

Improving Health and Safety through EDUCATION AND PREVENTION



Challenges

- Texans spend approximately \$239 billion annually on health care, or about \$8,000 per capita. More than 80% of health care costs are due to chronic conditions.
- Higher diabetes incidence rates and increased costs are expected in the future due to a variety of factors, including demographic changes and growth in the population of those who are at a higher risk for the disease.
- Obesity prevalence among adults in Texas has risen sharply, from 12% in 1990 to 36% in 2020.

AgriLife Extension Response

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service delivers various educational programs focusing on health, wellness, and disease prevention for adults and youth, including diabetes education, nutrition and exercise, food safety, child safety seat education and early cancer detection.

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. These programs delivered **31,000 educational events** in 2025, resulting in more than **2.2 million** adult educational and other contacts, with economic benefits estimated at **\$217.3 million**.

- **Texas 4-H Youth Development Program** reached **30,100 youth** participants through health and safety education programs. Another **140,000 youth** participated in nutrition and physical activity education programs.
- **Diabetes education programs** reached more than **9,300** educational and other contacts, teaching participants the skills to better manage their diabetes, and to effectively reduce the risk of developing diabetes. Lifetime economic benefits have been estimated at **\$41.3 million**.
- **Nutrition, food resource management, hypertension and programs for older adults** reached more than **7,600 participants**, with economic benefits estimated at **\$6.4 million**.
- **Physical activity** programs attracted **18,400 participants**, with lifetime economic benefits estimated at **\$140.4 million**.
- **Child safety seat programs** save lives. The economic benefit of the proper use of child safety seats for the **2,600 participants** is estimated at **\$5.4 million**.
- The **Healthy South Texas** program engaged more than **22,000 adults and youths** in healthy lifestyle education programs, with lifetime economic benefits estimated at **\$23.8 million**. AgriLife Extension and the Texas A&M Health Science Center are 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.
- Over **23,700 students** across 46 school districts participated in the **Healthy School Recognized Campus strategy** to improve health through nutrition, physical activity, and wellness programs of AgriLife Extension.

Contact

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