

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments
777 North Capitol Street, N.E.
Washington, DC 20002

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING CONTINUING REGIONAL STRATEGIES TO REDUCE OBESITY

WHEREAS, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and through its Health Officials Committee has long supported region-wide efforts to improve the health of the region's population; and

WHEREAS, since the mid-1970s, the prevalence of obese and overweight individuals has increased dramatically in the United States and today, nearly two in three adults are categorized as being either overweight or obese; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of overweight children and adolescents has nearly tripled in the same time span; and

WHEREAS, COG has sponsored multiple activities to share information on best practices to address obesity, including a 2009 regional forum on "Childhood Obesity and the Impact on Learning" which brought to light the need for community-wide strategies to support school efforts to reduce obesity; and

WHEREAS, surveys of the region's policies and programs aimed at reducing childhood obesity, and research of best practices continue to show gaps in policies and programs in the region; and

WHEREAS, the Institute for Medicine's report *Local Government Actions to Prevent Childhood Obesity* recommends 12 high priority action steps for local governments to reduce the prevalence of obesity in children including reducing sedentary behavior through greater emphasis on physical activity and encouraging better eating habits by increasing access to healthy affordable foods; and

WHEREAS, the region must work together to build broad based understanding and support for health and education policies, including land use decisions, that are focused on reducing obesity and creating healthier communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS THAT:

1. Member jurisdictions are strongly urged to utilize the Institute of Medicine report to select appropriate strategies and action steps. COG will survey member jurisdictions to measure the use of strategies recommended by the Institute of Medicine, and member jurisdictions will provide status updates to COG until all steps are implemented across the region.
2. COG supports and encourages state legislation that reduces school dependence on bus transportation; removes vending machines during school hours; and requires adequate space for physical activity in every school.
3. Jurisdictions are also encouraged to focus actions and promote policies that:
 - a. Encourage healthy eating and exercise without focusing on body image;

- b. Improve collection of obesity related data, including Youth Risk Behavior Survey, Body Mass Index, and cardiovascular and fitness levels;
 - c. Allow easier access to fresh foods in low income areas in retail stores, farmers markets and community gardens;
 - d. Ensures that healthy food is available near schools for after school snacks, and reduces focus on unhealthy foods around schools;
 - e. Provide sports programs that balance the need to compete with the need to be inclusive; and provides more free-for-all programs such as roller-blading and leagues that include overweight and less fit participants.
4. COG will continue to engage stakeholders across the region through health fairs, health summits, and other activities to increase support for and involvement in changing beliefs and behaviors related to eating and exercise habits.