



# 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 11th highest in the nation for childhood obesity and 10th highest in the nation for adult obesity.<sup>2</sup>
- 35.5% of children and youth age 10-17 are overweight or obese,<sup>3</sup> while 2 in every 3 adults (65.7%) 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>
- Overweight adolescents have a 70 percent chance of growing up and entering NC's workforce as overweight and obese adults.<sup>6</sup> An overweight or obese adult will have annual medical costs 37.4% higher than their healthy weight counterpart.<sup>7</sup> An overweight or obese adult will accrue **\$250,000 in lost productivity** over the course of his or her career.<sup>1</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>1</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> Trust for America's Health. (2010). *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America.* Available at <http://www.rwjf.org/files/research/20100629fasinfatmainreport.pdf> . Accessed on June 30, 2010.

<sup>3</sup> National Survey of Children's Health (2007), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Available at <http://nschdata.org/ranking/rankingmap.aspx?item=07> . Accessed March 13, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> North Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey, NC State Center for Health Statistics, NC Department of Health and Human Services, (2008). Available at <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/brfss/2008/nc/risk/rf1.html>. Accessed on March 19, 2010.

<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 Vilkkari, 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> Finkelstein EA., Fiebelkorn IC, Wang G. National medical spending attributable to overweight and obesity: how much, and who's paying? *Health.Aff.* 2003, Suppl Web Exclusives, W3-219-26.