



General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
JOINT STATE GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
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SUMMARY – Childhood Obesity:
Report of the Advisory Committee on Childhood Obesity

House Resolution 243 of 2013 directed the Joint State Government Commission to form an advisory committee to study and make recommendations about childhood obesity prevention and wellness. The report discusses the costs and effects of childhood obesity and recommends actions that would curtail the incidence of childhood obesity through each stage of life, from prenatal through adolescence.

Findings:

Childhood obesity has been demonstrated to contribute to the same health problems faced by overweight and obese adults, including high blood pressure, diabetes, and asthma, sleep apnea, and musculoskeletal problems. The consequences of childhood obesity may be a substantially lower quality of life, lower life expectancy, and overwhelming medical bills for individuals and private and public health insurers. Annual public and private health insurance expenditures for childhood obesity cost billions of dollars more than what is spent on children who are not suffering from obesity.

Healthful diets, regular vigorous physical activity, education, and information are indispensable components of childhood obesity prevention efforts. Schools and community groups have made progress in curtailing the rising childhood obesity rates, but more needs to be done. Resources need to be coordinated and directed at obesity prevention practices that have been scientifically and clinically proven to be effective.

Recommendations:

Importantly, a state advisory board should be established to address all aspects of childhood obesity prevention by coordinating public and private resources, and to advise the Governor and General Assembly on how best to position the Commonwealth's resources to take advantage of the latest research. Public and private programs to improve access to healthful foods need to be continued and strengthened, such as through school meals and public sector food and nutrition programs. Physical and health education should be core subjects provided to all K-12 students.

The full report is available on our website: <http://jsg.legis.state.pa.us/>