

# Statewide Vision and Strategy for Improving the Health of North Dakotans

## Healthy Weight/Healthy Kids Initiative: Highlights

### OVERALL GOAL OF THE INITIATIVE

Reduce the number of overweight kids in North Dakota by improving the nutrition and increasing the physical activity of kids 10 to 16 years old.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

- 30% of the kids who are under 5 years old and enrolled in WIC (Women Infant and Children Program) are considered overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. (WIC 2005)
- 36.7% of third graders in North Dakota are either overweight or at risk for becoming overweight. (North Dakota Oral Health Survey 2004)
- 28% of middle school students in North Dakota are overweight or considered to be at risk for becoming overweight. (ND YRBS 2005)
- 24% of high school students in North Dakota are overweight or considered to be at risk for becoming overweight. (ND YRBS 2005)
- 64% of North Dakota adults are either overweight or obese. (ND BRFSS 2005)

### RATIONALE

- Implement a long-term comprehensive approach to promoting healthy weight by focusing on six key areas:
  - Mobilizing communities
  - Fostering sustainable lifestyle changes
  - Transforming the healthcare delivery system
  - Creating environments that support healthy living
  - Aligning policies with healthy living
  - Creating financial incentives for healthy living
- Begin by targeting youth in normal growth years. During these years, weight maintenance combined with natural growth in height will reduce Body Mass Index (BMI) of overweight kids by the equivalent of a ten pound/year weight loss.
- Focus efforts on areas that have high potential for positively impacting the physical activity and nutritional behavior of kids between the ages of 10 and 16. These include:
  - Interactions with physicians
  - Family behavior, emphasizing key role of parents
  - Community fitness and nutrition resources
  - The school environment

## **SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED APPROACH**

### **Phase 1: Develop a Multi-Dimensional, Community-Based Initiative to Support Achieving Healthy Weight for Kids Ages 10-16**

This initiative will integrate the following key components:

- **Physician Intervention:** work through the North Dakota Medical Association to partner with physician groups and use routine physician visits to screen and identify overweight and at-risk kids and intervene with their parents
- **Parenting Healthy Kids:** use physician office advice to promote practical ways parents can foster healthy nutrition and increased physical activity in their kids
- **Linkage to Community Resources:** Provide physicians and their in-office counselors with practical tools to help parents and kids utilize community resources that can help them achieve healthy weights
- **Healthy Schools:** use the school environment to positively impact kids' nutritional choices and physical activity levels
- **Financial Incentives:** work with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Dakota and other insurance providers to implement financial incentives to encourage increased physician screening/counseling/referral and to encourage families to improve their nutrition and increase their physical activity levels

### **Phase 2: (July 2007- December 2008) Launch the Initiatives in Selected Communities**

- Work with existing community healthy lifestyle coalitions to implement the initiatives based on their unique local characteristics
- Demonstrate and document the success of North Dakota-based efforts
- Create an interactive, online resource center

### **Phase 3: Mobilize Leadership to Expand Efforts Statewide and Build Long-term Sustainability**

- Convene the Governor's Leadership Mobilization Conference to highlight successful efforts
- Establish and maintain a statewide leadership network of key groups that interface with kids
- Expand Phase 2 efforts to additional sites in North Dakota
- Develop on-going agendas for advocacy and social marketing
- Strengthen and sustain a statewide infrastructure that promotes healthy weight in kids

### **HEALTHY WEIGHT/HEALTHY KIDS INITIATIVE CORE TEAM MEMBERS**

- Jim Cooper, President and CEO, Medcenter One Health System, Bismarck, North Dakota, (Team Leader)
- Melissa Olson, Healthy North Dakota, Bismarck, North Dakota (Convener)

- Rob Beattie, MD, Chair, Department of Family and Community Medicine, University of North Dakota School of Medicine and Health Sciences, Grand Forks, North Dakota
- Karen Ehrens, Ehrens Consulting, Bismarck, North Dakota
- Denise Kolpack, Assistant Vice President of Communications, Blue Cross/Blue Shield of North Dakota, Fargo, North Dakota
- Parag Kumar, Pediatrician, Q&R Clinic, Bismarck, North Dakota
- Brad Strand, Chair, Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences, North Dakota State University, Fargo, North Dakota