

EMPLOYERS

The Problem

The weight of the nation is too high, and the consequences of the obesity epidemic and the chronic diseases it fuels are threatening the health and vitality of our citizens, children, communities, economy, and country.

Context

America's excess weight has serious consequences for U.S. businesses, especially those that face global competition. The consequences take two primary forms: increased cost and decreased productivity.

Next to salary, health care is one of the most significant labor costs employers face, and the reality is that obese workers have higher health care costs. According to the CDC, an obese worker's health care costs are \$1,400 per year on average higher than those of a worker in the normal body mass index (BMI) range.

The weight of the nation is also sapping the productivity of our workforce. Obese workers are sick more frequently, absent more often and less productive when they are on the job. It's estimated that obesity costs U.S. employers \$73 billion annually in lost productivity, disadvantaging them in global competition. And with one-third of American children age 2-19 overweight or obese, we face the prospect of the next generation of workers not being physically qualified for some of our most critically important jobs. For example, it's estimated that today one in four young Americans do not meet the weight requirement to join the armed forces.

As dark as the picture is, there are bright spots. There are many examples of employers and employees working together to improve the health of their workplace, and resources are available to help organizations seeking to improve the health and productivity of American workers and business.

The facts:

- Roughly two-thirds of American adults are overweight or obese.
- Obesity rates have tripled among American children since the 1980s.
- Obesity contributes to five of the 10 leading causes of death in the U.S.
- Obese workers on average are absent one more week each year than other employees.
- Obese employees have 37 percent higher medical costs.
- Obesity costs U.S. employers more than \$73 billion annually, reducing their competitiveness with overseas companies.

THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION

Community Activation Kit: Stakeholder Guide

About This Project

The causes of the obesity epidemic are complex, ranging from genetics and biology, to the environments we live and work in, to the business of food and farming in America. The solutions will require work on many fronts. Individuals, families, scientists, community organizations, health care providers, small business owners, industry, labor, government, houses of worship and faith-based organizations—each has a critical role in helping to ensure that future generations of Americans are healthier and stronger than we are today.

In the face of such a deep-seated health crisis and the need to rally so many forces to combat it, HBO, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), in partnership with the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and Kaiser Permanente, designed THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION to be far more than a television series. It is intended to be a catalyzing event for examining and discussing the impact obesity has on individuals, families, communities and the nation – and taking action together. In addition to the four feature films comprising THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION series and 12 bonus short films (all available at <http://theweightofthenation.hbo.com/#>), resources are available to help your organization enhance and accelerate your efforts to fight the obesity epidemic and improve the weight of the nation.

What Can You Do?

Spread the Word about THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION:

- Like the Weight of the Nation Facebook page from your organization's Facebook account (<http://www.facebook.com/#!/theweightofthenation>).
- Follow [@WeightOfTheNtn](https://twitter.com/WeightOfTheNtn) on Twitter.
- Tweet about [#weightofthenation](https://twitter.com/WeightOfTheNtn) from your organization's Twitter account.
- Host a screening. In this Community Activation Kit, you will find event ideas, sample agendas, moderator's guides, and other things you may need to plan and put on a great event. At <http://theweightofthenation.hbo.com/>, you can find sample invitations.

Learn More:

- Access fact sheets at <http://www.communitycommons.org/wotn> on a number of topics related to the obesity epidemic. Each fact sheet contains information about the topic from the HBO films, key statistics and suggestions for taking action on an individual, family, community, state, and national level.

THE WEIGHT OF THE NATION

Community Activation Kit: Stakeholder Guide

Do More:

- Identify actions via these fact sheets (<http://www.communitycommons.org/wotn>) that you, your organization, and community partnership can take to help improve the weight of the nation.

Work together!

- There are thousands of community-based organizations that are already working to improve health and fight obesity. Connect with the organizations in your community, get GIS data, and join the movement through the Community Commons (<http://www.communitycommons.org/>).

Additional Resources

- HBO Weight of the Nation website (<http://theweightofthenation.hbo.com/>)
- Kaiser Permanente Weight of the Nation website (<http://www.kp.org/weightofthenation>)
- The Map of the Movement (<http://www.communitycommons.org/>)
- Prevent Obesity.net (<http://www.preventobesity.net/>)