Safe Routes to School

Background and Goals of SRTS

Oklahoma Kick-off
May 4, 2011

The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

Fewer kids are biking and walking
More parents are driving

1969
48% walked or biked
12% driven

2009
13% walked or biked
44% driven

(U.S. DOT, 2009)

Parents driving

Parents driving their children to school account for up to 25% of morning rush hour traffic.

(Parisi Associates, 2003; Morris, 2001)

The consequences of *this...*

...instead of *this* can be alarming.

Promoting safe walking and bicycling is an ideal strategy to increase physical activity

Safe Routes to School programs

- Make walking and bicycling safe ways to get to school

- Encourage more children to walk and bike to school

History of Safe Routes to School

- Many child pedestrian fatalities in Denmark during the 1970s

- Odense reduced the number of injured school children by 30% - 40%

- Spread to the UK and Canada in the 1990s; Bronx, NY in 1997

Benefits of SRTS programs

- Improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists

- Reduce traffic congestion around schools

- Reduce emissions

- Improve children's health

Other benefits of SRTS programs

- Cost savings for schools (reduce need for "hazard" busing)

- Teach fundamental safety skills

- Benefit local economy

- Strengthen family bonds

- Increase child's sense of freedom and responsibility

- Provide more transportation options for everyone

The Ugly:

Today's barriers to walking and bicycling

How did we get here?

1. School siting issues

2. Individual barriers to walking to school

3. Community issues

1. School siting issues: A generation ago

- Small (average of 127 students)

- Located in community centers

- 48% of kids walked or biked to school

(U.S. EPA, 2003)

School siting issues: Today

- Mega-schools (average 521 students)
- Schools located on 10 to 30+ acres fringe land
- Lowest-cost construction

(National Center for Education Statistics, 2008)

School consolidation has lengthened the trip between home and school

Students living within 1 mile of school:

1969 – 41%
2009 – 31%

(U.S. DOT, 2009)

Safe Routes **training**

It's not just distance

Students living within one mile or less who walk or bike to school:

1969 – 88%

2009 – 38%

(U.S. DOT, 2009)

Safe Routes **training**

2. Individual barriers to walking and bicycling to school

- Long distances   62%

- Traffic danger   30%

- Adverse weather   19%

- Fear of crime danger   12%

(CDC, 2005)

Traffic danger

Community conditions make it hard to walk or bike

Adverse weather

Is this barrier reflective of changed social norms?

Safe Routes **training**

Fear of crime danger

- Range of concerns is broad, often not unique to walking and bicycling to school

- Both reality and perceptions need to be addressed

- SRTS can be a part of a larger, community-wide response

3. Difficult community issues

- Traffic flow problems

- Abandoned buildings

- Illegal behaviors

The Bad:

Unintended consequences of less walking and bicycling

- to the environment
- to our health

1996 Summer Olympic Games banned single occupant cars in downtown Atlanta

Results of the ban

- Morning traffic – ⬇ 23%

- Peak ozone – ⬇ 28%

- Asthma-related events for kids – ⬇ 42%

(Friedman, 2001)

Air quality

Measurably better around schools with more walkers and cyclists

(U.S. EPA, 2003)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 1985

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
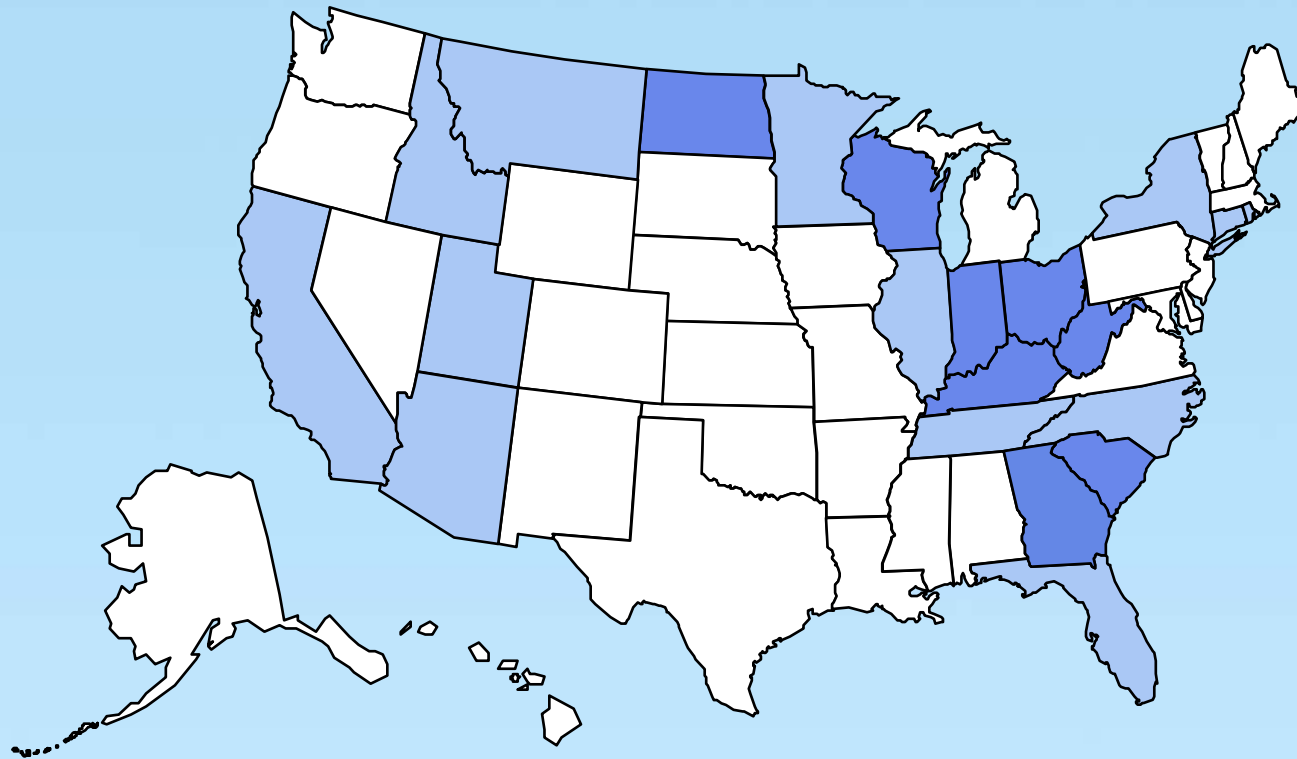
No Data   <10%   10%–14%

