



# PROGRESS REVIEW

## Physical Activity and Fitness

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES ■ PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ■ December 15, 1998

The Assistant Secretary for Health and Surgeon General chaired the third and final review of progress in achieving Healthy People 2000 (HP2000) objectives for Physical Activity and Fitness. The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports organized the review around the themes of reducing sedentary lifestyles and increasing the quantity and quality of school physical education. Of the 13 objectives in this priority area, one has met the targets, three have shown overall progress toward meeting the targets, five have moved away from the targets, and the rest have shown little or no change or have insufficient data sources to measure progress. During the overview and discussion, attention was given to the following HP2000 objectives. The numbers in boldface indicate the chapter and objective number.

**1.1** The age-adjusted death rate from coronary heart disease in the total population declined from 135 per 100,000 in 1987 to 105 in 1996. The HP2000 target is 100. For Blacks, the rate fell from 168 per 100,000 in 1987 to 140 in 1996. The target is 115.

**1.2** In 1988-94, the age-adjusted prevalence of overweight or obesity (BMI $\geq$ 25) was 54.9 percent—up from 46 percent in the 1970s and 43.3 percent in 1960-62. Among men, it increased to 59.4 percent in 1988-94, and among women, to 50.7 percent. Among black men and women, the prevalence increased from 43.1 to 56.5 percent and from 57.0 to 65.8 percent, respectively. Prevalence in adolescents increased from 15 percent in 1976-80 to 24 percent in 1988-94.

**1.3** In the past decade, less than one-quarter of people aged 18 and older engaged in light to moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 or more times per week. Showing little change since early in the decade. The target is 30 percent.

**1.4** In 1991, 16 percent of people aged 18 and older engaged in vigorous physical activity 3 or more days a week for at least 20 minutes per occasion. The proportion was unchanged in 1995. The target is 20 percent. The proportion of students in grades 9-12 who did so was the same (64 percent) in 1997 as in 1991. The target is 75 percent.

**1.5** The proportion of the total population aged 18 and older who engage in no leisure-time physical activity remained fairly stable at around 23-24 percent from 1985 to 1995. The target is 15 percent.

**1.6** In 1991, 27 percent of people aged 18 and older regularly performed stretching exercises. This increased to 32 percent in 1995. The proportion who engaged in regular weight training increased

from 11 percent in 1990 to 18 percent in 1995. The HP2000 target is 40 percent for each activity. Among students in grades 9-12, the proportion who engaged in strengthening routines 4 or more times per week barely changed from 1991 (37 percent) to 1997 (38 percent). Over this same period, the proportion of such students who performed stretching exercises 4 or more times per week decreased from 43 percent to 40 percent. The target is 40 percent in each category.

**1.7** In 1985, 30 percent of overweight females aged 18 and older and 25 percent of overweight males aged 18 and older had adopted sound dietary practices combined with regular physical activity to attain an appropriate body weight. The percentages of females and males combining diet and exercise to reduce overweight decreased to 19 percent and 15 percent, respectively, in 1995, moving away from the target of 50 percent. A change in the survey questionnaire in 1991 may have affected the tracking of this objective.

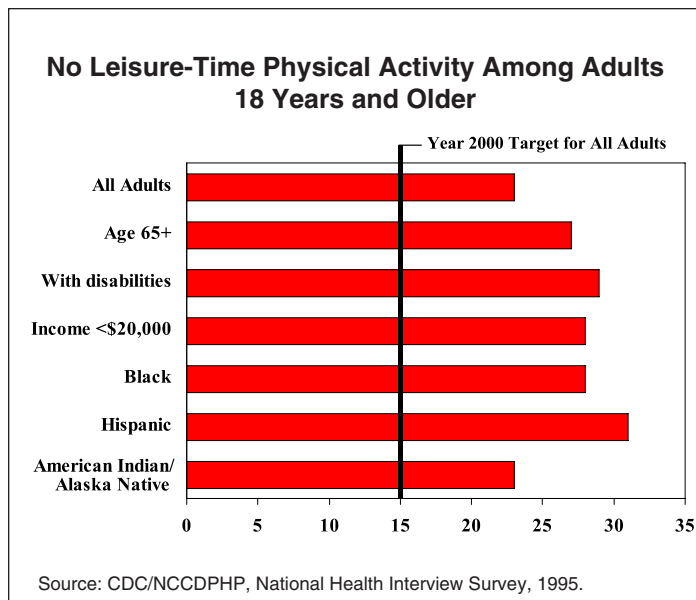
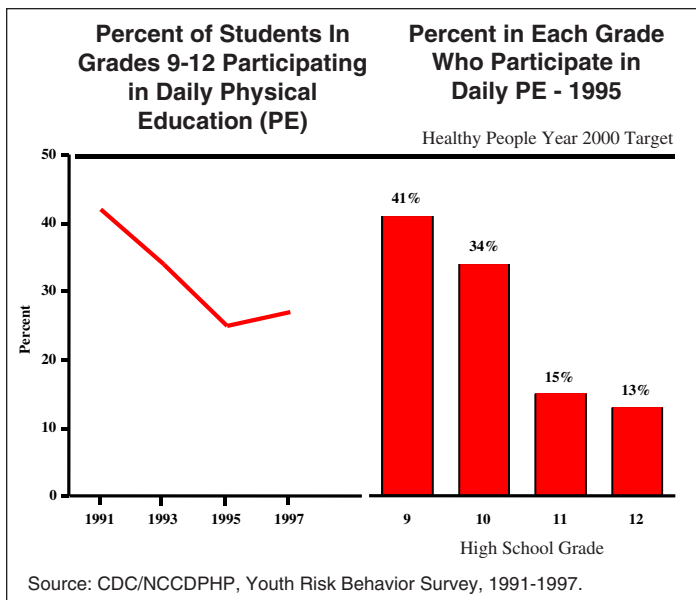
**1.8** The proportion of adolescents in grades 9-12 who participate in daily school physical education decreased from 42 percent in 1991 to 27 percent in 1997. The target is 50 percent.

