

Creating a Healthy Workplace

We Choose Health
Action Institute

September 21, 2012





What is “Activate Quad Cities”?



- Partnership with YMCA and Center for Disease Control to convene community leaders - “Pioneering Healthier Communities”
- Mission – to create a social and physical environment that encourages healthy lifestyles

What is “Activate Quad Cities”?

- Community coalition of government, school, health care, corporate, faith-based and not-for-profit organization
- Current areas of emphasis:
 - complete streets
 - safe routes to school
 - school wellness
 - creating a healthy workplace
 - healthy food access

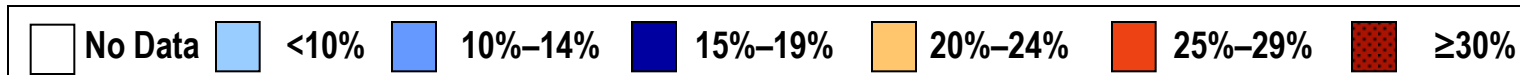
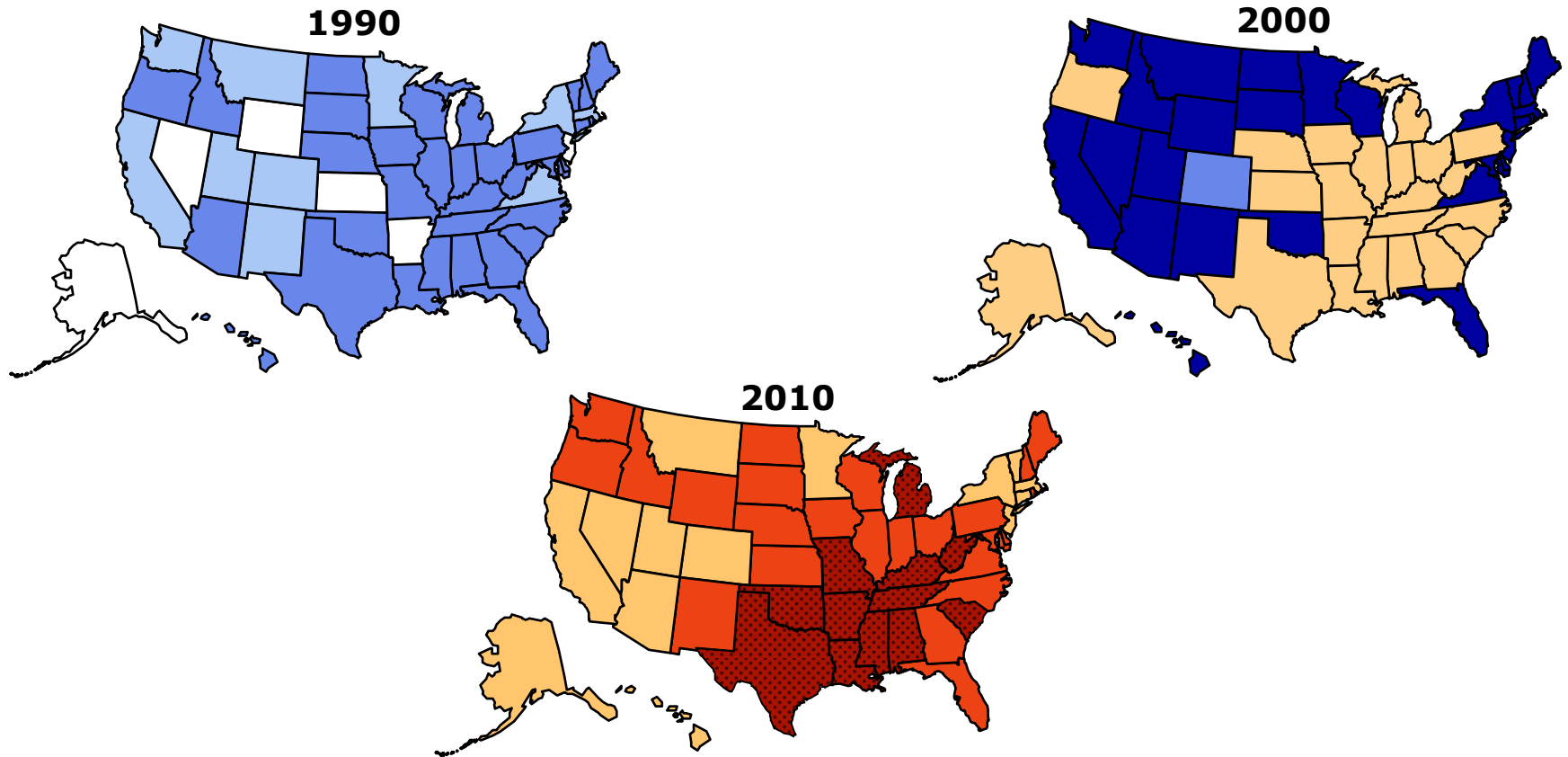