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

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Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 1990

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
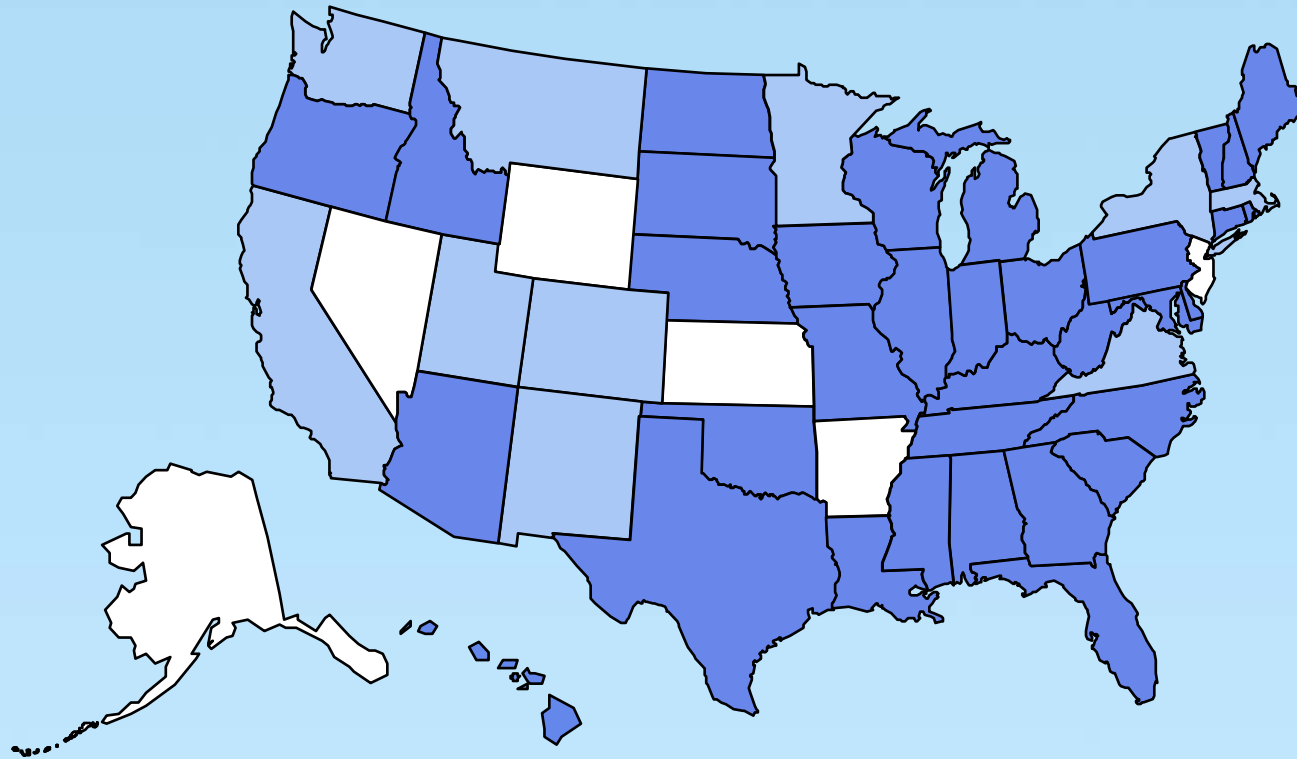
