



RWJF News

Childhood Obesity

Created by Brian Chen

Federal

USDA Launches Summer Meal Program



The Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced last week that it had partnered with six states to help improve participation in the summer meals programs, an effort described by Secretary Tom Vilsack as designed “to help close the nutrition gap children face when schools close for the summer.” The six states—Illinois, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, and Texas—were selected due to high levels of food insecurity and/or low program participation.

House Bill Addresses Long-term Prevention Scoring

Reps. Reid Ribble, R-Wis., and Mark Pocan, D-Wis., introduced legislation (H.R. 4444) last week that would require the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to conduct long-term scoring estimates of disease prevention and medical research legislation. The Long-Term Studies of Comprehensive Outcomes and Returns for the Economy (SCORE) Act

would provide funding for CBO to carry out 50-year scoring estimates for such bills, five times the traditional ten-year window. Last year, the Campaign to End Obesity released The Long-Term Returns of Obesity Prevention Programs, a report from economist Alex Brill that uses a lifetime scoring window (75 years) to identify billions of dollars in potential savings that may be attributable to specific obesity-prevention policies.



Reps. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., and Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, introduced a bill last week that would incorporate nutrition education into continuing education programs required of federally employed physicians. The Education and Training (EAT) for Health Act would require the Department of Health and Human Services to write new guidelines for continuing education programs to address the role of nutrition in preventing cancer, diabetes, obesity and cardiovascular disease.

House Bill Would Require Nutrition Education for Federally Employed Physicians

State

South Dakota Board of Education Holds PE Hearings

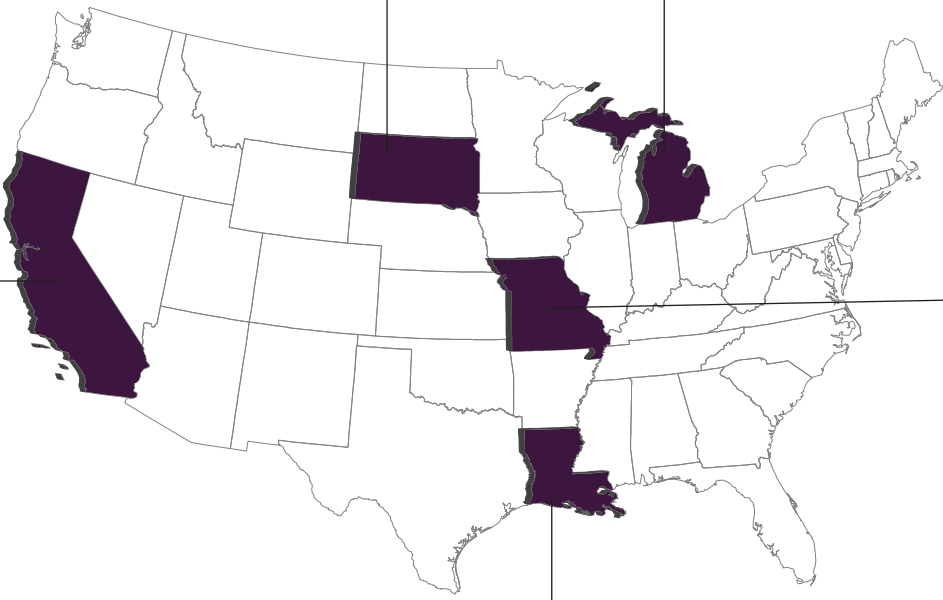
The South Dakota Board of Education held the first in a series of hearings last week on proposed K-12 physical education standards. The updated standards—reviewed for the first time since 2000—were revised to reflect recommendations from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education. According to the state board, decisions regarding specific curriculum and instruction time are made by local school districts.

Michigan Lawmakers Introduce Physical Education Bill

Michigan state representatives introduced legislation last week that would require 90 minutes of physical education and 60 minutes of recess for elementary school students each week. The bill (HB 5196), which has been referred to the House Education Committee, would also require one semester of daily, 45-minute physical education each week for middle school students.

California Senate Committee Advances Sugary Drink Warning Label Bill

The California state Senate Committee on Health passed legislation (SB 1000) last week that would require a warning label on sugar-sweetened beverages. The bill, which now advances to the Senate’s appropriations committee, would require the following label on all beverage containers with added sweeteners that have 75 calories or more per 12 ounces: “State of California Safety Warning: Drinking beverages with added sugar(s) contributes to obesity, diabetes, and tooth decay.”



Menu Labeling Bill Advances in Louisiana

The Louisiana Senate Health and Welfare Committee approved legislation last week that would require chain restaurants with 15 or more locations to post calorie information on menus. The Department of Health and Hospitals would be charged with enforcing the provision, violations of which would be subject to fines between \$250 and \$1000 for each violation.

