

An Ounce of Prevention

Neighborhood & Community Services
Prevention Unit

Issue 2: June/July 2015

Health Department Study Highlights Prevalence of Childhood Obesity in Fairfax County

Chris Narbut, School Health Coordinator, Fairfax County Health Department

Given the growing concerns about childhood obesity, many public health agencies have initiated school-based Body Mass Index (BMI) surveillance programs in recent years. BMI is a person's weight in kilograms divided by the square of height in meters, and is considered a reliable way to screen for overweight and obesity. Schools are a logical place to collect such data since they provide an easy way to reach the majority of school aged youth.

In Fairfax County, this surveillance started in school year 2010-2011, when the Health Department's School Health Program began collecting height and weight information from kindergarten students' school entry physical forms in order to better understand the overweight/obesity problem in our community. Overall, the results suggest that nearly 30 percent of Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) children entering kindergarten are overweight or obese, which is consistent with national and state trends. Three years of data from youth in 139 elementary schools in FCPS were analyzed to determine the prevalence of overweight and obesity in this population. The total sample consisted of 23,907 kindergarten students out of a total enrollment of 38,569 students (62% of kindergarten students).

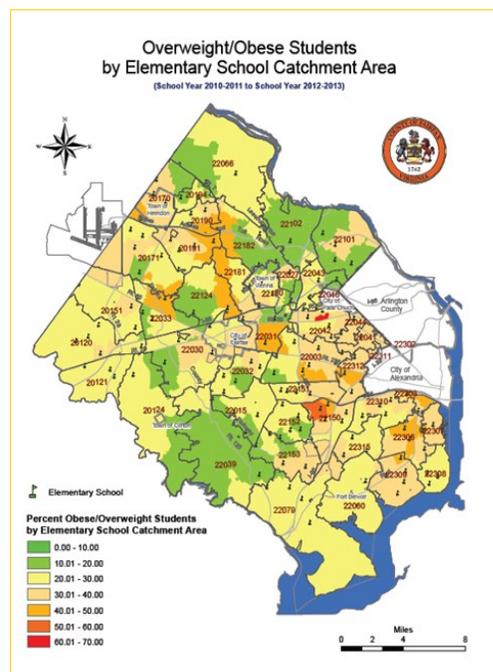
The prevalence of overweight and obesity in a specific population can be considered a health indicator for that population. Other measures include the level of regular physical activity and the daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. As poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are well known contributors to obesity and because these largely occur outside the school setting, community-

based public health approaches to prevention are indicated.

Collecting BMI data supports the Health Department's efforts to meet the following Institute of Medicine (IOM) goals for data collection programs:

- ◆ Describe trends in weight status over time among populations and/or subpopulations in a school or school district.
- ◆ Identify demographic or geographic subgroups at greatest risk of obesity to target prevention and treatment programs.
- ◆ Create awareness among school and health personnel, community members, and policy makers of the extent of obesity among Fairfax County youth.
- ◆ Provide an impetus to improve policies, practices, and services to prevent and treat obesity among youth.
- ◆ Monitor the effects of school and community based physical activity and nutrition programs and policies.
- ◆ Monitor progress toward achieving health objectives related to childhood obesity in the community.

The Health Department and FCPS plan to continue collecting the height and weight of children at kindergarten entry and at select points during their time in school (i.e., 3rd, 7th and 10th grades). The surveillance of BMI provides valuable information about the trends in weight status over time among school aged children in Fairfax. This data can be used to plan, develop, and evaluate



obesity prevention and education programs within the school and community setting, and ultimately inform future programmatic priorities in our community. For the full report go to: <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd/schoolhealth/pdfs/bmi-final-report-2015.pdf>

Inside This Edition:

- Community Health Dashboard
- Preventing Dating Violence Among Teens
- Helping Families Access Basic Needs
- Messaging Tools: Crisislink Textline
- Youth Survey Spotlight
- Building a Collective Impact Approach

