

A Growing and Costly Issue

- Texans spend approximately \$146 billion annually on health care, or about \$5,924 per capita. More than 75% of health care costs are due to chronic conditions.
- Higher diabetes incidence rates and increased costs in the future are expected due to the growing population of Hispanics/Latinos, who are at greater risk for the disease.
- Obesity prevalence among adults in Texas has risen sharply, from 12% in 1990 to 32% in 2015.

AgriLife Extension's Response

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service delivers a variety of educational programs focusing on health, wellness, and prevention for adults and youth.

- AgriLife Extension health and wellness programs include diabetes education, nutrition and exercise, food safety, child safety seat education, and early cancer detection.
- Using a network of county Extension agents, volunteers, and partnerships, these programs teach participants the skills to effectively reduce the risk of developing diabetes, better manage diabetes, reduce the risk for diabetes complications, prepare nutritious meals, stretch food resources, and safely handle and prepare food.
- Extension educators also work to increase awareness of the importance of cervical and breast cancer screenings for early detection, and they connect women in underserved areas with health clinics to obtain those screenings.
- Through *Healthy South Texas*, the pilot program of *Healthy Texas*, AgriLife Extension is working to reduce the highest impact diseases and their consequences throughout a 27-county region in South Texas. The goal is to focus on prevention by

engaging families and communities, promoting healthy behaviors, encouraging preventive care, and improving disease outcomes.

Economic Impacts

The economic impact of eight AgriLife Extension health and wellness programs was measured in terms of lifetime health care cost savings, avoidance of lost wages, and nutrition-related food cost savings for 2015.

- These programs delivered 9,500 educational events in 2015, resulting in 940,000 adult educational and other contacts, with potential economic benefits estimated at \$180.2 million.
- 53,988 youth participated in health education programs, and another 47,396 participated in safety education programs through the Texas 4-H Youth Development Program.
- Diabetes education programs achieved more than 11,500 educational and other contacts, with potential economic benefits estimated at \$46 million. Physical activity programs attracted more than 7,800 participants, with potential lifetime economic benefits estimated at \$125.8 million.
- Programs promoting nutrition and food resource management reached more than 14,600 participants, with economic benefits estimated at \$5.7 million.
- In addition to saving lives, the economic benefit of the proper use of child safety seats for the 2,166 program participants is estimated at \$2.9 million.
- From a broader perspective, these programs reach communities and individuals lacking access to health and wellness, and child passenger safety seat education; enabling a better quality of life for program participants.