**1.9** In 1991, 37 percent of students in grades 9-12 spent 21 minutes or more, 3-5 times per week being physically active during school physical education (P.E.) class time and 24 percent spent 30 minutes or more, 1 or more times per week. In 1997, these proportions decreased to 32 percent and 21 percent, respectively. The target is for students to spend 50 percent of P.E. class time being physically active.

**1.10** Between 1985 and 1992, the proportion of worksites offering employer-sponsored physical activity and fitness programs increased

### HIGHLIGHTS

- As part of the 1999 International Year of the Older Person campaign, former Senator and recent astronaut John Glenn is encouraging older people to exercise to the best of their ability.
- Currently, no State mandates daily physical education in schools.
- Obesity and low levels of physical fitness account for a large percentage of recruits failing to complete military basic training. To address this problem, the Department of Defense's Operation Be Fit, a 5-year program begun in 1997, aims to raise fitness levels of military personnel, their family members, and their communities. Participants perform one or more of 69 physical activities at least 3 times per week to develop healthy, fit and active lifestyles.
- Studies have shown that a strategy focused on reducing inactivity, as in the amount of time spent watching television, is more successful in decreasing obesity and maintaining weight loss than one which emphasizes increasing activity.
- In the Walking School Bus program in Canada, senior citizens alight from the buses about a mile from the schools and escort the schoolchildren on foot the rest of the way to class.
- The Girl Power program is successfully reaching girls before they turn 13 and giving them the opportunity to engage in physical activities, such as dancing.
- According to data from the Health Care Financing Administration, seventy percent of corporate pre-tax profits is spent on health care.
- Supported by the Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association and the International Health Racquet Sports Association, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports has received \$38 million of donated media since 1996.



in all categories of worksite size: for those with 50-99 employees, from 14 percent to 33 percent (HP2000 target, 20 percent); for those with 100-249 employees, from 23 percent to 47 percent (target, 35 percent); for those with 250-749 employees, from 32 percent to 66 percent (target, 50 percent); for those with 750 or more employees, from 54 percent to 83 percent (target, 80 percent).

**1.13** The proportion of older people who have difficulty performing self-care activities increased between 1984-85 and 1994-95. For the total population aged 70 and older, the increase was from 141 per 1,000 to 163 (HP2000 target, 90 per 1,000); for the total population aged 85 and older, from 371 per 1,000 to 471 (target, 325 per 1,000); and for Blacks aged 70 and older, from 166 per 1,000 to 218 (target, 98 per 1,000).

## PARTICIPANTS

- Administration for Children and Families
- Administration on Aging
- American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
- American College of Sports Medicine
- American Physical Therapy Association
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Department of Education
- Food and Drug Administration
- Harvard School of Public Health
- Health Resources and Services Administration
- Jewish Community Center of Greater Washington
- Maryland Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- National Institutes of Health
- National Recreation and Park Association
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
- Office of Minority Health
- Office of Public Health and Science
- Office of Representative Fred Upton
- Office on Women's Health
- President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports
- Sporting Goods Manufacturers Association
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- Tufts University
- United National Indian Tribal Youth

## FOLLOW-UP

- Validate new questions on the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS) to capture data on the frequency, duration and intensity of physical activity. Recast other survey instruments to more closely monitor moderate levels of physical activity, with the aim of providing communities with assessment tools.
- Partner with the Department of Transportation in its efforts to reduce automobile use, thereby increasing physical activity.
- Expand the base of scientific knowledge around the benefits of strength training and the optimum regimens for muscle strengthening at different age levels.
- Develop culturally appropriate models for enhancing physical activity and fitness in older people and other select populations so that physical activities can be integrated into their daily lives.
- Demonstrate to health maintenance organizations, businesses, and insurers the benefits of promoting physical activity, citing, for example, compelling evidence that regular exercise reduces the incidence of hip fractures in the elderly.
- Work through the National Coordinating Committee on School Health in support of efforts to standardize and expand school curricula in health and physical education.
- Work with the Department of Education to improve schools' physical education (PE) facilities and increase the amount of activity time in PE classes. Coordinate research on physical activity levels and school performance.
- Identify best practices for conveying information about the importance of sound nutrition and regular exercise and partner with the media to get these messages to the public.
- Develop innovative approaches for enhancing physical fitness by promoting community coalitions and using new venues, such as public buildings and churches, to attract more participants.



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