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(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 1995
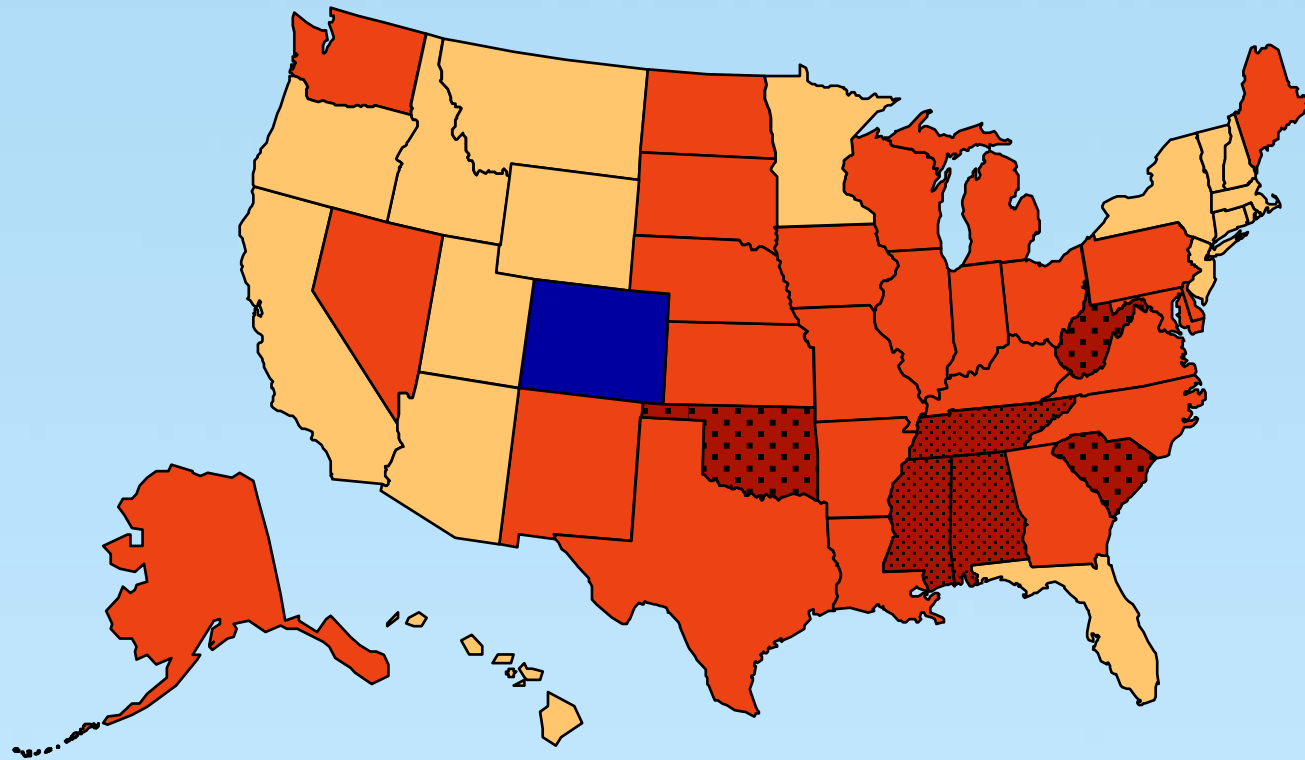
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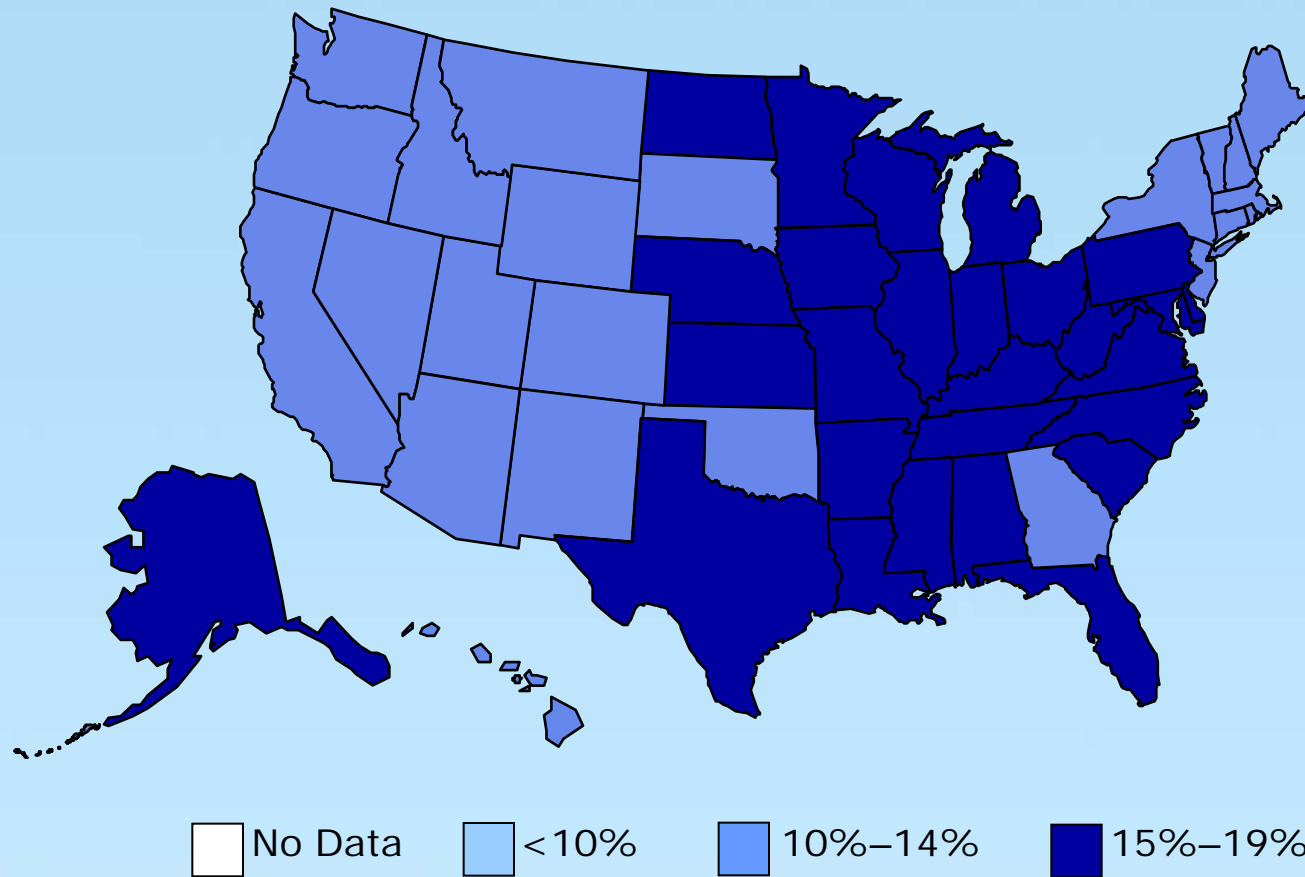
(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2000