Missouri Senate Approves Healthy Food Purchase Incentives

A bill to incentivize healthy purchases by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants was approved yesterday by the Missouri Senate. Under the terms of the legislation, SNAP beneficiaries would be reimbursed up to \$10 per week for buying fruits and vegetables at farmers’ markets. The bill would also provide a state and local sales tax exemption for goods purchased at farmers markets.



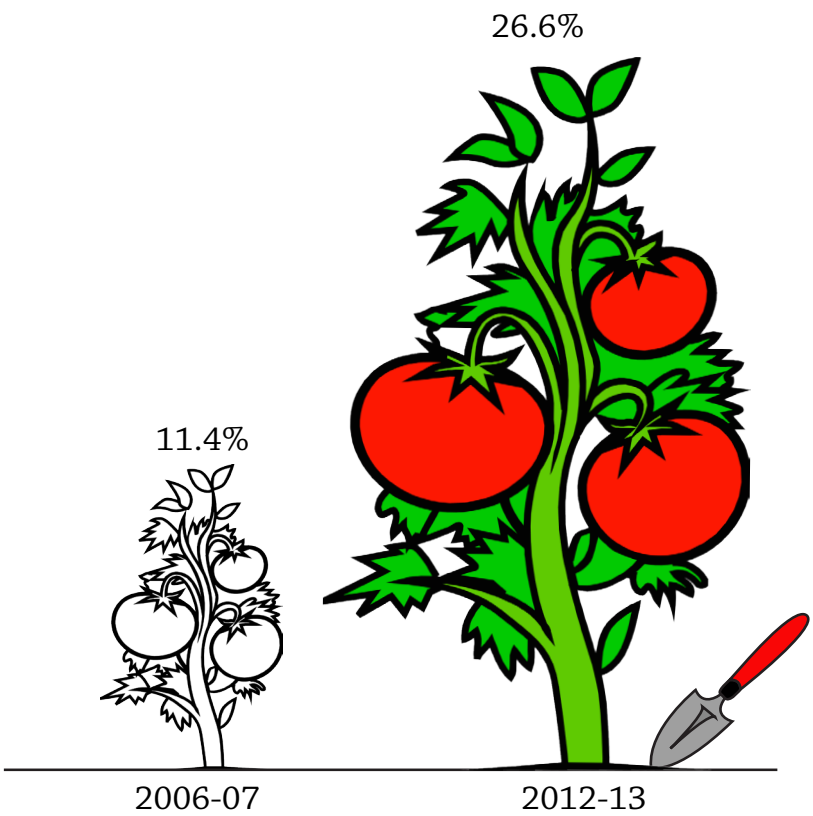
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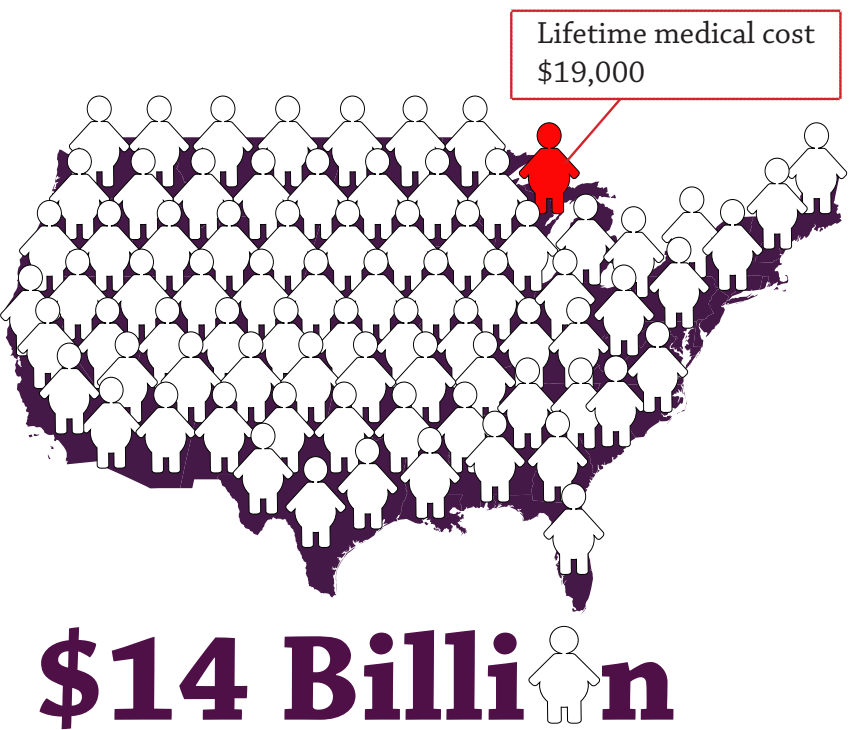
From the Field

