

## Child and Maternal Health

Uninsured children are less likely to receive medical care for childhood illnesses that can cause excessive school absences.

Access to consistent health care helps ensure that children are healthy and better prepared to learn.

Good prenatal care for mothers enhances infant brain development, impacting future learning ability.

- 1 out of 5 children in Oklahoma has no health insurance.
- 63% of the uninsured in Oklahoma live in families where at least one person is working full-time.
- Two of every five Oklahoma babies are born to mothers who failed to receive the recommended level of prenatal care.
- Oklahoma has only 20 community health centers compared to 54 in Arkansas and 115 in New Mexico.

### What can elected officials do?

- ★ Expand the number of community health centers in Oklahoma. Centers are created primarily with federal funds and require minimal matching funds from the state.
- ★ Continue to fund Medicaid at the current eligibility and benefit levels.

## Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Early school failure, early behavioral problems, family dysfunction and poverty are key predictors of teen pregnancy.

Oklahoma's high teen birth rates reduce the number of youth who complete high school or continue their education after high school.

Teen parents commonly have problems with school work and absenteeism, and their children often have early learning problems.

- Oklahoma ranks 8<sup>th</sup> highest (worst) in the nation for teen birth rates to ages 15-19 (2002).
- Oklahoma mothers having their first child at age 17 or younger are at least 10 times more likely **not** to finish high school by age 18, than women who wait until they are 20 or older.
- Two-thirds of the teen births in Oklahoma are to older teens, ages 18-19.
- Only about 40% of teen fathers graduate from high school by age 20, compared to nearly 90% who postpone parenting until after age 20.

### What can elected officials do?

- ★ Support school and community education and pregnancy prevention programs for all ages of teens.
- ★ Support prevention strategies focused on teens at greatest risk, including those in alternative schools, foster care and teen parents.

## Childhood Obesity

In the past two decades, the percentage of children (aged 6-11) who are overweight has more than doubled and rates among adolescents (aged 12-19) have tripled.

Consequences include hypertension, high cholesterol, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, stroke, respiratory problems, depression, social stigma, teasing and bullying.

In Oklahoma, the cost of obesity-attributable medical expenses is \$854 million per year.

- 30% of Oklahoma adolescents are overweight or at risk of being overweight
- 38.8% of students watched three or more hours of TV on an average school day
- Only 15.9% of students ate five or more servings per day of fruits and vegetables
- Only 31.3% of students attended physical education (PE) classes daily in an average week when they were in school

### What can elected officials do?

- ★ Promote Coordinated School Health Programs in all Oklahoma schools
- ★ Support policies that increase physical activity opportunities and improve nutrition and access to healthful food for all Oklahomans

# Afterschool & Out-of-School Time

Quality afterschool programs keep children safe and healthy, improve student achievement and success, help working families, and strengthen businesses and communities.

Out-of school programs contribute to higher test scores, increased physical activity, a reduction in risk-taking behaviors like smoking, alcohol and drug use, and sexual activity, and a reduction in juvenile crime.

- Oklahoma's children spend 80% of their waking hours out-of-school, yet far too few of them have access to quality afterschool programs.
- One out of four (25%) children in Oklahoma (K-12) care for themselves after school without ANY adult supervision.
- It is estimated that only 6% of Oklahoma's children and youth participate in an afterschool program.

## What can elected officials do?

- ★ Support the development of public-private partnerships to ensure that all Oklahoma's children and youth have access to quality out-of-school opportunities.
- ★ Expand resources available for afterschool programs that serve low-income children.

## The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy...

- ☑ Creates awareness
- ☑ Takes action and
- ☑ Changes policy...

on behalf of Oklahoma's youth and children.

Visit [www.oica.org](http://www.oica.org) to download the full *2006 Election Advocacy Tool Kit* and link to other election resources.



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Oklahoma voters report the education and health of children are top priorities in the 2006 elections.

Our state's future economic growth depends upon raising healthy, educated and capable young people.

Here are some quick facts to share with candidates and other voters about key ways Oklahoma can invest in the future... by investing in our children and youth!

