



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Adult Obesity Rates Still Climbing in Vermont and Nationwide

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Media Contact: Communication Office
Vermont Department of Health
802-863-7281

BURLINGTON – Vermont’s adult obesity rate since 1995 has risen from 13.4 percent to 23.5 percent, but fares better than most states (7th best).

The annual ‘*F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America’s Future 2011*’ report released today by the Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, shows that Vermont has seen significant increases for the past two years in a row.

The report calls obesity one of the most challenging health crises the nation has ever faced.

“The fact that Vermont ranks better than most other states is little comfort,” said Health Commissioner Harry Chen, MD. “This report clearly demonstrates that a concerted public health approach to this epidemic is more important than ever. We must continue to make policy, environmental and cultural changes to make the healthy choice the easiest choice for all Vermonters, in every corner of the state. This report should be read as call to action – immediately.”

The **Health Disparities of Vermonters 2010 report** by the Vermont Department of Health showed adults who have lower incomes, are less educated, or are Black, Hispanic or American Indian are the groups with the highest rates of obesity.

Key prevention strategies that are part of the Fit & Healthy Vermonters initiative of the Health Department and community coalitions around the state:

- policies to improve food offerings in schools and workplaces
- increased opportunities for physical activity
- improved sidewalks, walking trails and bike lanes
- public education on healthy choices – such as menu labeling and the ‘Healthy Retailers’ signage project

The second leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. is poor diet and physical inactivity. Obesity puts people at increased risk for more than 20 major diseases, including type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Since 1995, rates have doubled or nearly doubled in 17 states, and have not declined in any state. Twelve states now have obesity rates above 30 percent, compared to four years ago when only one state was above 30 percent. Colorado has the lowest obesity rate, and is the only state with a rate under 20 percent.

The full report is available at: www.healthyamericans.org.

For a link to the Fit and Healthy Vermonters program, visit: healthvermont.gov/fitandhealthy.aspx

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Vermont Department of Health | 108 Cherry Street | Burlington, VT 05402
Voice: 802-863-7200 | In Vermont 800-464-4343 | Fax: 802-865-7754 | TTY/TDD: Dial 711 first
Health Care Provider Infectious Disease Reporting: 802-863-7240 or 800-640-4374
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