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INDIANA TAKES NEXT STEP IN TACKLING OBESITY

INDIANAPOLIS – Building on the success of Gov. Daniels' INShape Indiana health initiative, the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity at the Indiana State Department of Health today released a plan to continue the fight against obesity, "Indiana's Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, 2010-2020."

"We've been encouraging Hoosiers to eat better and move more since launching INShape Indiana nearly six years ago. Since then, I've heard many individual success stories, but we can't truly solve this issue without affecting change on a much broader scale. We're taking the next step with this plan," said Gov. Daniels.

In 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) awarded Indiana and 22 other state health departments a five-year grant to address the growing problem of obesity. Through this grant, the Indiana State Department of Health's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity developed the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative. One of the first steps taken in this initiative was to form a task force of statewide partners to start working on a plan to fight obesity.

"Like INShape Indiana, the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative's plan is a call to action for individuals and organizations to work together to ensure every Indiana resident can enjoy a lifestyle of healthy eating and physical activity within an environment that supports health, wellness, and vitality," said State Health Commissioner Gregory Larkin, M.D. "The goal of this plan is to make changes in local communities, schools, worksites, child care, health care, and faith-based organizations that have already been proven to improve nutrition and increase physical activity."

According to state health officials, only 41 percent of adolescents and 64 percent of adults meet the recommended levels for physical activity. When it comes to eating fruits and vegetables, only 16 percent of adolescents and 21 percent of adults consume the recommended amount.

Dr. Larkin says the plan also focuses on increasing the percentage of women who breastfeed and on promoting healthy eating and physical activity among older adults.

Obesity and obesity-related diseases are costly. Indiana's obesity-attributable health care spending in 2008 was estimated at \$1.9 billion or \$435 per adult. If trends continue, by 2018, Indiana's obesity-attributable health care spending could be as high as \$7 billion or \$1,484 per adult. We all share the burden of paying for it.

Developed by members of the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative Task Force, the plan seeks to achieve the following six goals:

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- Increase access to and consumption of healthy foods and beverages.
- Increase opportunities for and engagement in physical activity.
- Increase efforts aimed at enabling people to achieve and maintain a healthy weight across the lifespan.
- Reduce environmental and policy-related disparities for breastfeeding, nutrition, physical activity, overweight, obesity, and chronic disease.
- Increase the capacity of communities and settings within those communities (e.g., schools, worksites, faith-based organizations, etc.) to develop and sustain environmental and policy support systems that encourage healthy eating and active living.
- Increase state and local strategic partnerships to more effectively coordinate efforts, share resources, and identify and reach priority populations.

“To achieve these goals, the plan calls for a broad and diverse group of partners to work together,” said Dr. Larkin. “Everyone has a role to play in making this a reality in our state.”

Dr. Larkin added, “I applaud the Task Force for the great work its members have already accomplished in developing this plan. With its leadership, I have no doubt Indiana will continue to move in the right direction.”

For more information on the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative and to see a copy of Indiana’s Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan, visit www.inhealthyweight.org.

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