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)

	No Data		<10%		10%–14%		15%–19%		≥20

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Safe Routes
training
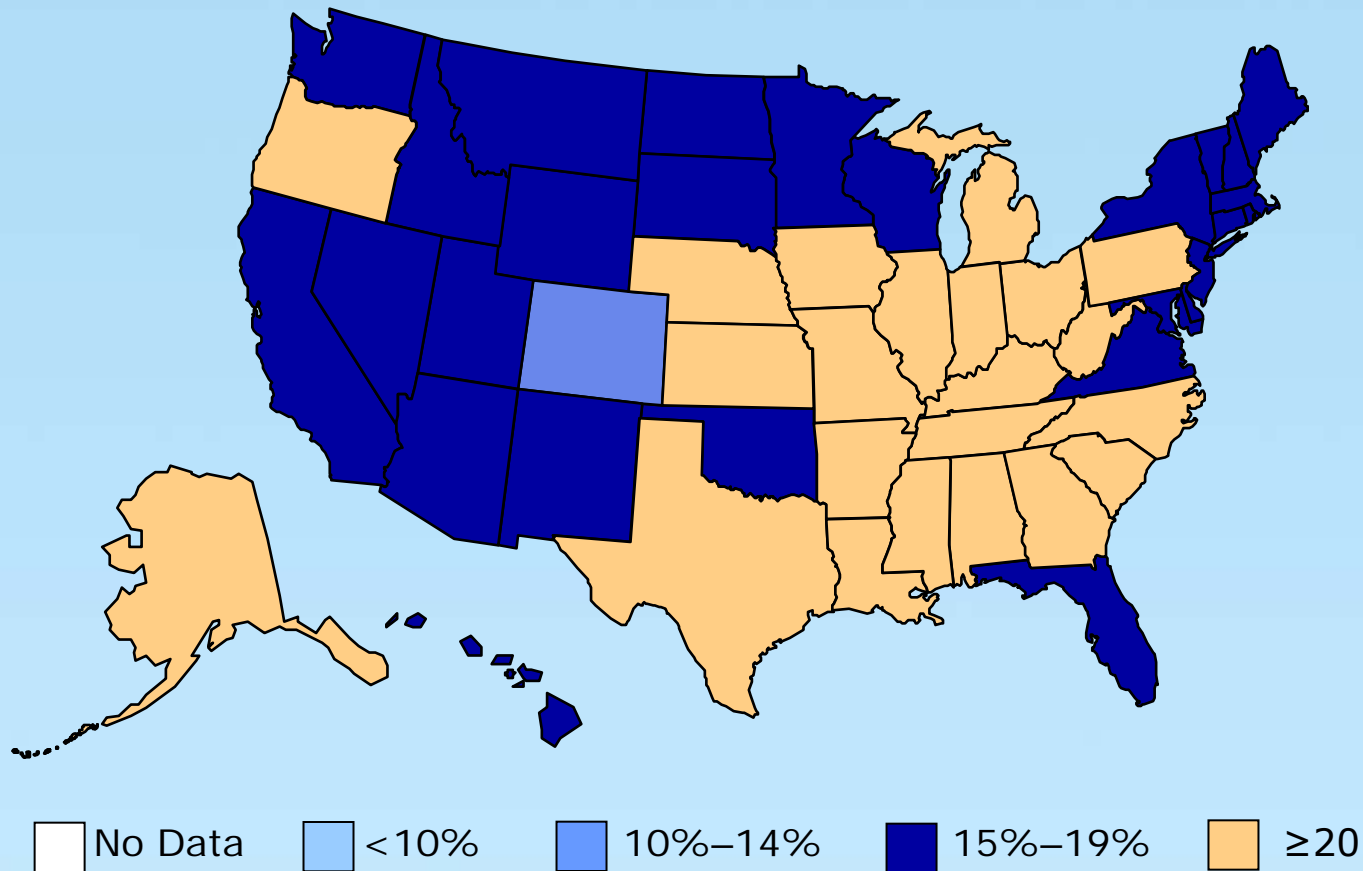
Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2001