School Gardens on the Rise, But Disparities Exist



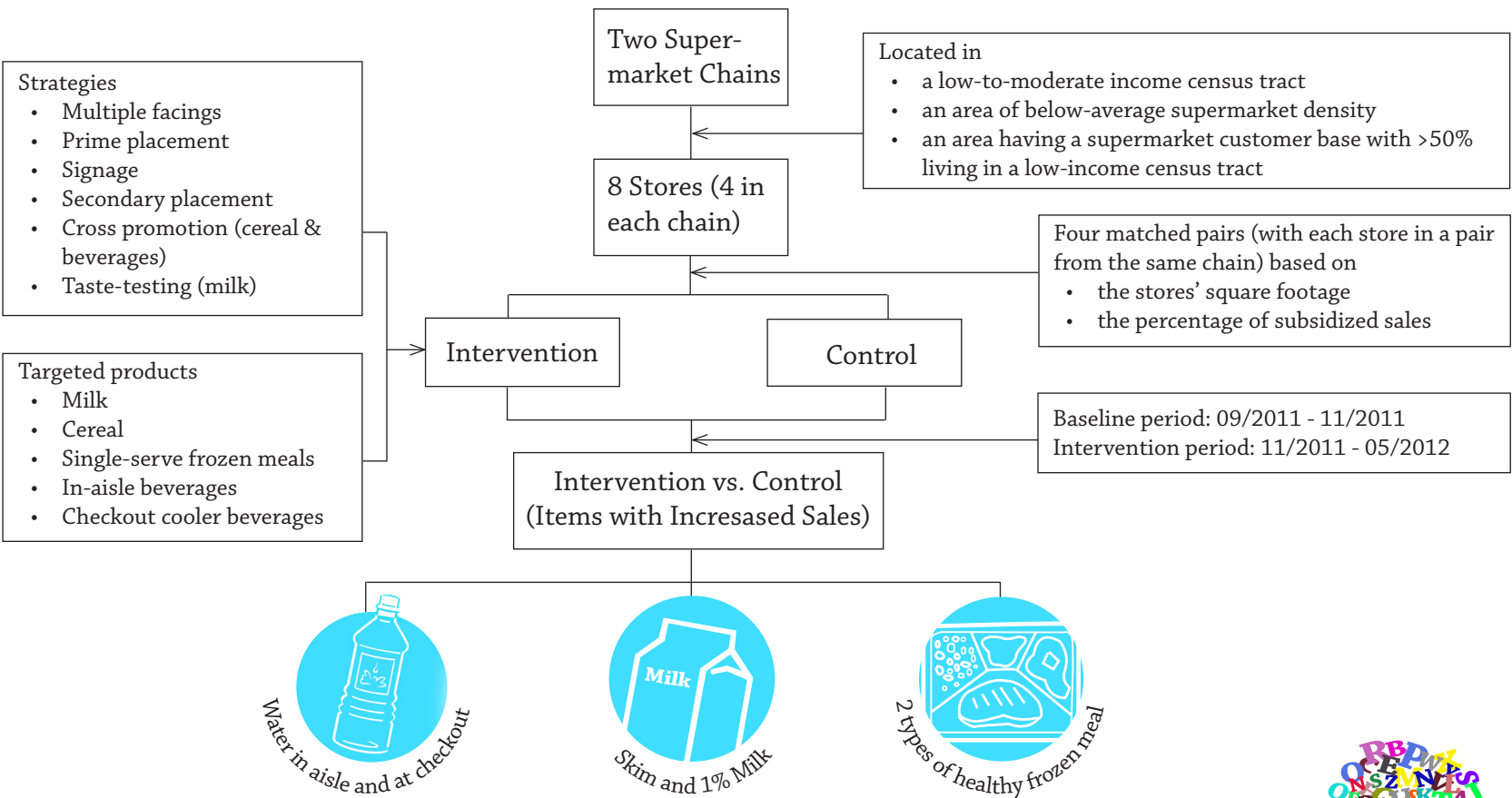
The prevalence of school garden programs at US public elementary schools has more than doubled over the past seven years—from 11.4 percent of elementary schools in 2006-07 to 26.6 percent in 2012-13—according to a research brief from Bridging the Gap. However, study authors note that gardens are less common in schools serving students of predominantly lower socioeconomic status.

Study: Obesity Costs \$19,000 per Child



The lifetime direct medical cost for an obese child is \$19,000, according to an analysis published in Pediatrics. Researchers from Duke University also found that the total lifetime medical costs for obese 10-year olds in the United States amount to \$14 billion. Lead author Eric Finkelstein concluded that “reducing childhood obesity is a public health priority that has substantial health and economic benefits.”

Study Examines Placement Strategies for Healthier Offerings in Grocery Stores



“Straightforward placement strategies can significantly enhance the sales of healthier items in several food and beverage categories” in supermarkets in low-income, ethnically diverse neighborhoods, according to a study published in American Journal of Clinical Nutrition (Foster et al., 2014). Funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, study authors from The Food Trust and other partners found that in-store marketing resulted in significantly greater sales of water and no- and low-fat milk, among other items.

