



# Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan

## Steering Committee:

- American Cancer Society
- American Heart Association
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
- Community Policy Action Team\*
- C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems
- Education Policy Action Team\*
- Health, Family, and Child Care Services Policy Action Team\*
- Michigan Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, & Dance
- Michigan Chapter of the American College of Cardiology
- Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development\*
- Michigan Department of Community Health\*
- Michigan Department of Education\*
- Michigan Department of Human Services\*
- Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs\*
- Michigan Department of Transportation\*
- Michigan Fitness Foundation
- Michigan Health & Hospital Association
- Michigan Soft Drink Association
- Michigan State Medical Society
- University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital
- YMCA State Alliance of Michigan

## *Advocates for Healthy Weight in Children*

### March/April 2015 Newsletter

#### Michigan State University Teaming up with USDA in Research to Identify best Interventions to Reduce Childhood Obesity

Michigan State University researchers will lead a \$4.7 million effort to tackle childhood obesity, one of the nation's biggest health challenges, the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced Wednesday. The five-year project is part of a national \$42-million initiative to address childhood obesity through the Agriculture and Food Research Initiative, which was authorized under the 2014 Farm Bill

[signed by President Obama on MSU's campus](#). Specifically, the study will look at healthy family mealtimes among low-income families.

"Healthy family mealtimes represent a key practice in obesity prevention and healthy lifestyles, yet few studies have examined the barriers economically vulnerable families may face in implementing frequent healthy family meals," said Holly Brophy-Herb, professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies in MSU's College of Social Science. "The primary goal of our study is to test the effectiveness of differing levels of support in increasing the frequency of healthy family meals," she added. "Results from this study are expected to have important implications for policies related to supports for economically-vulnerable families and for the practices of family support programs aimed at increasing child and family health and well-being." For more information, including on the multidisciplinary research team, click [here](#).



#### Michigan Healthy Food Financing Initiative Releases Report



Entitled "Food for Every Child" a new report has identified that 1.8 million people in Michigan (nearly one in every five) are impacted by a lack of healthy food options. That includes 300,000 children. This is despite successful efforts such as the Double Up Food Bucks program where food assistance benefits are doubled when used for fresh produce as well as local urban gardening projects and farmers' markets.

The report was authored by the Food Trust, and Loyola University. It used income, sales at supermarkets and health and death data to identify problem regions. The biggest underserved areas were in urban areas of Detroit, Flint and Grand Rapids and also in more rural counties in the northern Lower Peninsula and areas in the Thumb.



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The campaign hopes to use the data to expand options in the convenience stores and Mom-and-Pop operations now serving those neighborhoods. The group will call for \$10 million in state funding to offer assistance, such as low-interest loans statewide to neighborhood stores to expand storage and display spaces for healthy options and expand storage for fresh food at food banks.

"The bottom line is we want to fight childhood obesity. It is an epidemic in Michigan. It's an epidemic in the Midwest. The Heart Association believes that the first step to a healthy lifestyle starts with what you put in your mouth," said Ted O'Dell, campaign manager for the American Heart Association's Michigan affiliate, which helped release the report. For more information, and to view the report, be sure to visit the campaign website at [HealthyFoodMI.Heart.org](http://HealthyFoodMI.Heart.org)

## **UK Study: Parents Rarely Spot Childhood Obesity**

In a study of 2,976 families in the UK, only four parents thought their child was very overweight. Medical assessments put the figure at 369. The researchers, writing in the British Journal of General Practice, said obesity had become the new normal in society.

The team, from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and the UCL Institute of Child Health, gave questionnaires to nearly 3,000 families asking if their child was obese, overweight, underweight, or a healthy weight. The results showed that nearly a third, 31%, of parents underestimated the weight of their child. An accurate diagnosis kicked in only at the very high end of the scales. Prof Russell Viner, from the Institute of Child Health, told the BBC News website: "Modern parents don't recognize children as obese. If parents don't recognize a child is obese then they're very unlikely to do anything to help their child move to a more healthy weight. Then it's a potential major public health crisis being stored up."

Commenting on the findings, the chief executive of the Royal Society for Public Health, Shirley Cramer, said: "School education from a young age should focus on the importance of active lifestyles and healthy diets to ensure our society is one that understands the relationship between diet and good health. Parents are key role models for their children and it is imperative they are aware of all the factors that can influence health. However, it is not just the role of the parents, society as a whole needs to help enforce messages about eating well." For more, visit the BBC online [here](#).

## **Capitol Update**

The Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan coalition opposed legislation introduced and passed out of the Senate to allow fundraisers during school hours to sell food that does not meet nutritional guidelines. Introduced by Senator Patrick Colbeck (R- Canton), SB 139 was introduced due to complaints from kids and parents that their standard fundraising tactics for a myriad of extra-curricular activities were no longer allowed, per federal nutrition guidelines for food available during the school day. The bill passed unanimously through the Senate Education committee and on the Senate Floor. HKHM will work to educate members in the House that federal standards do not impact after school activities, such as during sports and other events, and that kids may pursue options outside of selling candy, doughnuts and cookies for fundraisers during school hours.