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
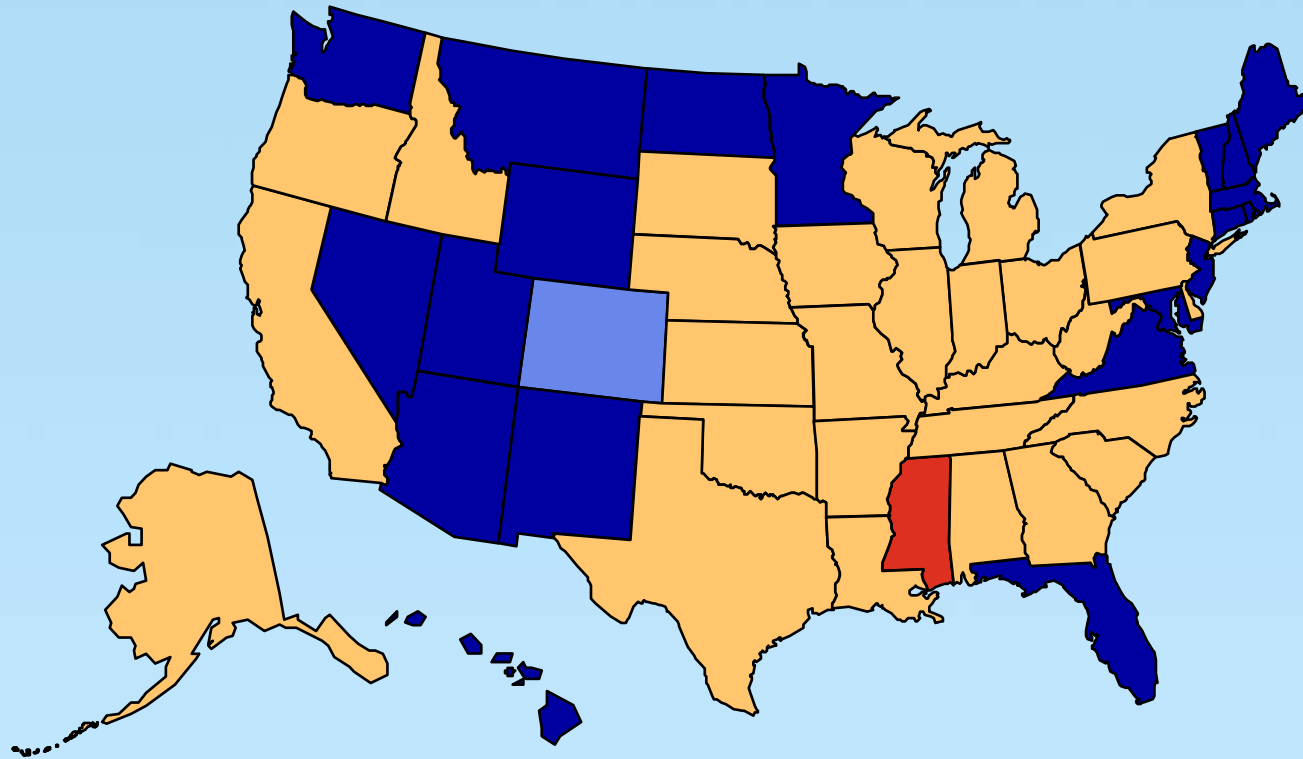
No Data | <10% | 10%–14% | 15%–19% | 20%–24% | ≥25%

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

National Center for Safe Routes to School | www.saferoutesinfo.org

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2002

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4'' woman)

