

# 2013 Texas Health Perception Survey

## Project Overview

Eighty-three Texas legislators were surveyed to identify knowledge and perceptions about obesity prevention and control measures. Legislators from both political parties and legislative chambers responded to the survey. Sixteen legislators provided additional information through interviews administered in-person with the legislator or with an aide speaking on their behalf.

## Legislators' knowledge and opinions about health

- The most important factors in determining which health issues to support were: (1) constituents' needs or opinions, (2) scientific research, and (3) data on the health impact in the legislator's local area.
- Most Texas legislators agree with the following statements:
  - "Health occurs where we live, pray, play, work and attend school."*
  - "Much can be done to lower the incidence of childhood obesity."*
  - "Schools can have an effect on childhood obesity."*
- In fighting the obesity problem in Texas, the largest role should be played by: (1) parents and families, (2) individuals, (3) health care providers, and (4) communities.

"Kids need to get outside. It's important to get kids started making healthy choices."

## Legislators' perceptions of obesity prevention and control measures

- The following obesity prevention and control measures showed high levels of support from legislators:
  1. Coordinated School Health programs that increase physical activity and nutrition;
  2. Health education in high schools; and,
  3. Increased access to healthier food, specifically fruits and vegetables.
- Legislators showed high levels of support for the following standards or practices:
  1. Healthier school lunches;
  2. More physical activity in schools; and,
  3. Educating parents about childhood obesity and healthier eating habits for children.

"But how big of a role should we have in all (policies)? And what can we be responsible for in the long term, because we can't look at funding something for 1-2 years; it has to be funding for half a decade at least in order to see results."

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### GRANT PARTNERS:

Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living  
The University of Texas School of Public Health  
Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Rural Public Health

### ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

Texas Medical Association  
Texas Hospital Association  
Texas Health Institute  
American Heart Association

*Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation*

For more information, visit [WWW.TCOPPE.ORG](http://WWW.TCOPPE.ORG)  
Contact: Heather Atteberry, MPH  
[Heather.N.Atteberry@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Heather.N.Atteberry@uth.tmc.edu)