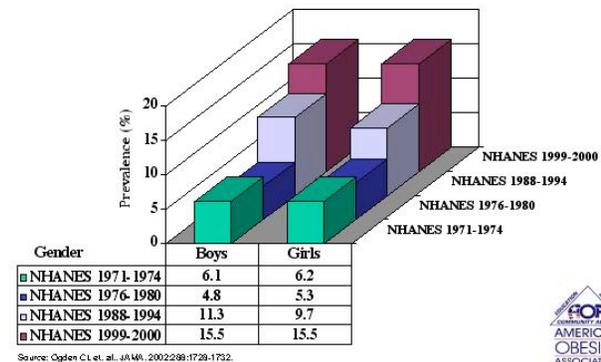# Obesity Epidemic Trends

- Obesity prevalence has nearly quadrupled in boys and girls (age 6-11) and doubled in adolescents (age 12-19) over the last 25 years (American Obesity Association)

- Trends show diagnosis of weight related disease occurring at younger and younger ages, which will likely lead to increased health care and other costs over larger portions of the lifecycle (Minnesota Task Force on Childhood Obesity)

- The overall financial burden of obesity in Minnesota was $1.3 billion in 2004 (Obesity Research, 2004)

Obesity Prevalence Trend (1971 to 2000) for U.S. Adolescents (Aged 12 to 19)

Gender	Boys	Girls
NHANES 1971-1974	6.1	6.2
NHANES 1976-1980	4.8	5.3
NHANES 1988-1994	11.3	9.7
NHANES 1999-2000	15.5	15.5

Source: Ogden CL et. al., JAMA. 2002:288:1728-1732.

Safe Routes to School Program

- In the 1960's, more than sixty percent of children walked or rose their bikes to school. Today that figure is closer to 10% (America Bikes)

- Enabling children to walk and bike to school benefits them by:

  -Improving Safety

  -Providing fresh air and exercise

  -Reducing traffic, fuel consumption, and pollution

  -Encouraging healthy lifestyles

Safe Routes to School Program

Safe Routes to School programs include infrastructure improvements, educational initiatives, and encouragement activities to make biking and walking to school a safer and more appealing alternative

These are simple steps to get your own program started:

1. Bring together the right people
2. Hold a kick off meeting and set a vision
3. Gather information and identify issues
4. Identify solution
5. Make a plan
6. Get the plan and people moving
7. Evaluate, adjust and keep moving

Wellness Policy Updates

Reconnect with wellness committee on a regular basis to congratulate successes and see what is not working

- **Why Evaluate?** - Ensures programs are on course, identifies new and changing needs, improves support for and implementation of goals
- **What does success look like?** - Polices implemented, policies changed if it did not or no longer achieves desired outcomes, barriers to success have been identified and overcome

Do not let it sit on the shelf and collect dust! It should always be considered a work in progress!