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Rep. Doris Matsui on New Report Highlighting Obesity Epidemic in California
Reiterates Urgent Need for Health Care Reform and Health Education

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (D-CA) issued the following statement today over a new report released by the California Center for Public Health Advocacy which found that the costs of obesity are further bankrupting California's economy:

“The nation is currently undergoing a historic economic and fiscal crisis which is putting pressure on every part of our infrastructure - our schools, our hospitals, our local and state governments. Thanks to this report, we now know widespread obesity is dramatically adding to the financial weight our state and nation are struggling to carry. The California Center for Public Health Advocacy's study serves as a wakeup call to every cost-conscious policymaker concerned about the well-being of their citizens and their fiscal resources.

“The findings are staggering - the economic cost of being overweight, obese, and physical inactive had climbed to \$41 billion in 2006 in California alone, nearly double the amount reported in 2000. Health care costs associated with overweight and obesity were \$12.8 billion, while health care costs associated with physical inactivity totaled \$7.9 billion. More specifically, current costs are at \$1.7 billion Sacramento County.

“As a bellwether state, what happens in California is a strong indicator of what is happening around our nation. The enormous costs associated with obesity and physical inactivity in California are undoubtedly being similarly felt in every other state, drawing on increasingly

limited treasuries and resources.

“I have been working hard in Congress to make public health and prevention a core element of national health care reform in order to reorient our health system toward keeping people out of the doctor’s office. I am pleased that the draft of the comprehensive health care reform bill currently being considered in Congress incorporates key initiatives I have fought for – initiatives that will restore the vitality of our public health workforce and increase our focus on preventive health care services. Investing in preventive health care is vital to helping Americans access the care they need to stay healthy, reducing their health care costs, and easing the burden on our over-crowded emergency rooms.

“In light of California and the nation’s financial woes and of the clear need for us to reduce health care costs, we need policies that make prevention a top priority and help ensure that our communities support people in making healthy eating and physical activity choices. In order to do so, we must enact and promote transportation policies that include bike lanes and sidewalks when possible, healthy school lunch menus, and physical education curricula that are both sensible and affordable.

“It is my hope that as Americans learn about the important findings of this study, we realize we must invest in the health and well-being of our most precious resource – our people – before we will truly restore the health and well-being of our economy.”

The California Center for Public Health Advocacy is based in Davis, California. Additional details about the study can be found by clicking [here](#).