rates and rising medical spending. It was estimated that obesity raises the medical care costs of obese adults by an average of \$3,429 (in 2013 dollars).⁸ In addition to being a risk factor for chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and some cancers, according to the CDC, individuals with obesity are also at increased risk of severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19.

CAUSES

Obesity is a complex disease resulting from a combination of factors including behavioral, genetic and environmental factors. Where people live, work, learn, worship, and play can have a significant impact on an individual's behavior and ultimately their health and risk of obesity. For example, if food, particularly unhealthy food, is plentiful and less expensive than healthy options, walking or biking to work or school is difficult or unsafe, physical education classes are eliminated in schools, and neighborhoods don't have access to safe places for physical activity or to full-service grocery stores, healthy choices are difficult to make.

SOLUTION

Everyone should have a fair and just opportunity to be healthy. In healthy communities, policies and the built and physical environments remove barriers to good health and facilitate and provide access to healthy, affordable food and places to be physically active that are safe and equitably distributed. Effective programs that support healthy lifestyles are accessible and culturally and linguistically appropriate. Creating healthy environments cannot be done by one organization or in isolation from others, it requires communities and organizations working together.



PARTNERS FOR A HEALTHY NEVADA'S (PHN) POSITION

Obesity is a significant public health issue that requires action at all levels. Specifically, we support and encourage the following evidence-based strategies and positions:

- Strengthening state and local school wellness policies and regulations and supporting implementation to increase access to healthy foods; limit/restrict access to unhealthy foods and increase opportunities for physical activity in school settings.
- Increasing accessibility and availability of healthier food and beverage choices including at restaurants, vending and concessions.
- Improving the availability of healthy foods and beverages and physical activity opportunities in organization or institutional settings including child care facilities, afterschool settings, worksites, health care facilities, food pantries, and faith-based organizations.
- Expanding culturally and linguistically appropriate programs for communities at higher risk of developing obesity to increase opportunities for healthy eating, breastfeeding support, and physical activity.
- Increasing the quality, frequency, and duration of physical education classes in schools and integrating opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day and during before and after school hours.
- Obesity surveillance efforts to monitor obesity and use data to direct resources to communities at highest risk.
- Dedication of sustainable funding to support obesity prevention efforts statewide.
- Making healthy foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, more affordable and accessible to low-income families and individuals.
- Built environment approaches to increase physical activity that combine pedestrian and bicycle transportation system interventions with land use and environmental design components and increase active routes to everyday destinations.

ABOUT PHN: Officially established in 2006, Partners for a Healthy Nevada is Southern Nevada's community obesity prevention coalition. Our members are committed to the PHN mission and vision:



VISION: Residents of Southern Nevada have a healthy weight through physical activity and healthy eating.

MISSION: To promote and support members' efforts to reduce the burden of weight-related disease through programs, advocacy and activities that promote healthy eating and physical activity.

QUESTIONS ABOUT PHN CAN BE SENT TO: Nicole Bungum, MS, CHES – PHN Facilitator: bungum@snhd.org

CITATIONS

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