New Community Health Dashboard Provides Access to Key Data

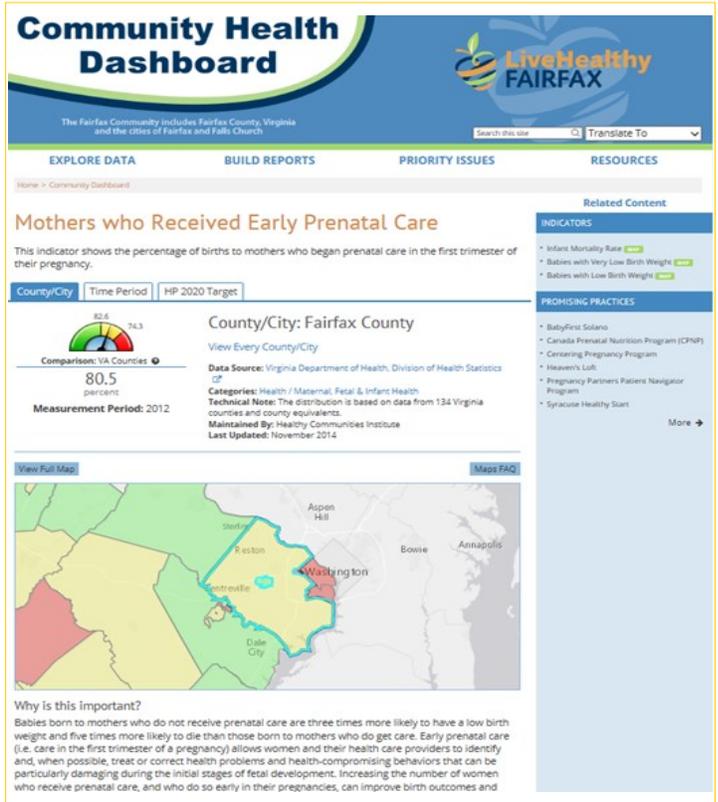
Victoria Kairys, Prevention Data & Evaluation Manager, NCS

Ever have problems finding the data you need? Many of us face that problem. We hear about existing data all the time, yet we rarely know where to find what we are looking for when we need it. To begin to address this problem, the Fairfax County Health Department launched the **Community Health Dashboard** — a web-based data resource center for the Fairfax community—with the intent to help everyone, from community members to policy makers, find and access data about factors that impact the health and well-being of the Fairfax community.

This site enables *anybody* to explore existing population data in a way that is easy-to-understand. The Dashboard includes data specific to Fairfax County and the cities of Fairfax and Falls Church. With the Dashboard, you can do the following:

- ◆ Access social, health and demographic data by topic or geographic location within the Fairfax Health District;
- ◆ Find data broken down by age, gender, and race/ethnicity, where available;
- ◆ View multiple health indicators at once, or a single indicator across multiple locations, including by zip code, county or census tract;
- ◆ Compare county indicators to the national targets identified in Healthy People 2020;
- ◆ Build customized reports on health topics of interest; and
- ◆ Find links to other existing local data resources.

But the Community Health Dashboard does not only track data for health outcomes.



In addition, you will find indicators for social determinants of health, including measure of economy, education, environment, government and politics, public safety, social environment, and transportation.

To explore the Community Health Dashboard, please visit www.livehealthyfairfax.org.

Research Highlight: Preventing Dating Violence Among Teens

In a review of 61 intimate partner violence and sexual violence prevention interventions, the authors identified those with the greatest evidence of success and found promising practices in multiple settings. They highlighted three promising approaches. “First, school-based dating violence interventions show considerable success.” Second, community-based programs can be especially successful when they focus on developing equitable attitudes among boys and girls.

And third, parenting interventions may work to prevent dating violence by addressing child maltreatment, a significant risk factor for dating violence. The article highlights key risk and protective factors and priorities for future research.

Lundgren, R., et al. *Addressing intimate partner Violence and Sexual Violence Among Adolescents: Emerging Evidence of Effectiveness*. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. January 2015. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2014.08.012>.

Things You Should Know About: Helping Families Access Basic Needs

Coordinated Services Planning (CSP), a service of Fairfax County Neighborhood & Community Services, provides information, referral, linkage, and advocacy to public and private human services available to Fairfax County residents. Through partnerships with community-based organizations and other Fairfax County agencies, CSP assists callers with services such as *basic needs* (e.g., emergency food and shelter), financial

assistance (e.g., rent assistance and utility payments), health care, employment and education, recreation, and general information and referrals to other services and programs. CSP is available Monday through Friday from 8am to 4:30pm in multiple languages. Access CSP by calling 703-222-0880, TTY 711. Visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/csp for more information.

Messaging Tools

Every issue, we will feature messaging that you can use to share prevention resources available in Fairfax County. Feel free to, without attribution, use these messages in your outreach efforts.

This Month's Resource: PRS CrisisLink's Textline *Laura Mayer, PRS CrisisLink Program Director*

Newsletter Article

PRS CrisisLink has served northern Virginia through crisis hotlines for over 45 years. In June of 2014, PRS CrisisLink expanded their services to include crisis texting services to Fairfax County Public Schools and the community at large. Since the program launch, crisis workers have handled over 5,400 texting conversations and exchanged over 223,000 text messages with those in crisis. By and large, those under the age of 18 have been the most significant consumers of this service, with 18-24 year olds close behind. More importantly, textline volume indicates that more young people are talking about their crises and suicidal thoughts at much higher rates than they ever have on a traditional hotline call.

