

Childhood Obesity: 2008 Survey of the National Capital Region



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Background

- Since the mid-1970s, the number of overweight & obese Americans has increased dramatically. In that time span, the number of overweight children has tripled.
- January 2005 – Regional summit on childhood obesity found gaps in information.
- 2006 – Survey identified gaps in policies and programs.
- November 2006 – COG holds conference, “Obesity, Tipping the Scales towards Crisis.”

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COG Resolution R36-07

- Adopt nutrition and physical education standards recommended by experts.
- Collect data on obesity trends.
- Incorporate measures to encourage and enhance healthy food and exercise options in land use planning.

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Survey Purpose

- Follow-up response to the resolution.
- Obtain baseline of information about obesity and efforts to reduce obesity in the COG region.
- Survey sent by area health officials to local school systems. The data included in this report is from systems that voluntarily returned it.

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Nutrition



- School systems meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards
- School systems have educational component in nutrition program

	DC	Frederick	Montgomery	Prince George's	Alexandria	Arlington	Fairfax	Loudoun	Prince William
Has an Educational Component in Nutrition Program	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Meets or Exceeds USDA Standards for Breakfast and Lunch	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds	Meets	Meets	Exceeds	Meets	Exceeds

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Physical Activity



- Elementary school students do not receive the recommended 150 minutes of PE each week in any jurisdiction

	DC	Frederick	Montgomery	Prince George's	Alexandria	Arlington	Fairfax	Loudoun	Prince William
Meets recommended minutes per week of elementary school PE									
Minutes per week of middle school PE		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Use of a Physical Fitness Assessment	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Planning/Land Use



- Only two jurisdictions conduct a Health Impact Assessment in their local land use process

	DC	Frederick	Montgomery	Prince George's	Alexandria	Arlington	Fairfax	Loudoun	Prince William
Use of Smart Growth Practices	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Analysis of Services Available w/o a car	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	
Safe Routes to School Program	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
Health Impact Assessment in Planning Process		✓	✓						

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Obesity Trend Data



- Only two jurisdictions collect student Body Mass Index (BMI) measurements

	DC	Frederick	Montgomery	Prince George's	Alexandria	Arlington	Fairfax	Loudoun	Prince William
Collection of Student BMIs	✓					✓			
Use of Youth Risk Behavior Survey	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Use of Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System	✓		✓		✓				

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HSPC Recommendations

- Take steps to encourage retail access to fresh foods in low-income areas.
- Engage school board members on the subject of obesity.
- Participate in health fairs and summits to increase community support for policies that will prevent obesity.
- Host a regional meeting among elected officials and school board members to address obesity and its impact on success in school.

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Additional Considerations

- “One size fits all” strategy is difficult to implement in a tri-state region of school systems of varying sizes.
- Federal/state education mandates and the current fiscal climate are major challenges to some obesity prevention priorities such as physical education.

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