

How much do you know about the childhood obesity epidemic in PENNSYLVANIA?

KEY POINTS:

- Approximately 390,000 of 1,333,000 Pennsylvania children ages 10-17 years (29.3%) are considered overweight or obese according to BMI-for-age standards.
- Pennsylvania ranks first (i.e. best) in overweight/obese prevalence among children in poor families with a rate of 26.7%. The state’s income disparity ratio of 1.18 ranks second.
- Pennsylvania children with public health insurance have an overweight/obese prevalence rate of 31.2%, roughly two percentage points higher than the rate for privately insured children (28.8%). The state ranks fifth in prevalence rate for publicly insured children, and the insurance disparity ratio of 1.08 is third lowest in the country.
- Pennsylvania children are less likely than their counterparts nationwide to be physically active for at least 4 days per week, and more likely to spend 2 hours or more in front of a television or computer screen.
- According to the 2006 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS), which assesses weight status of children from low-income families participating in WIC, 24.7% of low-income children ages 2 to 5 years in Pennsylvania are overweight or obese.

OVERALL PREVALENCE	PENNSYLVANIA %	NATIONAL %
Percentage of children ages 10-17 years who are overweight or obese	29.3%	30.6%
State Rank for overweight or obese children (1 is best)	23	
Percentage of children ages 6–17 years who participate in 4 or more days of vigorous physical activity per week	54.2%	59.0%
Percentage of children ages 6-17 years who engage in 2 or more hours of screen time per day (includes TV, videos, computer games, etc.)	46.7%	44.9%
DISPARITIES – ACROSS AND WITHIN STATES	PENNSYLVANIA %	NATIONAL %
% Overweight or Obese by Family Income		
<100% Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	26.7%	39.8%
>400 % FPL	22.6%	22.9%
Income Disparity Ratio	1.18	1.74
State Rank on Income Disparity Ratio (1 is best, 39 is worst)	2	
% Overweight or Obese by Type of Insurance		
Public Insurance	31.2%	39.6%
Private Insurance	28.8%	26.7%
Insurance Disparity Ratio	1.08	1.48
State Rank on Insurance Disparity Ratio (1 is best, 49 is worst)	3	
% Overweight or Obese by Race		
Black, non-Hispanic	43.2%	41.2%
White, non-Hispanic	27.0%	26.6%
Race Disparity Ratio	1.6	1.55
State Rank on Race Disparity Ratio (1 is best, 23 is worst)	13	
% Overweight or Obese by Hispanic Origin		
Hispanic	NA	37.7%
Non-Hispanic	29.7%	29.5%
Hispanic Origin Disparity Ratio	NA	1.28
State Rank on Hispanic Origin Disparity Ratio (1 is best, 21 is worst)	NA	

* Difference between state and national overall prevalence is statistically significant at the .05 level of significance.

NA – Not Available. Estimates with a relative standard error greater than 30%, or based on an unweighted sample of fewer than 25 children, are considered unreliable and are not reported.

State rankings on disparity ratios include only those states with reliable estimates for both groups.

Data Source: CAHMI/Data Resource Center analysis of the 2003 National Survey of Children’s Health.

Developed by the Child Policy Research Center and the Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative/Data Resource Center (www.childhealthdata.org) on behalf of the NICHQ Childhood Obesity Action Network.

TECHNICAL NOTES:

The 2003 National Survey of Children’s Health (NSCH) provides parent-reported information on the health and well-being of children in each state and nationwide. Two important aspects of children’s health measured in the survey are physical activity and overweight, which is calculated from the child’s height and weight as reported by the parent or guardian. Using survey results and sex-specific BMI-for-age growth charts developed by CDC, the prevalence of children with BMI scores in two separate percentile ranges (85th to 95th and at or above the 95th) can be estimated. Children with BMI between the 85th and 95th percentiles are classified as overweight; those with a BMI at or above the 95th percentile are classified as obese. Childhood and adolescent obesity measures based on parental report may not accurately reflect the true prevalence of overweight and obesity. However, previous research and comparisons of NSCH with data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) have shown that parental reports are reliable and provide a fairly close correspondence for children 10-17 years (Ogden et al., *Advance Data From Vital and Health Statistics*, 2004).

What is PENNSYLVANIA doing about obesity?

The table below is derived from the 2007 edition of *F as in Fat*, published by Trust for America’s Health (www.healthyamericans.org). The effectiveness or value of any one state approach is not known; the summary below is intended only for comparing a state’s activities with others.