No Data ☐   <10% ☐   10%–14% ☐   15%–19% ☐   20%–24% ☐   ≥25% ☐
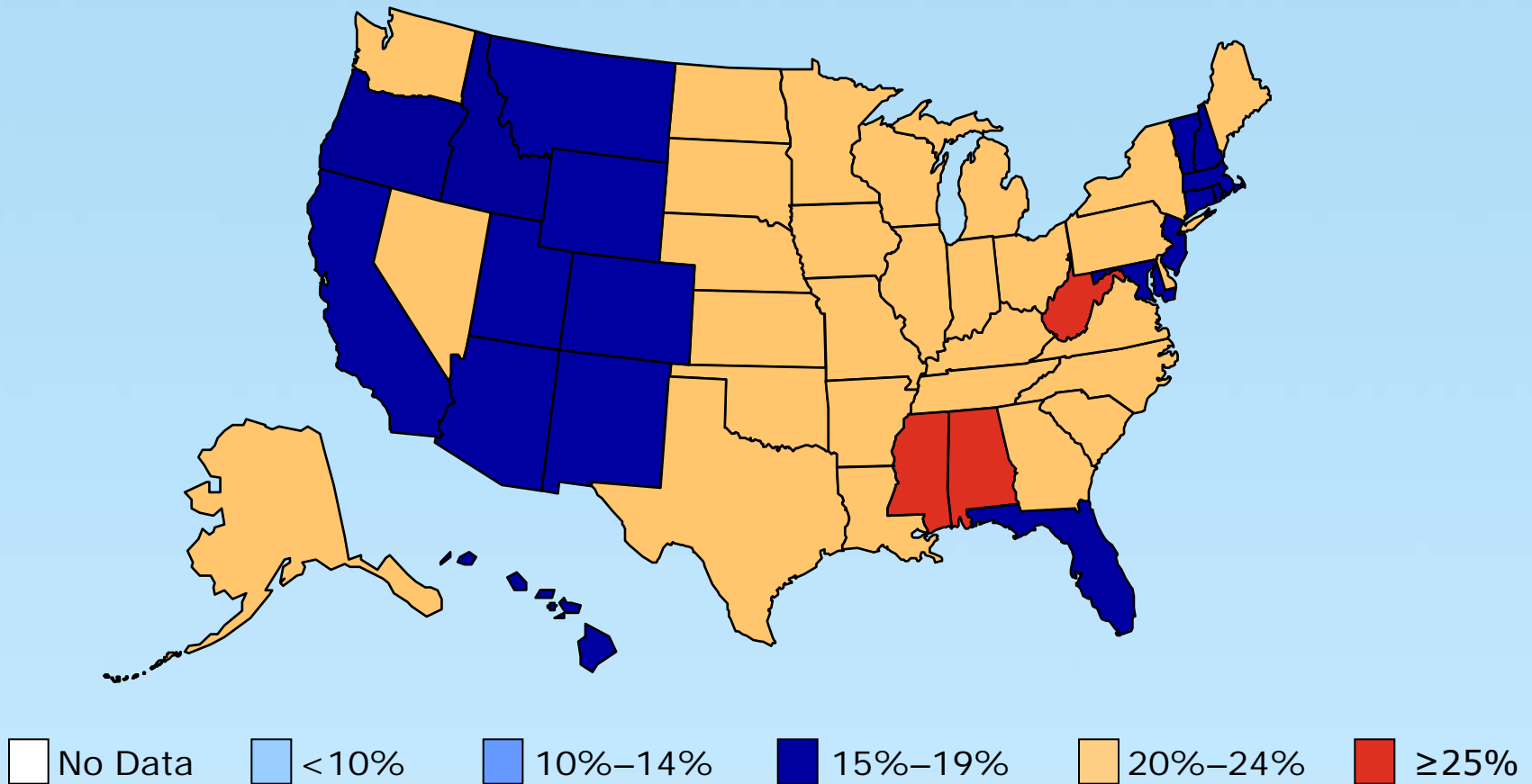
(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2003

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
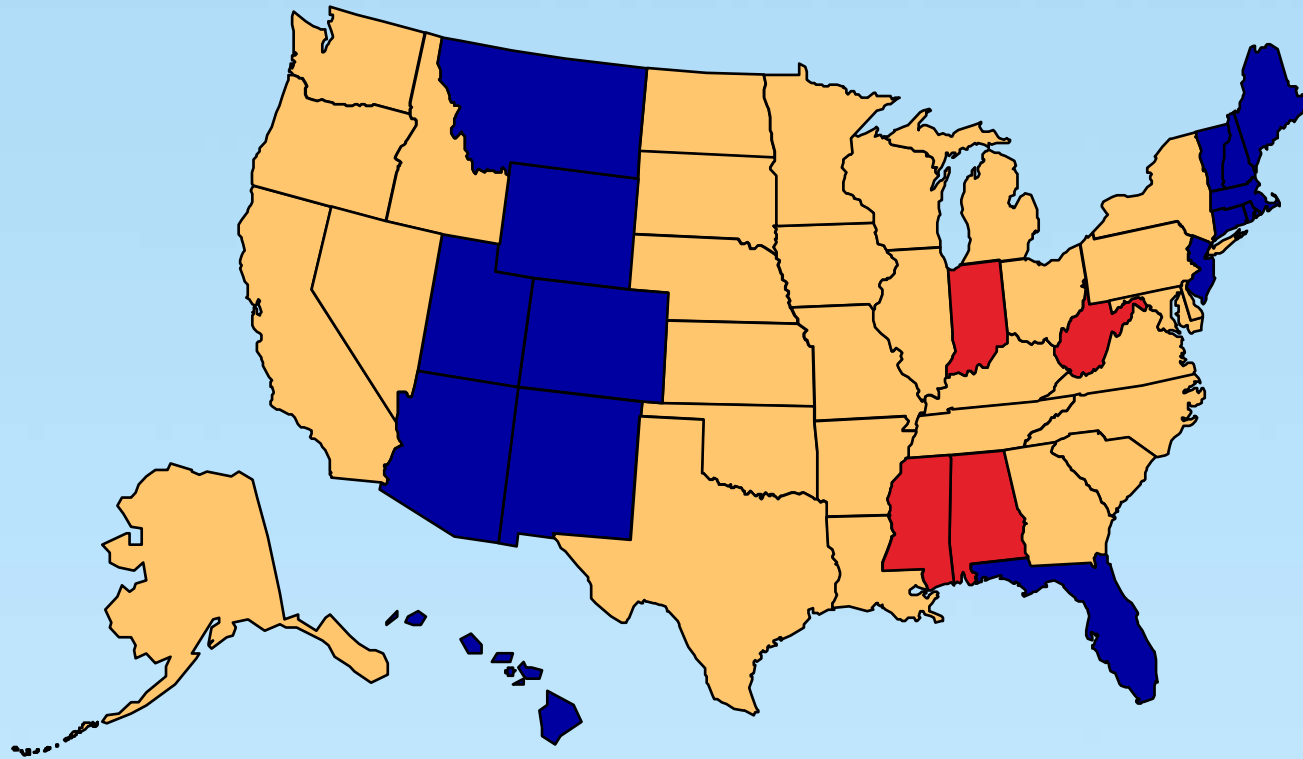
No Data   <10%   10%–14%   15%–19%   20%–24%   ≥25%

