

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ALLIANCE



April 26, 2022

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Appropriations  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Roy Blunt  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies Subcommittee  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Ranking Member Blunt:

As organizations dedicated to improving the health of all Americans, we respectfully request that you allocate \$125 million for FY 2023 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity, which would include a dedicated \$10 million funding line for Active People Healthy Nation and \$15 million for the High Obesity Program initiative.

CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) invests in effective strategies that support active living and healthy eating in states and communities across the nation. There is no more important time to invest in these priorities as our nation recovers from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on chronic disease risk factors and mental health and well-being. A recent systematic review has shown convincingly that physical activity significantly reduces the risk of a more severe clinical course in those infected with severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).<sup>1</sup> New research shows that over 110,000 lives could be saved if adults in the US increased their physical activity by just 10 minutes per day.<sup>2</sup> Data indicate that a large majority of the population has experienced undesired weight gain during the pandemic at a time when the national obesity rate for adults has surpassed the 40% mark for the first time.<sup>3</sup> One cohort study in the US showed a 15% increase in obesity among children and adolescents during the pandemic.<sup>4</sup>

To help prevent a potential onslaught of chronic disease as the nation emerges from the pandemic, we believe the funding allocation to the Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity is more important than ever. Implementing DNPAO's programs can help prevent and address obesity and reduce the risk of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke, and cancer. Other potential benefits include better school performance, lower health care costs, stronger local economies, less air

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<sup>1</sup> Hill, AL., Whitfield, G., Morford, M., Okasako-Schmucker, DL., et al. Brief summary of findings on the association between physical inactivity and severe COVID-19 outcomes. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Atlanta, Georgia. 2022. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/clinical-care/E-Physical-Inactivity-Review.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Saint-Maurice, PF., Graubard, BI., Troiano, RP., Berrigan, D., Galuska, DA., Fulton, JE., Matthews, CE. Estimated number of deaths prevented through increased physical activity among US adults. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2022 March 1; 182(3); 349-352.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Surveillance System. Accessed online August 11, 2021 at [Adult Obesity Facts | Overweight & Obesity | CDC](#).

<sup>4</sup> Stavridou, A. et al., Obesity in children and adolescents during COVID-19 pandemic. *Children (Basel)*. 2021 Feb; 8(2):135. [Obesity in Children and Adolescents during COVID-19 Pandemic \(nih.gov\)](#).

pollution, more cohesive communities, enhanced national security, and decreasing healthcare costs. For example, if everyone met current physical activity guidelines, Medicare could save \$73.9 billion per year.<sup>5</sup>

Currently, DNPAO funds a limited number of states and communities to support these effective evidence-based strategies. An increase in FY 2023 funding for DNPAO will allow CDC to fund all 50 states and D.C. and implement programs that could substantially reduce health care costs. While investments would support state-level entities, funding would be disseminated to individual communities to create more places for physical activity and increase access to healthy foods.

### **Active People Healthy Nation**

Active People, Healthy Nation is a national initiative to help 27 million Americans become more physically active by 2027 by creating more places for people of all ages and abilities to be physically active including: Complete Streets; community plans for parks and recreation; safe routes to schools; safer, more accessible places for walking, moving and biking; and evidence-based physical activity interventions to prevent and control disease.

### **High Obesity Program**

CDC funds the High Obesity program which enables land grant universities to work with community extension services to increase access to safe and accessible places for physical activity and healthier foods in counties that have more than 40% of adults with obesity.

### **Access to Healthy Foods**

DNPAO supports maternity care practices and worksite supports for breastfeeding; implementation of food service guidelines in worksites and in community settings; and integration of nutrition standards into statewide early care and education (ECE) systems.

### **State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program**

DNPAO funds the State Physical Activity and Nutrition Program (SPAN) which provides substantive levels of funding to implement evidence-based strategies at state and local levels to improve physical activity and nutrition. Currently only 16 states are supported, and it is estimated for each additional \$1.2 million in SPAN funding, an additional state could be added to the program.

We greatly appreciate your consideration of our request to provide \$125 million in FY 2023 for CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity. This investment is critical to help public health officials and organizations support active living and healthy eating in states and communities across the nation. Implementing these initiatives and programs will help prevent obesity, reduce the risk of chronic diseases and lower healthcare costs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request and please reach out to Graham Melstrand ([Graham.Melstrand@acefitness.org](mailto:Graham.Melstrand@acefitness.org)) if we can answer any further questions.

Sincerely,

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<sup>5</sup> HHS FY2016 Budget in Brief, <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/budget-in-brief/cms/medicare/index.html>.

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics  
America Walks  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American College Health Association (ACHA)  
American College of Lifestyle Medicine  
American College of Sports Medicine  
American Council on Exercise  
American Heart Association  
American Institute for Cancer Research  
American Medical Society for Sports Medicine  
Equitable Cities LLC  
International Health, Racquet, and Sportsclub Association  
League of American Bicyclists  
Move to Live More  
Myzone Inc.  
National Academy of Sports Medicine  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Athletic Trainers' Association  
National Council of Youth Sports  
National Youth Sports Health & Safety Institute  
National Association for Health and Fitness  
NIRSA: Leaders In Collegiate Recreation  
Physical Activity Alliance  
Safe Routes Partnership  
SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators  
Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)  
Trust for America's Health  
YMCA of the USA