

Treating the consequences of unhealthy lifestyle choices is a major cost to society

- Total costs (medical cost and lost productivity attributable to obesity alone amounted to an estimated **\$99 billion in 1995.**" ⁱ
- "Cigarette **smoking** is the **single most preventable cause of disease and death** in the United States. Smoking results in more deaths each year in the United States than AIDS, alcohol, cocaine, heroin, homicide, suicide, motor vehicle crashes, and fires combined." ⁱⁱ
- According to the USDA, **healthy diet** could prevent at least **\$71 billion** per year in medical costs, lost productivity, and lost lives. ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Tobacco** use causes **440,000 deaths** annually and costs **\$75 billion** just in direct medical costs. ^{iv}
- **\$75 billion per year is spent on treating obesity** in the U.S. ^v
- CDC estimates that if all **physically inactive** Americans became active, we would save **\$77 billion** in annual medical costs. ^{vi}
- The total cost of **obesity** to the U.S. has risen to **\$117 billion** annually. ^{vii}

Per capita, per year *increases* in inpatient and ambulatory care costs for people with lifestyle choice risk factors: **Obesity**, \$395; **Smoking** (current or ever), \$230; Problem **Drinking**, \$150; **Overweight**, \$125. For comparison, the increase in annual per-capita cost associated with 20 years of aging is \$225. ^{viii}

"Prevention is the right cause, the right issue, the right time,"

-U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy G. Thompson ^{ix}

- As a Nation, we must focus on **preventing diseases**, not just treating their symptoms and complications. We must promote the benefits of healthy lifestyle choices. And we must do so with a **special emphasis on youth and racial/ethnic minorities.** ^x
- Instilling **healthier lifestyles at the earliest ages** will help children and adolescents grow into healthy adulthood and enjoy a long and quality life. (Tommy G. Thompson, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) ^{xi}
- "Early adolescence (age 11-15 years, or sixth through tenth grade) is the period when young people are most likely to **try smoking for the first time.** ^{xii}

Health Education is the best investment we can make

- **Education** can be more effective than regulatory measures in achieving long-term reduction of tobacco use. U.S. Surgeon General. *Reducing Tobacco Use: a report of the Surgeon General—2000*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000.
- 90 million American adults have **difficulty understanding and using health information**. Patients with limited health literacy have higher rates of hospitalization and use of emergency services. ^{xiii}
- “**Schools are a logical place** to promote lifelong healthy behaviors. Every school day 50 million young people attend more than 110,000 schools in the United States. Research has shown that well designed and well implemented school based physical activity and nutrition programs can be effective. ^{xiv}
- “Improving and intensifying efforts to promote physical activity and healthy eating is entirely consistent with the fundamental mission of schools: **educating young people to become healthy, productive citizens who can make meaningful contributions to society.**” ^{xv}
- “School-based health promotion programs can **effectively improve physical activity and eating behaviors...** [and] reduce tobacco use among youth.” ^{xvi}
- **Nutrition education** leads to decreased cholesterol, total fat, and saturated fat intakes and improved nutrition knowledge, reported usual behavior, intentions, self-efficacy, and perceived social reinforcement for healthy food choices. ^{xvii}
- National Cancer Institute’s 5-a-Day for Better Health Program funded several **school-based nutrition education programs** that resulted in significant increases in children’s intake of fruits and vegetables. Initial evaluations of the program showed that students increased fruit and vegetable intake both inside and outside the school environment. ^{xviii}

Road of Life is the only organization in the U.S. focusing exclusively on cancer prevention for children.

- In 2004, only 5% of schools had executed the CDC’s smoking prevention (TIPS) recommendations. ^{xix}
- Only 27% of schools require health education in grade 6; 20% in grade 8; 10% in grade 9; 2% in grade 12. ^{xx}
- If Road of Life’s program saves just one child from dying of cancer, the value to society is estimated to be between **\$5.5 million and \$7.5 million.** ^{xxi}

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- ⁱ US Department of Health and Human Services. "Healthy People 2010: Leading Health Indicators." URL: www.healthypeople.gov.
- ⁱⁱ US Department of Health and Human Services. "Healthy People 2010: Leading Health Indicators." URL: www.healthypeople.gov.
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- ^{iv} Thompson, Tommy G., Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Chronic Disease through Healthy Lifestyle*. Testimony before the US Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education. July 15, 2004.
- ^v Thompson, Tommy G., Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Chronic Disease through Healthy Lifestyle*. Testimony before the US Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education. July 15, 2004.
- ^{vi} Pratt M, Macera CA, Wang G. "Higher Direct Medical Costs Associated with Physical Inactivity." *The Physician and Sportsmedicine* 2000, vol. 28, pp. 63-70.
- ^{vii} Thompson, Tommy G., Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Preventing Chronic Disease through Healthy Lifestyle*. Testimony before the US Senate Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education. July 15, 2004.
- ^{viii} Sturm R. "The Effects of Obesity, Smoking, and Drinking on Medical Problems and Costs." *Health Affairs* 2002, vol. 21, pp. 245-253.
- ^{ix} Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Steps to a Healthier U.S. Prevention Report*, vol. 17, issue 4, Summer 2003. HHS 2003.
- ^x Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Steps to a Healthier U.S. Prevention Report*, vol. 17, issue 4, Summer 2003. HHS 2003.
- ^{xi} Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Steps to a Healthier U.S. Prevention Report*, vol. 17, issue 4, Summer 2003. HHS 2003.
- ^{xii} Centers for Disease Control. *A Report of the Surgeon General: Tobacco Information and Prevention Source Fact Sheet*. CDC, 2000.
- ^{xiii} Nielsen-Bohman, Lynn; Allison M. Panzer, David A. Kindig, Editors. *Health Literacy a Prescription to End Confusion* 2004. Institute of Medicine of the National Academies: 2004.
- ^{xiv} Position statement of the School Nutrition Association (formerly ASFSA).
- ^{xv} Wechler H, McKenna ML, and Lee SM. CDC Division of Adolescent and School Health. *Journal of the National Association of State Boards of Education*, December 2004.
- ^{xvi} Gerberding, Julie L. Director, CDC, Department of Health and Human Services. *Statement on CDC's Role in Promoting Healthy Lifestyles* before the Senate Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Labor, HHS, Education and Related Agencies. Monday, January 17, 2003.
- ^{xvii} *Preventive Medicine*, 1996; 25(4); 465-477
- ^{xviii} American Dietetic Association. *Wellness Policies* presentation. Accessed at: www.eatright.org/ada/files/ADAWellnessPolicy.ppt
- ^{xix} Centers for Disease Control. *Tobacco Information and Prevention Source (TIPS) Fact Sheet: Education*. Atlanta: CDC, 2005.
- ^{xx} Kann L, Brener ND, Allensworth DD. 2001. Health education: Results from the School Health Policies and Programs Study 2000. *Journal of School Health*. 71(7): 266-278
- ^{xxi} Murphy, Kevin and Robert Topel. "The Value of Health and Longevity." Working Paper No. 11405, Issued in June 2005. National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11405.pdf>