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

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Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2004

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
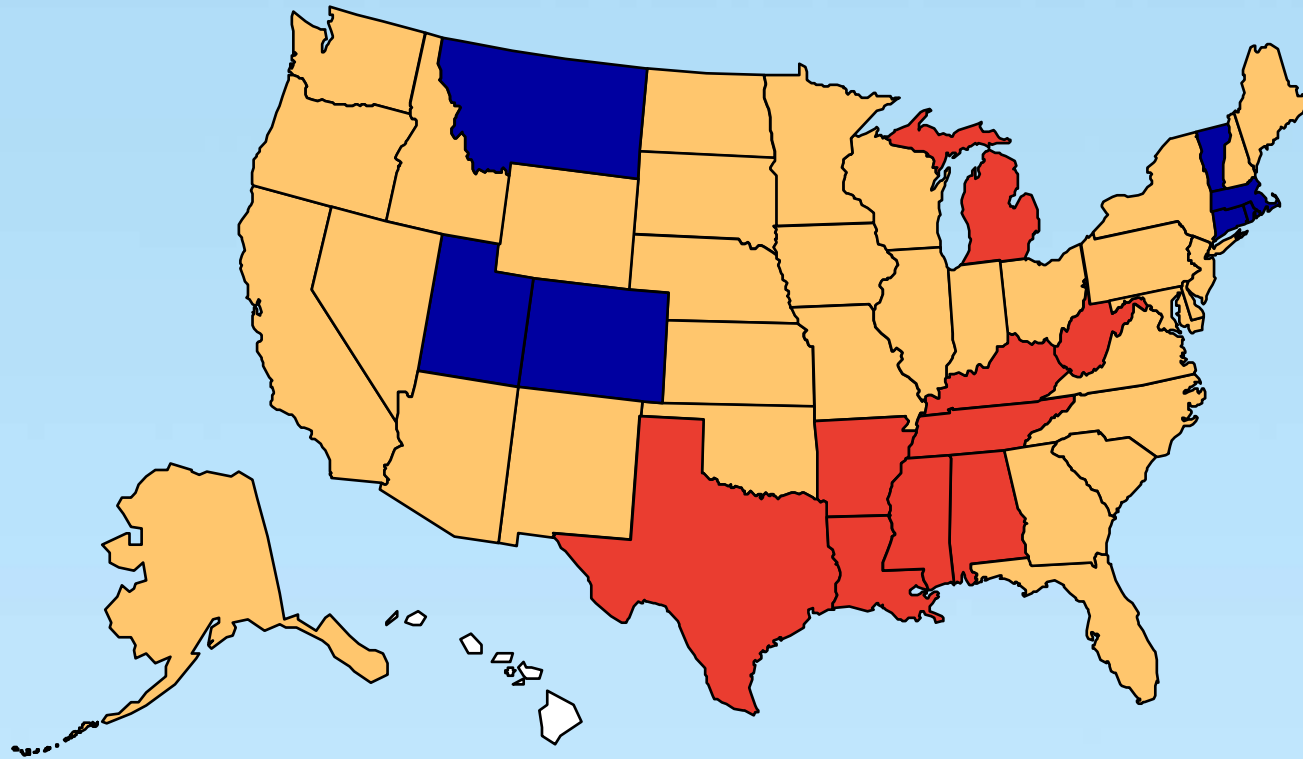
| | No Data | | <10% | | 10%–14% | | 15%–19% | | 20%–24% | | ≥25% |

