

ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

A GROWING AND COSTLY ISSUE

- Texans spend approximately \$239 billion annually on health care, or about \$8,000 per capita. More than 75 percent of health care costs are due to chronic conditions.
- Higher diabetes incidence rates and rising health care costs are expected due to a growing Hispanic/Latino population, which is at greater risk for the disease.

AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- Healthy South Texas combines the expertise of the Texas A&M University Health Science Center with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's one-of-a-kind, statewide reach to provide families with the knowledge and resources to take control of their health.
- The mission of Healthy South Texas is to reduce the risk of the highest impact diseases and their consequences, including diabetes, asthma, and infectious diseases, throughout a 27-county region in South Texas. This comprehensive, multi-disciplinary team engages families, enhances education, promotes behavior change, and improves the quality of medical care and health outcomes.
- Using a network of county extension agents, volunteers and community partners, Healthy South Texas programs teach participants the skills to effectively reduce the risk of developing diabetes, better manage diabetes, reduce the risk for complications, prepare nutritious meals, stretch food resources, and safely handle and prepare food.
- More than 1,400 people attended health, weight management, and nutrition programs in 2024 in Healthy South Texas counties.

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- In addition to reaching adult audiences, Healthy South Texas also uses the Learn, Grow, Eat, & GO! youth programs to teach children about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. 1,255 youth participated in the school garden program featuring garden science, food preparation, and vegetable tastings.
- Healthy South Texas programs targeting physical activity through the Walk Across Texas program engaged more than 7,800 adult and youth participants that walked a combined 719,080 miles.
- 26 Healthy South Texas county coalitions have been mobilized with 254 members to create a culture for better health in South Texas. The coalitions help to identify the most critical health needs in their community and assess the best method of addressing those needs.

ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- The economic impact of Healthy South Texas through AgriLife Extension programming in 2024 was measured in terms of the health care cost savings and improved productivity associated with improved health.
- More than 2,200 adults participated in the Walk Across Texas program, resulting in estimated lifetime health care cost savings of \$10.6 million associated with reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.