Reversing the Epidemic of Obesity and Diabetes

2005 Greater Memphis Area Progress Report Summary

Tracking our Progress towards the Goals of the Obesity and Diabetes Initiative of the Healthy Memphis Common Table

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Healthy Memphis DATACenter
This report documents the progress made through the Obesity and Diabetes Initiative (ODI) of the Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT). Using established benchmarks, it specifically shows our community’s progress toward both the ODI’s overall goals and the goals of each of its four Working Groups. The report shows our progress toward making Memphis a healthier community.

**Overall Goal:** To reverse current trends in adult and childhood obesity and diabetes by 2008.

- The majority of adults in Shelby County are dangerously overweight or obese.
- Rates of overweight and obesity are still rising in the greater Memphis area.
- Memphis is at the center of a nationwide epidemic of obesity and diabetes that is leading to premature death and terrible suffering for many of our citizens.

- Rates of overweight appear to still be increasing in children in Shelby County.
- The number of children being diagnosed with obesity, pre-diabetes, and adult-type diabetes is increasing exponentially.
- Particular efforts are needed to improve fitness in our children.
• Diabetes rates are still on the rise in the greater Memphis area.
• The number of adult diabetics in Memphis has grown exponentially over the last 20 years, and diabetes rates in Shelby County are higher than the national average.

• The obesity and diabetes epidemic is affecting every part of Shelby County but is particularly severe in the lowest income areas of Memphis in which as many as half of adults may be obese and a third may have diabetes.
Community Awareness Goal: Everyone in Memphis knows how to prevent diabetes through healthy living.

Percent of Memphians who Know Diet and Exercise are Most Important to Prevent Diabetes*

- Yes 72%
- No 21%
- Unsure 7%

- Most Memphians are being reached by messages about obesity and diabetes and are aware of the factors causing the obesity and diabetes epidemics.
- Many Memphis residents understand that the majority of diabetes can be prevented and even cured by healthy eating and exercise habits.
- Ongoing efforts should focus on reaching the people who are still poorly informed.

Screening Goal: All Memphians have their body mass index (BMI) checked and everyone knows his or her BMI.

Percent of Shelby County Residents whose BMI was Ever Checked*

- BMI Checked 31%
- BMI Not Checked 69%

- Most Memphians still are not getting their BMIs checked and do not know their BMI.
• Screening for overweight and obesity in the greater Memphis area is inadequate. Many overweight and obese Memphians do not realize that they are at increased risk for serious weight-related disease.

  ✓ Over 80% of Memphians do not know their body mass index (BMI).

  ✓ Approximately 70% of Memphians report they have never had their BMI checked.

**Diabetes Management Goal:** Everyone in Memphis with diabetes gets recommended care.

![Bar chart showing % of Shelby County Adults receiving recommended care for diabetes 2004](chart)

• Although we are showing steady improvements in diabetes care, people in the greater Memphis area frequently still do not receive recommended life-saving care for diabetes.

  ✓ Many Memphians with diabetes, whether insured by BlueCross BlueShield, Medicare or TennCare, do not get all the recommended care they need.

  ✓ Only half of people with diabetes in the greater Memphis area participated in a diabetes education program in the past year.
**Business Case Goal:** Every business, payer and person finds a way to pay for prevention and real value in healthcare.

**Percent of Memphis Employees with Access to Workplace Health Promotion Programs***

- Yes 23%
- No 77%

- Workplace fitness and wellness programs benefit both employee and employer. Most Memphis employees are not aware of existing fitness programs or do not have access to these programs.

**Tracking Progress to a Healthier Memphis**

Since late 2003 Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT) has focused its first community-wide initiative on *reversing* the obesity and diabetes epidemics in the Mid-South by 2008. The Healthy Memphis Common Table appropriately has set as a 5-year goal to begin to show a real difference in obesity and diabetes trends in the greater Memphis area. The impact of these many projects will not be apparent overnight, nor is it possible to easily separate out the impacts of each of the many ongoing projects in the Mid-South. However, all the available evidence suggests that, for communities to substantially impact their health status, their interventions need to be multi-tiered and in multiple settings, to meet people where they live in order to have a meaningful impact on their lives.

Thus, although the Healthy Memphis Data Center is unable to report on all the good works that are going on in our community, each project group involved in the Obesity and Diabetes Initiative (ODI) will continue to be encouraged to set measurable goals and to measure, track and report on progress toward these goals. Project leaders will continue to report on their key process indicators at regular Healthy Memphis Common Table (HMCT) Community Partner meetings. In general, projects will focus on improving short-term process goals for their projects, such as participation rates, knowledge, attitude, and
behavior change rates for project participants, and participant completion rates for each HMCT intervention.

Over 150 Community Partners are participating in four working groups to: 1) promote community awareness of the epidemic, 2) increase screening for obesity and diabetes, 3) improve management of obesity and diabetes, and 4) build a business case for health promotion in the Mid-South.

The Community Awareness and Education Working Group focuses on reaching the significant number of people who are still poorly informed about the factors involved in the obesity and diabetes epidemic. Its many activities include identifying community resources, promoting media events, organizing walking clubs, helping restaurants publish nutrition data for their menus, and maintaining the HMCT website.

The goal of The Screening Working Group is that everyone in Memphis will know his or her Body Mass Index (BMI). It has developed a screening tool for distribution at health fairs to calculate BMI and to inform about risk factors. The group also seeks to provide health care professionals with information that will encourage them to check BMI on all their patients and to follow up on their patients' risk factors.

Projects of The Disease Management Working Group are aimed at ensuring that all obese and diabetic patients in Shelby County receive the recommended care. The group is building a data registry of diabetics in the county, identifying and coordinating community resources for standardized management, providing models for care, and creating incentives for physicians to implement recommended standards of care.

The Business Case Working Group is identifying local businesses that have workplace health promotion programs and is helping to ensure that the community knows the programs are available. The group is providing a diabetes services guide for regional employers.

Community Partner organizations are conducting many additional projects on their own to educate the community and provide resources for fighting the epidemic of obesity and diabetes. Simultaneously, the Healthy Memphis Data Center (HMDC) will continue to focus on reporting our whole community’s progress toward its intermediate and long-term goals. Unlike individual project teams, the HMDC will focus on tracking key outcome measures for the entire community. During our first year of operation we have assisted the Shared Urban Data System (SUDS) in acquiring extracts of several healthcare utilization databases and have continued to develop the Memphis Behavioral Risk Factor Survey to expand its focus on the key health needs of children in the Mid-South. For some of these databases this has been our first year of data. However, most of these data resources will permit ongoing tracking of key health outcomes for our community. The Healthy Memphis Data Center remains committed to long-term tracking of our progress to a healthier Memphis.