

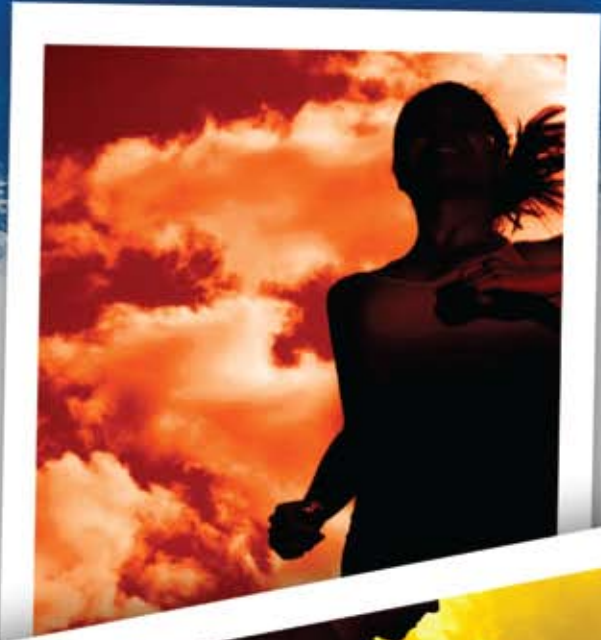
OVERVIEW

WASHINGTON STATE

NUTRITION & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAN

POLICY & ENVIRONMENTAL APPROACHES

REVISED JUNE 2008



energize your life!
Eat Healthy - Be Active

A GUIDE FOR COMMUNITIES TO PROMOTE AND SUPPORT HEALTH

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Health

Poor diet and lack of physical activity cause many chronic diseases and at least 300,000 deaths in the United States each year. Only tobacco use causes more preventable deaths. Chronic diseases – such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, obesity, and stroke – account for seven of every 10 deaths and for more than 60 percent of medical costs in the United States. In Washington, the cost of obesity-related medical expenses, paid by Medicare and Medicaid, is estimated to be \$365 million per year.

Obesity in Washington

About 60 percent of Washington adults in Washington were either overweight (36 percent) or obese (24 percent) in 2006. Obesity rates have more than doubled since 1990, which is similar to national rates. The percentage of young people in the United States who are overweight more than doubled in the last 20 years. For Washington 10th graders, 11 percent were obese and 14 percent were overweight in 2005. Children who are obese are more likely to develop chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease earlier in life than children with normal weight.

▶ The Vision

Washington residents will enjoy good nutrition, have active lives, and live in healthy communities.

▶ The Purpose

The purpose of the Washington State Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan is to provide a framework for policy makers at the state, local, and institutional levels to work together to support and build environments that make it easier for Washington residents to choose healthy foods and to be physically active in order to:

- Slow the increase in the proportion of adults and children who are obese
- Reduce rates of chronic diseases that are associated with obesity
- Improve quality of life



PUBLIC HEALTH IN WASHINGTON

Helping communities make changes so people can make healthy choices

Public health takes a different approach than health care and medicine, which focus on individuals. Public health looks at the entire system – the physical environment where we live, learn, work, and play. To help people to get healthy and stay healthy, we need to understand how people live and what needs to change to support health. Changes in policy at the state, regional, and local levels can improve the environments where we live, learn, work, and play.

Focus for the State Plan

The plan is based on scientific evidence about obesity prevention. It emphasizes environmental and policy approaches to build a foundation for stemming the rapid increase in rates of overweight and obesity. All obesity prevention and treatment initiatives will be more successful when Washington residents live in environments that make it easier to eat healthy and be active.

New to the Plan in 2008

- The role of families and individuals
- The role of primary prevention in health care
- New examples chosen from hundreds of initiatives across that state to illustrate how policy and environmental changes can make a difference
- Cultural competence, provide new data and suggest communication approaches
- The importance of working through partners and coalitions

About Environmental and Policy Approaches

In most cases, obesity can be prevented if people move more and eat less. This is easier said than done. Often environmental factors prevent access to healthy foods and ways to be physically active. The environment where we work, for example, might not have healthy choices in vending machines. The environment where we live might have busy streets and no sidewalks, making it difficult to walk. Our culture also affects food and physical activity choices.

