



Facts & Statistics

- Approximately 50 million Americans, or nearly 20 percent of the population, have a disability. There are an additional 5.5 million children who have a disability.
- Almost 9 million children and adolescents (ages 6 – 19) are considered overweight or obese. Children and adolescents with disabilities have substantially higher rates of obesity than their non-disabled peers.
- Among children and adolescents, annual hospital costs related to obesity were \$127 million during 1997 – 1999. This is likely to be higher for children and adolescents with disabilities since activity limitations and secondary conditions associated with a disability worsen with obesity.
- Today, 61% of adult Americans are overweight or obese, putting them at increased risk for life-threatening diseases including heart disease and diabetes. The rate of overweight and obesity among people with disabilities is disproportionately higher than in the general population.
- *Healthy People 2010* illustrates that individuals with disabilities engage in significantly less physical activity compared to the general population.
- 100 million to 125 million Americans have a health condition, such as diabetes, heart disease or obesity, which can be improved with a fitness program.
- The annual cost for diseases associated with physical inactivity is \$76 billion.

Key Changes Needed in Communities and States

- Government-subsidized fitness center memberships, such as a family or individual membership to the YMCA, can save millions of dollars in preventable health care conditions such as diabetes and depression.
- Community park districts should be mandated by the government to have universally designed landscapes, playgrounds and equipment that are accessible to people with disabilities.
- With a few minor rule changes and adaptations, school- and community-based recreational sports programs can offer integrated sports for children and adolescents with disabilities. Government requirements for select sports would begin positive progress towards making organized physical fitness available to everybody.