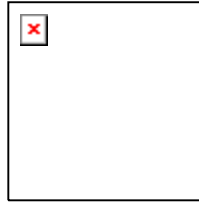


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## North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

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### North Carolina has 5th Fattest Adolescents

RALEIGH – North Carolina’s adolescents are the 5th most overweight in the nation, according to the fourth annual F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies are Failing in America report released today at the U.S. Southern Obesity Conference in Little Rock, Ark.

The report, released by Trust for America’s Health, a Washington-based health advocacy group, examines current policy and grand-scale changes that need to be considered to combat the growing obesity epidemic.

The ranking comes from data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in January of 2003 through July of 2004, in a random-digit dialed phone survey of parents about their child’s health. With 19.3 percent of the state’s 10 to 17-year-olds classified as overweight, North Carolina ranks 5th highest in the country.

“This is a grave concern for us,” said State Health Director Leah Devlin. “The CDC reports that this generation of kids is not expected to live as long as their parents because of the health issues associated with carrying so many extra pounds.”

North Carolina ranks 17th in obesity for adults, according to the 4th edition of F as in Fat. North Carolina’s obesity rate increased to 26.6 percent in 2006 from 25.9 percent in 2005, while the rate of overweight adults declined from 36.7 percent in 2005 to 36.2 percent in 2006. This data is collected through the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a random-digit dialed phone survey conducted every year by the CDC. Survey participants self-report their height and weight, which is then converted to the Body Mass Index, a number that reflects body weight adjusted for height.

“This ranking means we have more diabetes, more heart disease and strokes, not to mention the quality of life issues – depression, social stigma and ostracizing of obese people in our society,” said Devlin. “This is particularly true for children, who suffer from bullying and teasing in school, depression, low self-esteem – these all impact that child’s ability to succeed in school and in life.”

Devlin says “What we need to do is focus our resources on prevention and reduction of obesity, by changing state and local policy, and making our communities places that make healthy choices the easy option. We need to encourage individuals and families to make healthier decisions about eating and physical activity, but they can’t do it alone. Our state must put policies into place to make it easier for people to make better decisions. We have a plan to do these things and have made some

progress, but we still have a ways to go.” To make the changes we need to see, Devlin recommends the following:

Fully fund and implement Eat Smart, Move More: North Carolina’s Plan to Prevent overweight, Obesity and Related Chronic Diseases

Provide funding to local communities to support at least one full-time public health professional in each county to address the key risk factors that lead to chronic disease.

Support the work of local Healthy Carolinians partnerships and Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalitions.

Establish quality physical education in our schools across all grade levels.

Support implementation of local school wellness policies.

Fully fund implementation of elementary school nutrition standards, and establish standards for middle and high schools.

Encourage non-governmental agencies to work toward establishing worksite wellness policies that enable their employees to eat healthy foods and be more active in the workplace.

Support neighborhood design that promotes active living.

Mandate that health insurance companies and HMOs include preventive services related to nutrition and physical activity

The full report with complete state rankings in all categories is available on TFAH’s Web site at [www.healthyamericans.org](http://www.healthyamericans.org).

Eat Smart, Move More North Carolina is a statewide movement that promotes increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity wherever people live, learn, earn, play and pray. Learn more at [www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com](http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com)

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