



## Newsletter/Website Article

Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in Illinois — 62% of Illinois adults are overweight or obese. One in five children are obese, the fourth worst rate in the nation.

Given that obesity and overweight are primary determinants of cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases, and diabetes – already leading causes of death in Illinois – the implications of this epidemic for our state’s health and resources are staggering. In Illinois, adult obesity alone adds \$3.4 billion to annual health care costs, including \$1 billion to Medicaid and \$800 million to Medicare.

Last year, the Illinois General Assembly passed the Obesity Prevention Initiative (PA96-0155) that calls for three public hearings to educate policy-makers about the costs of inaction and provide information about programs and policies that would effectively counter worsening health trends for obesity and lack of physical activity.

**YOUR ORGANIZATION** is joining with the Illinois Public Health Institute and other stakeholders to ensure that policy makers hear from a broad spectrum of citizens working on solutions to the obesity epidemic in Illinois.

We encourage our members and all Illinoisans to attend and testify at these hearings to support statewide action on obesity, so that collectively we can unite for a healthier Illinois.

Key messages we hope to you’ll include in your testimony:

1. Illinois has an epidemic of obesity – leading to increasing rates of costly disease and disability.
2. We need more information about the state of obesity in our state – where are the largest prevalence rates; how are disparities in obesity distributed; and we need this information more frequently.
3. Local, collaborative initiatives exist and are demonstrating how to make an impact on the problem, but inadequate funding means they are limited in scope, with limited capacity for holistic evaluation.

4. A state-level response is needed. Development of coordinated systems, changes in policy and investment on the scale of the problem must be undertaken.

Hearing 1: Friday, February 26, 2010

1 p.m. – 4 p.m.

Michael A. Bilandic Building  
160 N. LaSalle, Room C-500  
Chicago, IL

Hearing 2: Monday, March 8, 2010

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Illinois Dept. of Agriculture  
801 Sangamon Ave. Gate 11, Auditorium  
Springfield, IL

Hearing 3: Monday, March 15, 2010

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Carbondale City Hall/Civic Center  
200 South Illinois Ave., Room 108  
Carbondale, IL

You can also submit written testimony to: [DPH.MAILUS@illinois.gov](mailto:DPH.MAILUS@illinois.gov). The deadline for submission is March 15, 2010.

For more information and to receive direct updates on future activities contact the Illinois Public Health Institute at [www.iphionline.org](http://www.iphionline.org) or contact Amber Broughton at [amber.broughton@iphionline.org](mailto:amber.broughton@iphionline.org) or 312-850-4744.