



# Taking Action Against Obesity:

A Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax for New York State

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**CCC's statewide poll showed that**  
**Most New Yorkers View Obesity as a**  
**Public Health Issue, Not Just a Personal One**

CCC's Poll asked: *Some people say obesity is a private issue that people need to deal with on their own. Others feel that it is a public health issue that society needs to help solve. Which comes closer to how you feel?*

- 54 % obesity is a public health issue
  - 41 % obesity is a private issue.
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- *CCC commissioned a survey of 750 randomly selected likely New York State voters on public health issues. Respondents were interviewed by telephone from December 2-7, 2008. The survey results have a margin of error of +/- 3.6 percent.*

## **Childhood Obesity**

### **Impacts Child Health and Education:**

- Obesity results in early onset diabetes, orthopedic problems, wearing of joints, increased risk of breaking bones, asthma, sleep apnea, depression. *(Yanovisky JA. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Bethesda Maryland. Interviewed by Jonathan Bor 2010 Jan 21.)*
- Obesity increases likelihood of developing chronic illnesses later in life. *(Yanovisky JA. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development; Bethesda Maryland. Interviewed by Jonathan Bor 2010 Jan 21.)*
- Children who are overweight or obese are less likely to be engaged in school, more likely to repeat a grade in school, and to miss more than two weeks of school in a school year. *(C.Bethall, L. Simpson, S. Stumbo, A.C. Carle, N. Gombojav. National, State and Local Disparities in Childhood Obesity March 2010 29:3 Health Affairs)*

## Childhood Obesity

### Impacts Health Care Costs :

- The tripling of obesity in children and youth since 1963 is associated with higher health care costs from early onset diabetes, hypertension, and musculoskeletal, and behavioral health disorders. (*Wang G, Dietz WH. Economic Burden of Obesity in youths 6 to 17: 1979 – 1999. Pediatrics. 2002; 109:E81*)
- A review of commercial insurance and Medicaid data from 2004 in 8 states, showed services for type II diabetes, depression, bone and joint disorders, asthma, hypertension, and abdominal complaints all elevated in obese children in the insured population. (*Thomson Medstat. Childhood Obesity: costs, treatment patterns, disparities in care, and prevalent medical conditions. NY (NY) Thomson Reuters; 2006*)

## Childhood Obesity Impacts Parental Employment:

- Working parents are challenged to support sick children's need for health services and supervision. Work attendance can be compromised. (*Emlen AC, Koren PE. Hard to find and difficult to manage: effects of childcare on the workplace. www.ssw.pdx.edu/focus/emlen/documents/HardtoFind.pdf*).
- The use of health services by obese children affects the need for parental time away from work. Data on commercially insured and Medicaid population showed hospitalization and physician visits rates that were 3.7 and 1.8 times higher for children with obesity than with children without obesity, respectively. (*Thomson Medstat. Childhood Obesity: costs, treatment patterns, disparities in care, and prevalent medical conditions. NY (NY) Thomson Reuters; 2006*).

## **Childhood Obesity**

### **Impacts the Future Workforce:**

- Employers are at-risk of inheriting a future workforce in which many are obese and have costly chronic illness (*S. Dentzer March 2010 Health Affairs*).
- Childhood obesity carried into adulthood has been estimated to account for 25 percent of adult obesity if acquired before age 8. (*Borgalusa Heart Study. Pediatrics. 1999; 103 (6A):1175-82*)

## **Creating an Environment that Supports Healthy Choices**

- Healthy eating is not solely a matter of personal responsibility or individual taste; it is also a matter of making healthy, affordable food accessible and available in all communities.
- CCC believes that by promoting healthy eating, increasing the supply of affordable food retail options, expanding transportation alternatives in underserved communities, and being innovative in our use of tax policy - we can improve the health outcomes and quality of life of all New Yorkers, in particular our children.

## **Combating Obesity – A Multi Pronged Approach**

Many innovative initiatives are underway including:

- Calorie Labeling In Restaurants
- The Healthy Bodega Initiative
- Health Bucks
- Green Carts
- Revision of nutritional standards in schools & child care
- Expansion of fitness programs in schools
- Passage of the FRESH food retail financing initiative
- Public Education Campaigns

**Tax Policy Must be Part of the Solution**  
**CCC's statewide poll showed strong public support**  
**for taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages**

- When initially asked, 52% of voters supported a penny-an-ounce tax on sugar-sweetened beverages.
- After hearing more about the initiative and that revenues from this tax could be used to address childhood obesity and reduce the need to cut services, 72% support the tax and only 27% oppose it.
- By margins of more than 3 to 1, voters prefer taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages over cuts in government services.
- <http://www.cccnewyork.org/publications/12-12-08CCCPoll.pdf>
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