

Increase Activity and Improve Health and Wellness by Utilizing Park and Recreation Amenities and Services

PARK & RECREATION SERVICES ARE THE GATEWAY TO REDUCING THE OBESITY & DIABETES EPIDEMICS

14TH

Texas has the 14th highest adult obesity rate in the nation.

7TH

Texas has the 7th highest obesity rate for youth ages 10 to 17.

Texans today are confronted with several serious health issues – obesity and diabetes to name a few. Texas has the 14th highest adult obesity rate in the nation, and the seventh highest obesity rate for youth ages 10 to 17.

The trend towards a sedentary lifestyle is recognized as a major contributor towards many of Texas's health and social issues. With the increased awareness of these issues, park and recreation professionals, policy makers, health care providers, public safety officers and educators need to better understand the benefits that park and recreation amenities and services may play in addressing these concerns.

By 2030, one in every 10 adults or 552 million people could have diabetes.

Physical inactivity and obesity are factors in over 200,000 premature deaths each year. In addition to the extraordinary toll on our nation's health, obesity also poses a tremendous financial burden, with costs estimated at \$117 billion annually.



The thousands of acres of Texas parks can do more to serve the important purpose of helping people become healthier. With a growing clamor about obesity from doctors, parents, researchers and public health officials, it's time for people to understand that parks and recreation are more than simply pretty places, they are places that can help people to become more active and improve their quality of life.

Texas park and recreation agencies create healthy communities and play a fundamental role in enhancing the physical environments in which we live. Through facilities, outdoor settings, and services provided, they support healthy opportunities for people of all abilities, ages, socio-economic backgrounds, and ethnicities.

Texas park and recreation agencies foster change through collaborative programs and policies that reach a vast population to:

- Help reduce obesity and incidence of chronic disease by providing opportunities to increase rigorous physical activity in a variety of forms; and
- Provide a connection to nature which studies demonstrate relieves stress levels, tightens interpersonal relationships, and improves mental health.

Public park and recreation agencies are leaders in improving the overall health and wellness of the nation. They are essential partners in combating some of the most complicated challenges our country faces – including obesity and physical inactivity. Park and recreation agencies effectively improve health outcomes that ensure a better quality of life for people of all ages and thus should be supported through policies that enable them to continue to expand their efforts in making a positive change in the health and wellness of our nation.

Public parks and recreation services are the gateways to a healthier Texas. They ensure that communities are truly livable and play an important role in the enhancement of opportunities for physical activity and good nutrition for obesity and diabetes prevention among children and adults.

Resources

The National Recreation and Parks Association. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2018, from <https://www.nrpa.org/our-work/Three-Pillars/role-of-parks-and-recreation-on-health-and-wellness/>

State Briefs. (n.d.). Retrieved October 10, 2018, from <https://stateofobesity.org/states/tx/>