Focus is on policy, systems and environmental change

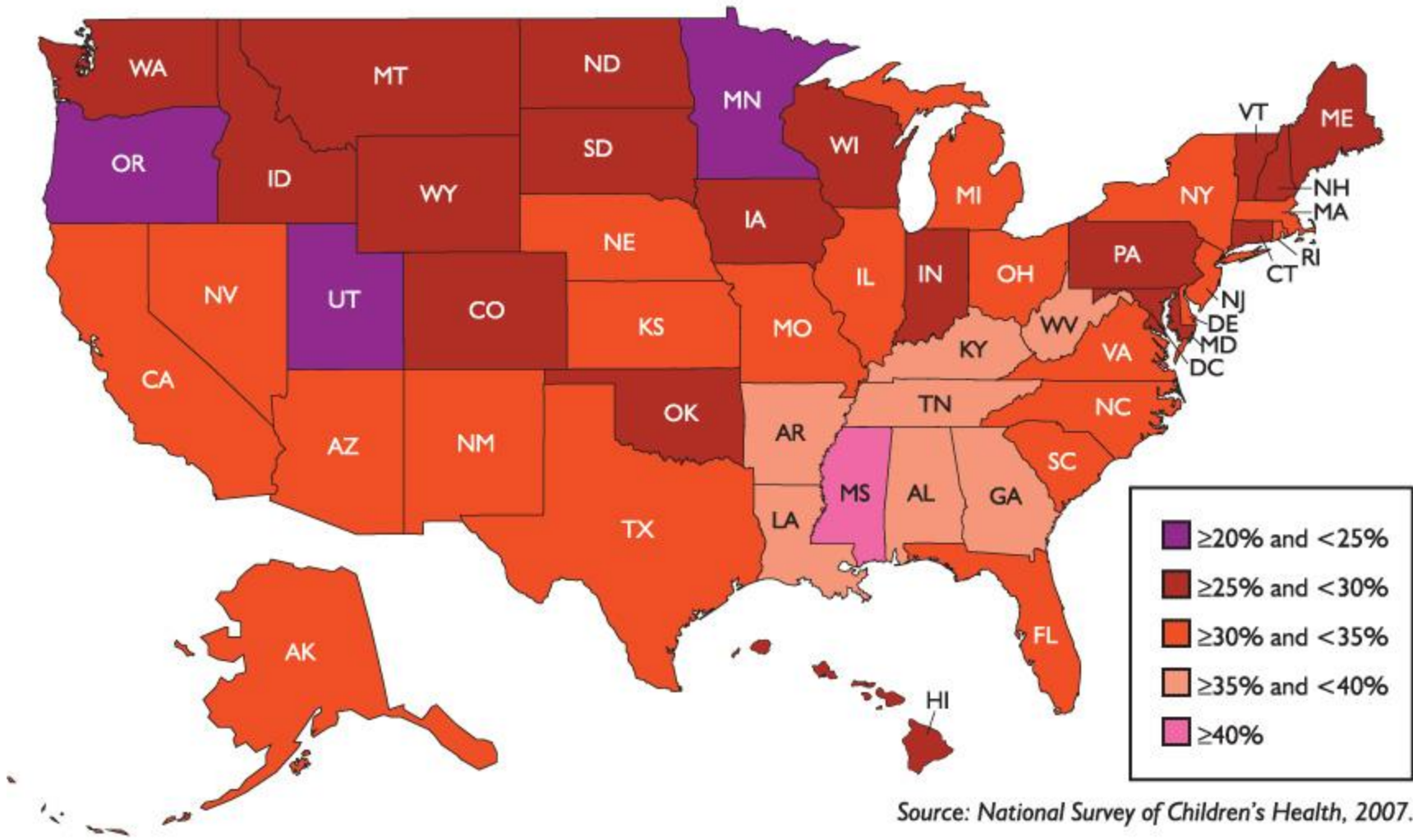
Obesity Trends* Among U.S. Adults

BRFSS, 1990, 2000, 2010

(*BMI ≥ 30 , or about 30 lbs. overweight for 5'4" person)



PROPORTION OF CHILDREN AGES 10-17 CLASSIFIED AS OVERWEIGHT OR OBESE, BY STATE



Source: National Survey of Children's Health, 2007.



America is in a health crisis so severe that it threatens to reverse a centuries-long trend—for the first time in memory, this generation of children could face a lower life expectancy than their parents.

It is **the defining issue of this generation and the next.**

Why create a healthy workplace?



- Obese people spend 42% more on health care costs than healthy-weight people
- Obesity related job absenteeism costs \$4.3 billion per year
- Obese employees had more than \$50,000 in medical claims costs per 100 full time employees / \$7,503 for workers not overweight
- Obesity related health costs are \$147 billion a year – with \$45 billion a year to private employers in medical expenses and work loss.

Why create a healthy workplace?



- Weight discrimination has increased by two-thirds over the past decade – to a rate comparable to racial discrimination
- Overweight subjects were 12 times more likely to report weight-based employment discrimination / obese subjects were 37 times more likely
- Overweight people earn one to six percent less than non-overweight people in comparable positions

How do you create a healthy workplace?



- Employee health risk assessments (HRAs)
- Employee health fair
- Educational opportunities for staff
- Physical activity programs



***All part of a comprehensive program,
but a big piece is missing!***



