American Recreation Coalition

Fighting Fat with Fun
Recreation’s Role in Combating Obesity

July 29, 2004
Recreation’s Role in Combating Obesity

Agenda

Obesity by the Numbers
Health Related Impacts
Economic Impacts
Role of Government
Role of Employers
Role of Recreation Community
Discussion
Recreation’s Role in Combating Obesity

Obesity by the Numbers in the U.S.

- More Americans are considered overweight or obese than at any other time in our history

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification Categories for Adults (20+ Years Old)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI: 25 - 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Obese</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI: 30 - 39.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extremely Obese</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMI: Over 40</td>
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Obesity by the Numbers in the U.S.

- The most recent National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) indicates alarmingly high nationwide rates of obesity and overweight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prevalence of Overweight, Obese, &amp; Extremely Obese in the US</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults (20+ Years Old)</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overweight</td>
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<tr>
<td>34.7%</td>
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<td>25.5%</td>
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<td>4.9%</td>
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At Risk for Overweight = BMI between 85th and 95th percentile

Data published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, June 16, 2004
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Obesity by the Numbers in the U.S.

• The prevalence of overweight and obese Americans has reached epidemic levels
  - Since 1993, obesity rates have increased by more than 60% among adults
  - Approximately 59 million adults are obese or extremely obese
  - Since 1980, obesity rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents
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Obesity by the Numbers in the U.S., continued

- More than 60% of adults do not get enough physical activity
- More than 33% of young people in grades 9-12 do not regularly engage in vigorous physical activity
- More high school students state that they would rather be on-line than outside
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Health Related Impacts

• According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), overweight and obese people are at increased risk for numerous physical ailments including…

  High blood pressure

  Diabetes

  Angina

  High cholesterol

  Cancer

  Osteoarthritis

  Congestive heart failure

  Gout

  Gallstones

  Heart disease

  Stroke

  Depression

= 400,000 Deaths per year
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Economic Impacts

Estimated DIRECT cost of obesity in 2000: $61 Billion
Estimated INDIRECT cost of obesity in 2000: $56 Billion
Estimated TOTAL cost of obesity in 2000: $117 Billion

Medicare and Medicaid pay approximately 50% of the cost.

Obesity accounts for approximately 10% of ALL medical expenditures in the U.S.
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Economic Impacts

Higher Rates of Obesity → Higher Insurance Costs → More Expensive Goods and Services → Less Competitive American Companies

Health care costs paid by employers are expected to increase 11% - 20% per year for the next three years
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Economic Impacts

Examples:

• Health benefits = $1,200 - $1,400 of the wholesale cost of each automobile made in America

• Unum Provident estimates obesity costs of $8,720 per employee, per year

• Xerox estimates $6,000 - $7,000 per employee, per year
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Conditions Contributing to Obesity

• Physical activity is one of the two most important factors for controlling obesity
• Adults need 30 minutes or more of moderate activity five days per week; children need 60 minutes or more
• Approximately 66% of adults do not get enough physical activity; 38% report getting no leisure-time physical activity

The Bottom Line…

Americans must get more physical activity to successfully fight obesity
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Though the problem is serious….

It can be solved!

Government, employers, and recreation communities play key roles
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Role of Government

- **Objectives:**
  - Reduce prevalence of obesity and overweight conditions among the populace
  - Increase the number of citizens participating in physical activity
  - Increase the frequency and duration of activity for those already participating at low levels

The Bush Administration Recognizes the urgency of this issue and, through the HealthierUS initiative, has directed executive agencies to encourage increased physical activity
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Role of Government, continued

Government adds value in three major areas

- Research
- Opportunity Delivery
- Public Outreach

Intersections represent areas where these three major areas overlap, highlighting synergies and opportunities for comprehensive action.
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Role of Employers

• Private and public sector employers have a vested financial interest in reducing obesity among employees
• Employers are positioned to have meaningful impacts on employee lifestyles by providing incentives
• For long term success, employers must create a culture that values wellness
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Role of Employers
Case Study – Caesar’s Entertainment

- Management recognized that casino environment is unhealthy and unlikely to change
- Average worker had BMI of 33 (obese)
  - Typical 5’4” employee was 200 pounds
- At two properties the average employee BMI = 44+
- In response, Caesar’s launched Lifestrides in 2002
  - Focus on prevention, education, communication, and partnership
  - Includes free health assessments, newsletters, and education
  - Invested $1 million in marketing and sponsored “Weight No More” challenge
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Role of Employers
Case Study – Caesar's Entertainment, continued

- 6,000 employees have participated in “Weight No More”
  - Lost an average of 13.4 pounds per person
- Annual health care costs have remained stable
- Employee contributions to health care plan have remained flat
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Role of Employers – Public Sector
Washoe County School District

- Program established in 1994, focused on individual responsibility for its 7,000 employees
- Cost = Mandatory $40 per month paid by employee
  - Fee reduced by $10 if employees participate in health screening
  - Fee reduced in additional $10 increments if employees demonstrate that they are actively working to address risk factors identified in screening
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Role of Employers – Public Sector
Washoe County School District

- Program spent $176,000 in 2003 and sponsors activities such as kayaking and Holiday Weight Challenge
- Study by Brigham Young University (2001-2002) indicates that absentee rates dropped 20%, saving taxpayers $3 million - 1,600% return on $176,000 investment
Summary of Other Examples Presented in Research Paper

- **Union Pacific Railroad (Health Track and System Health Facility Program) awards:**
  - C. Everett Koop Nat. Health Award (1994, 1997, 2001)
- **Waco-McLennan County Public Health District awards:**
  - 2003 USDHHS Innovation in Prevention Award (small organization) for its wellness program
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Role of Recreation Communities
Case Study – Forever Resorts

• In response to HealthierUS Initiative, developed a program to increase levels of visitor physical activity
• Provide maps of local hiking and walking trails at appropriate properties in or near federal lands
• Provide incentives for guests who participate
• Unexpected benefit = some employees also take advantage of the program to enhance their own levels of physical activity
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Discussion

• Government
  - Goals
    • Maintain/increase funding to support research, outreach, and opportunity delivery
    • Bring commitment to exercise into national spotlight
  - Possible Actions
    • Tax incentives and other financial incentives for business
    • Partner with private sector to enhance recreation access
Discussion, continued

• Employers
  - Goals
    • Mitigate impacts of obesity on employees and financial performance
  - Possible Actions
    • Provide paid time during the work day for exercise,
      No “unwritten rules” against participation
      Management should participate
    • Establish pool of recreation equipment for employee use during work hours and personal leisure time
    • Use technology
      Disseminate information (daily wellness tips)
      Track employee success
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Discussion, continued

- Recreation Community
  - Goals
    • Fulfill physical activity needs of the public through increased use of recreation opportunities
    • Meet needs in a cost effective manner
  - Possible Actions
    • Provide customer incentives to increase recreation
    • Become a leader in progressive employee wellness and physical activity programs
    • Partner with government to encourage increased public awareness and use of recreation
    • Study, measure, and communicate health benefits of increased recreation
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Discussion