OBESITY-RELATED STATE INITIATIVES	PENNSYLVANIA	NATIONAL
Snack and/or soda tax	No	17 states + D.C.
CDC state-based nutrition and physical activity program	Yes	28 states
Federal STEPS grant recipient	Yes	7 states
Laws that limit liability for obesity and obesity-related health problems	No	24 states
OBESITY-RELATED SCHOOL STANDARDS	PENNSYLVANIA	NATIONAL
Physical education requirement <i>(Note: There is variation in whether states enforce these standards)</i>	Yes	50 states + D.C.
Health education requirement <i>(Note: There is variation in whether states enforce these standards)</i>	Yes	48 states + D.C.
Nutritional standards for school meals and snacks that go beyond existing USDA requirements	No	17 states
Nutritional standards for competitive food products sold a la carte, in vending machines, school stores or at bake sales	No	22 states
Limitation (beyond federal requirements) on when and where competitive food products may be sold	No	26 states
BMI or health information collected <i>(Note: There is variation in whether states enforce these standards)</i>	Yes	16 states
2006 OBESITY-RELATED POLICY OPTIONS	PENNSYLVANIA	NATIONAL
Provision for strengthening of private insurance coverage for obesity prevention or treatment, especially for the morbidly obese (BMI of 40 or higher). Children may or may not be covered.	No	8 states introduced
Legislation or resolutions to create obesity-related task forces, commissions, studies or other special programs	Yes	19 states introduced

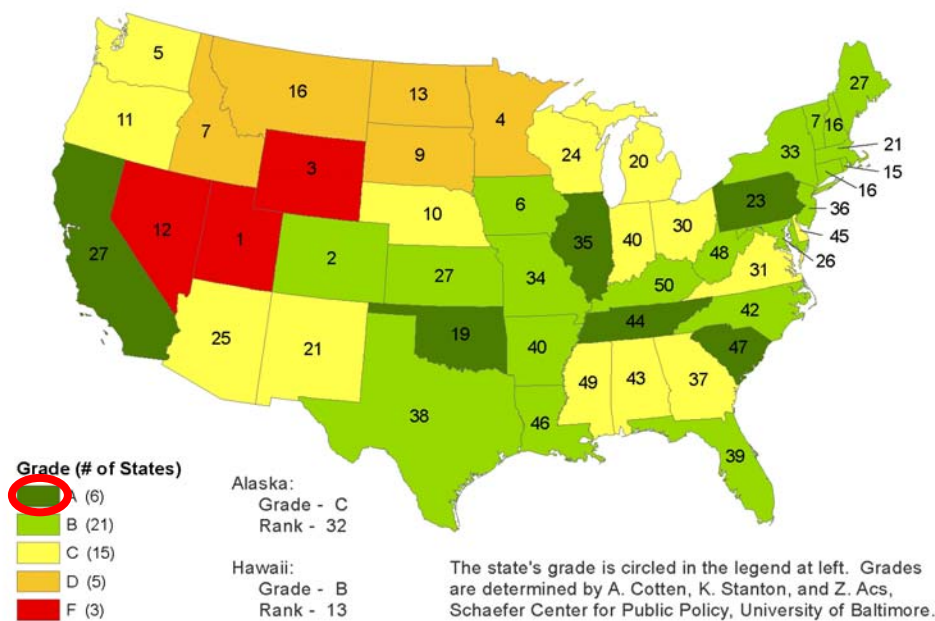
NOTES:

The federal Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108 - 265) required each local school district participating in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program to establish a local wellness policy by the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. To view model school wellness policies, see www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/.

The Pennsylvania Department of Health requires school nurses to compute body mass index for students in grades 1-8 during annual growth screenings. BMI measurement will be required for students in all grades in the 2007-08 school year. Parents receive letters about the BMI results that encourage them to share the information with their family’s physician.

Recent legislation requires the establishment of an interagency coordinating council for child health, nutrition and physical education that shall offer recommendations on physical education curriculum (HB 185, Act 114).

STATE OBESITY PREVALENCE RANKING AND REPORT CARD GRADE FOR CHILDHOOD OBESITY-RELATED ACTIVITIES



Note: The numbers shown in the map above represent the state’s ranking on the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children ages 10-17. Utah ranks first with the lowest overweight/obese prevalence, while Kentucky ranks 50th. The child obesity report card grade developed for each state is a composite of the state score on five types of childhood obesity-related legislation: (1) Nutrition standards in schools, (2) Vending machine prohibitions in schools, (3) Body mass index measured in school, (4) Recess and physical education requirements, and (5) Obesity programs and education. For more information, see www.ubalt.edu/experts/obesity/index.html.