

The Minnesota perspective on the CDC's *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009*

CDC Releases First Report Card on Minnesota's Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, Environmental Supports, and Policies

The *State Indicator Report on Fruits and Vegetables, 2009*, for the first time provides Minnesota's data, environmental supports and policies that may help Americans eat more fruits and vegetables.

The report shows that Minnesota, along with all other states in the country, is not meeting national objectives.

The data comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) health surveillance systems. With a national Healthy People 2010 goal of increasing the proportion of Americans eating at least two fruits daily to 75% and increasing the proportion of Americans eating at least three vegetables daily to 50%, the report found that among Minnesotan adults only 27.3% ate two fruits daily, 63.6% below the target and 16.8% below the national average, and 25.8% ate at least three vegetables daily, 48.4% below the target and 5.8% below the national average.

A diet high in fruits and vegetables is important for optimal child growth, management of weight and prevention of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and some cancers, all of which currently contribute to health care costs in the U.S. This tool will help Minnesota determine what is taking place in communities and schools and identify policies that can be improved to promote healthy eating among Americans.

In what could be a promising sign, the Minnesota Student Survey found adolescent consumption of five or more servings of fruits and vegetables to have increased between the years 2004 and 2007. However, due to variances in data collection, Minnesota data for adolescent fruit and vegetable consumption cannot compare to the national data.

The new report card highlights consumption and three key policy and environmental areas:

- **Healthier Food Retail:** Retailers, such as supermarkets and grocery stores that stock a variety of high quality fruits and vegetables, are a critical asset for the health of residents. Yet only 63.6% of census tracts in Minnesota have healthier food retailers located within the tract or within 1/2 mile of tract boundaries, compared to a 72% national average.
- **Availability of Healthier Foods in Schools:** Schools are in a unique position to influence and promote fruit and vegetable intake among youth, school staff, parents and

community members. Yet only 18% of middle and high schools in Minnesota offer fruits and non-fried vegetables in vending machines, school stores, snack bars. This falls below the national average of 20.9%.

- **Food System Support:** A systems approach to food considers many factors involved in getting fruits and vegetables from farm to consumer, and Food Policy Councils and related coalitions are an important part of this system. Yet, Minnesota does not have a state-level Food Policy Council and has only one local Food Policy Council. Nationally, there are 20 states with a state-level policy and 59 local councils.

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The Fruit and Vegetable Report Card – United States: 2009 is available on the CDC Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity website <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/>. The website also provides many other resources that support states and communities to make changes in the policy and environmental supports around fruits and vegetables, including CDC's Recommended Community Strategies and Measurements to Prevent Obesity in the United States.

CDC is also a partner in the National Fruit & Vegetable Program and has a number of resources for September National Fruits & Veggies - More Matters Month available at <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov>.

The Minnesota Nutrition and Physical Activity Program to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases is funded out of CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (DNPAO). The program currently funds 25 states to address the problems of obesity and other chronic diseases through statewide efforts coordinated with multiple partners. The program's primary focus is to create policy and environmental changes that will improve the health of places where Americans live, work, learn and play, and is working to build lasting and comprehensive efforts to address obesity and other chronic diseases through a variety of nutrition and physical activity strategies.

