

# Family Wellness

## Summary of Significant Trends:

Because of the unarguable fact that individuals and families face unprecedented amounts of change and uncertainty on a daily basis, along with the demands of life's many roles, there is increasing concern about quality-of-life and overall health issues.

While it is difficult to quantify stress levels beyond an individual's perception of his/her stress, a plethora of research related to the impact of stress on the human system indicates direct correlations to physical, emotional, mental, social, and even spiritual well-being.

Nationally, it is becoming common knowledge that our society is grossly over-nourished and under-active. Over 50 percent of adult Americans are either overweight or obese, placing them at a much higher risk for serious health problems that costs the taxpayers billions of dollars per year to treat. And though New Year's resolutions abound with notions of "getting into shape", most of those resolutions are abandoned by the first week in February. Technological conveniences contribute to higher and higher levels of inactivity, as well. Part of the underlying causes of these trends are closely connected to other aspects of a wellness lifestyle.

Some key indicators related to quality of life and well-being in North Carolina were reported in the 2001 *Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System* survey interviews of over 6,205 persons across the state. For example, the obesity rate among adults increased to 23% in 2001 from

22% in 2000. Body Mass Index Groupings in 2001 showed 2.1% were underweight, 39.1% in recommended range, 35.9% were overweight, and 22.9% were obese. In response to questions related to physical activity, the BRFSS study showed that Moderate Physical Activity (defined as moderate physical activity for 30 or more minutes per day, five or more days per week or vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes per day, three or more days per week) was engaged in by 42.4% of the respondents, while 57.6% represented a relatively sedentary lifestyle. 20.4% said they engaged in Vigorous Physical Activity (defined as vigorous physical activity for 20 or more minutes per day, three or more days per week) and 79.6% responded No to Vigorous Physical Activity (defined as no vigorous physical activity or less than 20 minutes per day, or less than three days per week).

Other pertinent questions related to life quality in the survey yielded the following:

1. 7+ Days in Past 30 Days of Not Good Physical Health = 14.6%
2. 7+ Days in Past 30 Days of Not Good Mental Health = 12.2%
3. 7+ Days in Past 30 Days When Pain Prevented Activities = 12.6%
4. 7+ Days in Past 30 Days When Worried or Anxious = 17.6%
5. 7+ Days in Past 30 days When Depressed = 11.7%
6. 7+ Days in Past 30 Days When Not Enough Sleep = 36.2%

## Relevance of Trends to County Programs:

Wellness is a descriptive term which implies an optimum level of quality living for individuals and families. The concept of wellness encompasses most, if not all, the subject matter areas within the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Because so many of our citizens are experiencing uncertainty and anxiety related to the economy and the climate of change, our communities need information and skill-building strategies to enhance their quality of life. The establishment of a wellness lifestyle would also transcend whatever the immediate "crisis" situation might be to add value to individuals across the entire life span. In addition, millions of tax dollars would be saved by reducing the need for various medical interventions, due to the preventive nature of a wellness approach to health management.

The *Workable Wellness* program is a multidisciplinary curriculum comprised of several learning modules related to a broad spectrum of wellness issues. Targeting work-sites, employees across the state will learn principles and acquire skills that will impact their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as well as enhance their relationships at home and at work. Family and Consumer Science County Agents will serve as facilitators for implementing the program in their respective communities.

## Sources of Supporting Data:

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System  
<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/about/programs/brfss/index.html>

2001 BRFSS Topics for North Carolina

<http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/healthstats/brfss/2001/nc/topics.html#e>

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System  
<http://www.cdc.gov/brfss/index.htm>

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