To create a sustainable change in the health of our workforce, we must create a culture of health in our workplaces through policy and built environment changes

Create Healthy Food Guidelines



- Signifies commitment to employees' wellness
- Big step in changing the culture
- Benefits everyone
- Communicates to greater community your commitment to health
- Must be documented as policy

Create Healthy Vending Guidelines

- Supports employees in “moments of weakness”
- Assists in changing snacking patterns
- Company must be willing to sacrifice income (maybe?)
- Vendors must be held accountable
- Must be documented as policy



Create Guidelines that Promote Physical Activity



- Goes beyond “programs”
- Utilize built environment
- Utilize community partnerships
- Remove barriers
- Document as policy where applicable

Positives to this approach

- Changes the culture...supports behavior change
- Shows commitment to employees – “walking the talk”
- Will provide benefits long after that “program” is gone





Barriers to this approach

- Can be hard to grasp
- Requires ongoing CEO/management commitment
- Change in vending, meeting menus may face resistance – education is key
- Applying the food initiatives to larger settings such as hospital cafeterias

Three Different Options

**CREATING A
HEALTHY WORKPLACE**

**CREATING A
HEALTHY AGENCY
A GUIDE FOR NON-PROFITS**

**CREATING A HEALTHY
FAITH COMMUNITY**

www.activatequadcities.org





"It is unreasonable to expect that people will change their behavior easily when so many forces in the social, cultural and physical environment conspire against such change."

-Institute of Medicine



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