



# What is the Obesity Epidemic Costing North Carolina? Too Much.

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## The Cost of NC's Obesity Epidemic<sup>1</sup>

	Costs in 2006	Projected Costs for 2011	Projected Costs for 2015
<b>Adults 18 +: Direct Medical &amp; Indirect Costs</b>	\$57.37 billion	\$75.64 billion	\$94.31 billion
<b>Youth Age 10-17: Direct Medical costs</b>	\$105.13 million	\$164.59 million	\$204.96 million

- North Carolina is ranked 14th highest in the nation for childhood obesity and 12th highest in the nation for adult obesity.<sup>2</sup>
- 35.5% of children and youth age 6-17 are overweight (18.6%) or obese (16.9%),<sup>3</sup> while 2 in every 3 adults (64.6%) in NC is overweight or obese.<sup>4</sup>
- Obesity is driving up health care costs in NC. The above adult costs are calculated according to the prevalence of the following risk factors: poor nutrition, physical inactivity, overweight and obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol, tobacco use, depression and type II diabetes. The above youth costs are calculated according to physical activity, overweight and obesity, and type 2 diabetes.
- 56% of NC's high school students and 45% of middle school students do not get the recommended amount of physical activity.<sup>5</sup>
- Inactive overweight adolescents are 70 percent more likely to grow up and enter N.C.'s workforce as overweight and obese adults.<sup>6</sup> Obese workers have up to 21% higher health care costs compared with those of healthy weight.<sup>7 8 9</sup> An overweight or obese adult will accrue **\$250,000 in lost productivity** over the course of his or her career.<sup>10</sup>
- If just 3% of North Carolinians moved from overweight or obese to a healthy weight through physical activity and good nutrition, North Carolinians could save **three billion dollars between 2007 and 2011**. That's enough to fund the UNC system for a year, or pay for 68,000 new jobs.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Tipping the Scales: How obesity and unhealthy lifestyles have become a weighty problem for the North Carolina economy.* Chenoweth & Associates, June 2008 (provided in the Be Active North Carolina Inc. report titled "Tipping the Scales") and available at [http://209.200.69.140/threeppercent/download/Tipping\\_the\\_Scales.pdf](http://209.200.69.140/threeppercent/download/Tipping_the_Scales.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *"F" as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America*, Trust for America's Health (2009).

<sup>3</sup> North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics. Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP), (2007).

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services, (2007).

<sup>5</sup> North Carolina Youth Risk Behavior Survey, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. (2007)

<sup>6</sup> Telama, R., Yang, X., Laakso, L., and Vilkari, J. (1997). Physical activity in childhood and adolescence as predictor of physical activity in young adulthood. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 13, 317-323.

<sup>7</sup> Burton WN, Chen CY, Schultz AB, Edington DW. The economic costs associated with body mass index in a workplace. *J Occup Environ Med.* 1998;40:786-792.

<sup>8</sup> Wang F, Schultz AB, Musich S, McDonald T, Hirschland D, Edington DW. The relationship between National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Weight Guidelines and concurrent medical costs in a manufacturing population. *Am J Health Promot.* 2003;17:183-189.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson DR, Whitmer RW, Goetzel RZ, et al; Health Enhancement Research Organization (HERO) Research Committee. The relationship between modifiable health risks and group-level health care expenditures. *Am J Health Promot.* 2000;15:45-52.

<sup>10</sup> *Tipping the Scales: How obesity and unhealthy lifestyles have become a weighty problem for the North Carolina economy.* Chenoweth & Associates, p. 12, June 2008 (provided in the Be Active North Carolina Inc. report titled "Tipping the Sales") ; available at [http://209.200.69.140/threeppercent/download/Tipping\\_the\\_Scales.pdf](http://209.200.69.140/threeppercent/download/Tipping_the_Scales.pdf)