What you should know about the textline:

All texts are confidential and free. There is no problem too big or too small for PRS CrisisLink crisis workers. In addition to providing texters with a safe place to talk about their experiences, crisis workers are trained to provide risk assessments, information and referrals and for youth, how to connect with a trusted adult. The goal of the crisis worker is for every person who reaches out to these services to feel more empowered, safe and connected to the community support network. If you or someone you know needs help, please text 703-940-0888 to speak with a crisis worker. For more information about PRS CrisisLink, including information about accessing wallet cards or becoming a volunteer, please visit prsinc.org/crisislink.

Need to talk?

If you or a friend are in crisis send a text to
703-940-0888
any time, 24/7

Confidential. Safe.
Non-judgmental.

GET HELP NOW
It will make a difference.

CRISIS TEXT HOTLINE (24 hours)
703-940-0888
Standard text rates based on your service provider will apply.

CRISIS HOTLINES (24 hours)
PRS CrisisLink Hotline 703-527-4077
Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-784-2433

Facebook Post

If you ever find yourself in a difficult situation or just need to talk, call PRS CrisisLink at (703) 527-4077 or text (703) 940-0888 to speak with one of their highly trained crisis counselors, 24/7. It's free and confidential. #suicideprevention #mentalhealth

Tweets

Those seeking help can text @crisislink at 703-940-0888 for prompt response, counsel and referral #suicideprevention. Our 24/7 suicide prevention text hotline—text “Need help” to 703-940-0888 if you are in crisis. Please RT.

Posters

Four different letter-size posters advertising the textline are available to download, print and post at:

<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/csb/publications/suicide-text-line.htm>



Contact Us:

Prevention Unit
Fairfax County Neighborhood &
Community Services

Email:

ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov

Website:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention

Twitter:

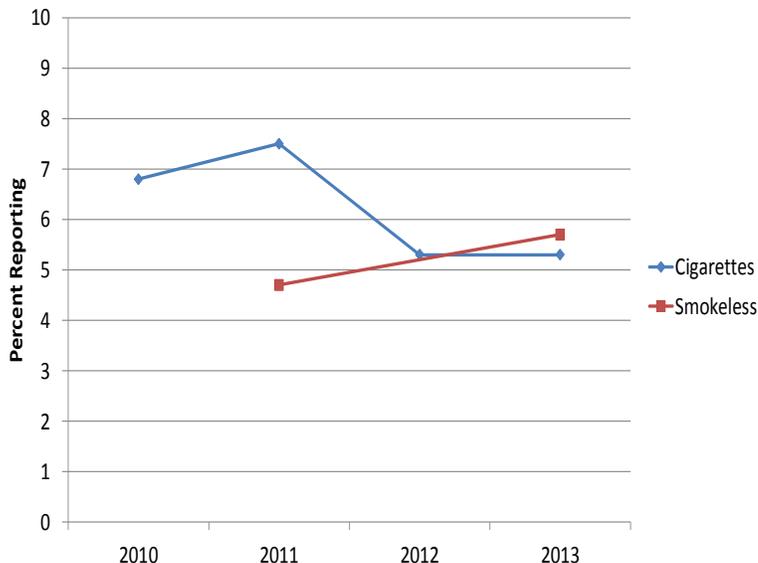
[@ffxyouththrive](https://twitter.com/ffxyouththrive)

Subscribe to An Ounce of Prevention at:

www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs/prevention

Youth Survey Spotlight

**Tobacco Use Trends
(30 Day Use)**



2013 Fairfax County Youth Survey
www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey

While the prevalence of tobacco use in Fairfax County tends to be lower than national rates, the trends seen here mirror national trends. Cigarette use has plummeted over the past decade; fewer than 6% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders report smoking in the past month. However, smokeless tobacco use is on the rise and is now more prevalent than smoking. The 2015 Youth Survey will, for the first time, ask about e-cigarette use, also.

For more data, information, and publications on the Fairfax County Youth Survey, please visit www.fairfaxcounty.gov/youthsurvey.

Building a Collective Impact Approach to Ensure Children and Youth Thrive

Over 150 individuals, representing dozens of organizations, attended April 29 Community Dialogue to help shape a shared agenda for healthy and successful children and youth in Fairfax. (See the [article](#) in our April/May newsletter for background.) Staff continue to meet with organizations, teams, and individuals throughout the community to discuss a common vision and outcomes that all can contribute to. To get engaged, or for more information, email ncs-prevention@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Fairfax County is committed to nondiscrimination on the basis of disability in all county programs, services and activities. Reasonable accommodations will be provided upon request. For more information, call 703-324-4600, TTY 711.

