OBESITY

Obesity has important consequences on our nation’s health and economy. It is linked to a number of chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers. It is evident obesity has a major impact in Comanche County, considering the number one leading cause of death in the county is heart disease, which is compounded by a poor diet, physical inactivity, and tobacco use. According to Comanche County’s Health Report (County Profile) released in 2014, the rate of adult obesity was 31.4%, only 15.6% of adults consumed the daily recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and only 31.4% achieved the recommended amount of physical activity. In addition to this, the prevalence of diabetes has risen in Comanche County to 9.3% with the state rate being 10.1%. In 2010, heart disease accounted for $51.7 million in healthcare costs alone with an additional $5 million in hospital discharges related to diabetes. Medical costs for obese individuals were estimated to be $2,741 higher than per capita spending for normal weight individuals in 2005. This economic burden can be expected to increase as the cost of health care increases. 7

Prevalence of Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity has been called “one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century” 21 and with good reason. It is the greatest health threat facing our children as it can harm nearly ever system in a child’s body – heart and lungs, muscles and bones, kidneys and digestive tract, as well as the hormones that control blood sugar and puberty. 22 Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates have tripled in the U.S., and today, the country has some of the highest obesity rates in the world. One out of six children are obese, and one out of three children is overweight. County specific childhood obesity rates are hard to gather however, according to the 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 15.3% Oklahoma adolescents were overweight with 17.3% being obese. The percentage of students who were physically active for a total of at least 60 minutes per day on all seven of the seven days before the survey was 32.2% which was down from the 2013 percentages of 38.5. Of Oklahoma students, 45.6% reported they played video or computer games or used a computer for something that was not school work three or more hours per day on an average school day. 28

Comanche County Community Assets

Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma was developed in 2006 to serve as a coordinating organization in an effort to create a more active and healthy community for children. The fact that the CDC and other leading health experts predict that this generation of children will be the first that will not have the same life expectancy as their parents due to the health implications of obesity is deplorable. This profound statement is the driving force behind the Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma Coalition. Fit Kids is comprised of many, key partners throughout the county to include: local organizations, community groups and private citizens, as well as health professionals, schools, local, county and state governmental agencies.

Comanche County has numerous resources available and actively involved in addressing obesity. To name a few:

- Two Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) Healthy Living grants - designed to prevent cancer and cardiovascular disease by preventing and reducing tobacco use and obesity at the community level.
- Certified Healthy Oklahoma Program
- Fitness in Action Series - community wide resource for running, walking, biking
- Farmers Market
- Fort Sill Healthy Base Initiative
- City of Lawton actively addressing walkability and bikeability through development of comprehensive plans.
- Duty Rowe Fit Kids Fitness Trailway through the Wildlife Refuge (over $12 million dollar project)
- See appendix I for map of assets.