



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Obesity and Physical Inactivity Costs Yolo County Millions

WOODLAND, CA According to a study of the economic cost of obesity and physical inactivity in California released today by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA), Yolo County collectively lost \$197,464,460 in healthcare costs and productivity. In just six years, reported economic costs of adult overweight, obesity and physical inactivity have nearly doubled statewide and are now costing California an estimated \$41 billion a year.

“This study reinforces the need to make obesity, physical inactivity and the conditions associated with them a priority in our county,” says Dr. Joseph Iser, Yolo County Health Department Health Department Director-Health Officer. “We have taken great strides in the county, but we need to do more,” he adds.

There are several nutrition and physical activity programs in the county which work with a broad spectrum of the county’s population. The Health Department’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program and GET READY programs work with families with young children, trying to establish healthy eating habits at a very early age and helping entire families make healthy lifestyle changes. The California Nutrition Network has several funded agencies in the county, one of them, housed at the Health Department, works with school children, teaching them the importance of being active and how to make healthy eating easy and fun. The Health Department also sponsors walking groups for adults in the community through the Women and Men Who Walk Program.

Many agencies currently work together to address obesity and physical activity in the county, almost all of them being health and social service agencies. However, public and non-profit agencies are not the only ones impacted by the rising cost of obesity and physical inactivity. According to the study, employers share much of the burden of the economic costs because they pay much of the cost of health care benefits, which are steadily increasing in part due to increasing illness caused by poor diet and lack of physical activity. “We need to bring more partners to the table, not just our health and social services agencies and healthcare partners” says Iser, reaffirming the study’s recommendation to build partnerships between the public and private sector. “We need a complete community norm change in the county, and we won’t achieve that without bringing the public and private sectors together,” he states. Public policies must also be established to make it easier for Yolo County residents to adopt healthier lifestyles, according to the study. These public health strategies have worked well in the past, as evidenced by California and Yolo County’s tobacco control efforts over the years. “We know that public-private partnerships and public policies work,” states Iser, “But in order to move forward in tackling the obesity epidemic, we need everybody working together and moving in the same direction.”

For more information about the study, visit the CCPHA site at:
www.publichealthadvocacy.org.