The state plan stresses developing policies for schools, workplaces, communities, and health-care settings that support healthy changes that will last. An example of a policy change might be a school district no longer allowing students to purchase soda in school or a city code requiring that all neighborhoods have sidewalks.



Overarching Strategies

Each priority recommendation includes these essential ingredients for success:

- Working with partners
- Communication
- Cultural competence
- Surveillance (monitoring health behaviors), assessment and evaluation

► NUTRITION

Objectives & Priority Recommendations

Objective 1:

Increase access to health-promoting foods.

- Assure that communities provide access to healthy foods and beverages
- Assure that worksites, including healthcare services and schools, provide healthy foods and beverages.
- Assure that schools provide healthy foods and beverages.

Objective 2:

Reduce food insecurity* in Washington

- Strengthen food assistance programs and improve economic security for low-income families and individuals.
- Improve access to and awareness of food assistance programs.

**Food insecurity means not having enough food to be healthy and active.*

Objective 3:

Increase the proportion of mothers who breastfeed their infants and toddlers.

- Assure that health care settings, child care facilities, and worksite environments support breastfeeding.



► PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Objectives & Priority Recommendations

Objective 1:

Increase the number of people who have access to free or low-cost recreational opportunities for physical activity.

- Provide adequate funding for state and local recreational sites and facilities.
- Develop model policies to increase access to public facilities for physical activity.
- Increase the number of worksites, including healthcare and school settings, that have policies to enhance physical activity opportunities.

Objective 2:

Increase the number of physical activity opportunities available to children

- Adopt school-based curricula and policies that provide quality, daily physical education for all students.
- Encourage policies that provide students with opportunities for physical activity outside of formal physical education classes.
- Provide opportunities to replace sedentary behaviors, such as watching television, with physical activity.



Objective 3:

Increase the number of active community environments in Washington.

- Use urban planning approaches – zoning and land use – that promote physical activity.
- Change transportation policy and funding to promote walking and bicycling.
- Enhance the safety and perceived safety of communities to improve walkability and bikeability.



Updating the State Plan

In 2007 Washington State Department of Health (DOH) and the Center for Public Health Nutrition at the University of Washington worked together to update Washington's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan. To be included in the plan, recommendations and strategies are:

- Related to obesity and chronic disease prevention
- Population-based
- Evidence-based, theoretically sound, or recommended by nationally recognized authorities or experts
- Potential to affect a large portion of the population
- Based on measurable objectives

The original plan was created in 2002. Since then more than 700 stakeholders identified themselves as "partners of the plan." Nearly 200 stories about their progress are published on the Washington Partners in Action Web site: WaPartnersInAction.org.

In-depth interviews were conducted, along with online surveys and correspondence with members of the original advisory group, and many others who use the plan.

Partners in the Plan

Long-term solutions to the challenging problem of obesity require the concerted effort of many partners. The Department of Health coordinates obesity prevention efforts in Washington. Other state agency partners include the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Agriculture, Health Care Authority, Community Trade and Economic Development, and Department of Transportation. Local health departments and districts also play an important role in addressing obesity and chronic disease in Washington. Professional associations and advocacy groups contribute by educating their members about the issues, developing effective policies to support the plan and helping to implement these policies in communities.

Using the Plan

The plan includes objectives and recommendations for nutrition and physical activity.

Agencies, institutions and groups involved in these efforts will champion the priority recommendations in their own work plans. The plan is designed to stimulate new ideas and partnerships. It will be used by policy makers across the state to take action to prevent further increases in obesity. The complete Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan is available online at www.doh.wa.gov.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Prevention Program

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