

Tri-Affiliate Obesity Prevention Workgroup: Supporting State Health Departments in Making a Difference

Call to Action

The Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTPHND), Directors of Health Promotion and Education (DHPE), and National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) call upon members to work together to address the obesity epidemic facing our nation. Together, we can align our skills, knowledge and resources to maximize efforts, reduce duplication and address gaps. Integration of efforts at the federal, state and local levels is important to stemming the obesity epidemic and improving public health.

Background

State health agencies (SHAs) face significant and unique challenges in addressing obesity. These challenges are complex and made more difficult by limited resources. The three Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) affiliates have joined together to strengthen their relationship and increase the effectiveness of the work among chronic disease, nutrition, and health promotion efforts in SHAs.

Members of the three affiliates work in SHAs that are building obesity prevention efforts. These SHA efforts encourage healthy eating and increased physical activity through policy, programs, systems, and environmental change strategies. Specific strategies are directed toward high-risk populations, especially those disproportionately affected by obesity. SHAs staff are already working with other partners in education, health care, government, faith-based organizations, community based agencies, agriculture, transportation, worksite settings and non-traditional partners. Together, members of these partner organizations have a unique position and capability to connect with others within and beyond health departments to make a difference in obesity prevention.

ASTPHND, DHPE and NACDD at the national and state levels together provide leadership to address the national obesity epidemic. The three ASTHO affiliates will use this statement to further shape their national activities and to encourage state-level members to do the same. Examples of efforts to be accomplished jointly include:

- *Clarify the roles and responsibilities of state health agencies and programs in obesity prevention efforts.*
- *Engage in planning and evaluation of state and local efforts to identify effective integrated approaches to obesity prevention.*
- *Strengthen and coordinate training across health education, nutrition and chronic disease disciplines.*
- *Collaborate statewide to design, implement, promote and evaluate obesity prevention interventions and tools.*
- *Support SHAs in addressing health equity issues and connecting with other partners within and outside state government to further these efforts.*
- *Work together on policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that support obesity prevention efforts.*

The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This publication was released in May 2012 and was supported by the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors cooperative agreement 5U58DP002233-03, the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors cooperative agreement U58DP002759-02, and the Directors of Health Promotion and Education.