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Safe Routes training

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2005

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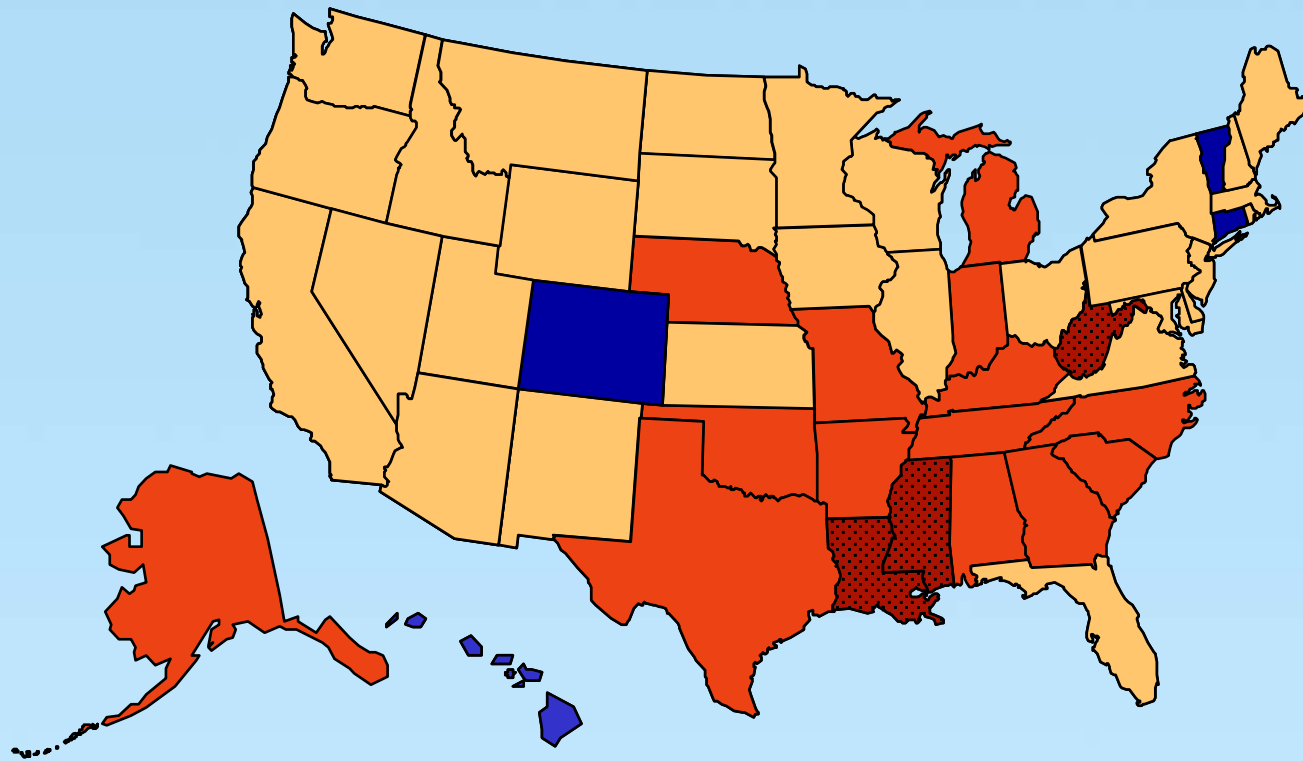
| | < 10% | | 10%–14% | | 15%–19% | | 20%–24% | | 25%–29% | | ≥30% |

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2006

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)
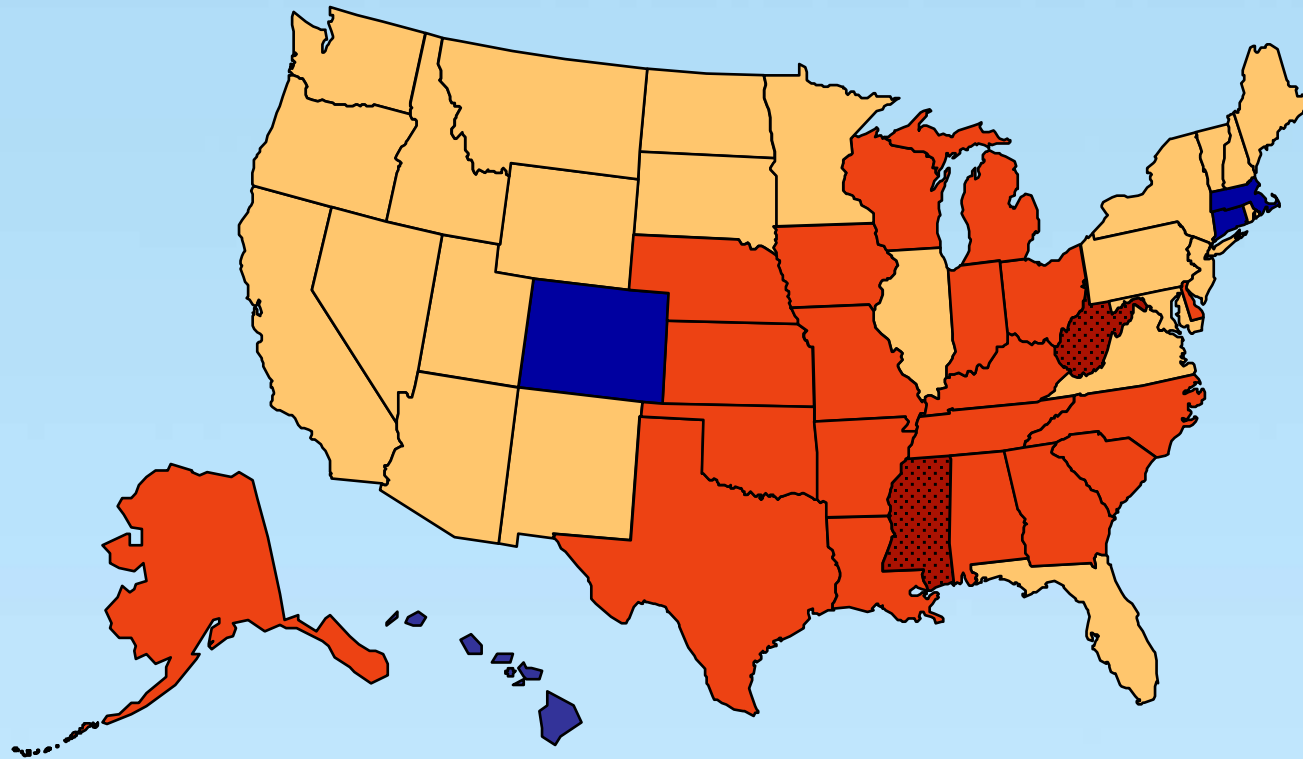
Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2007

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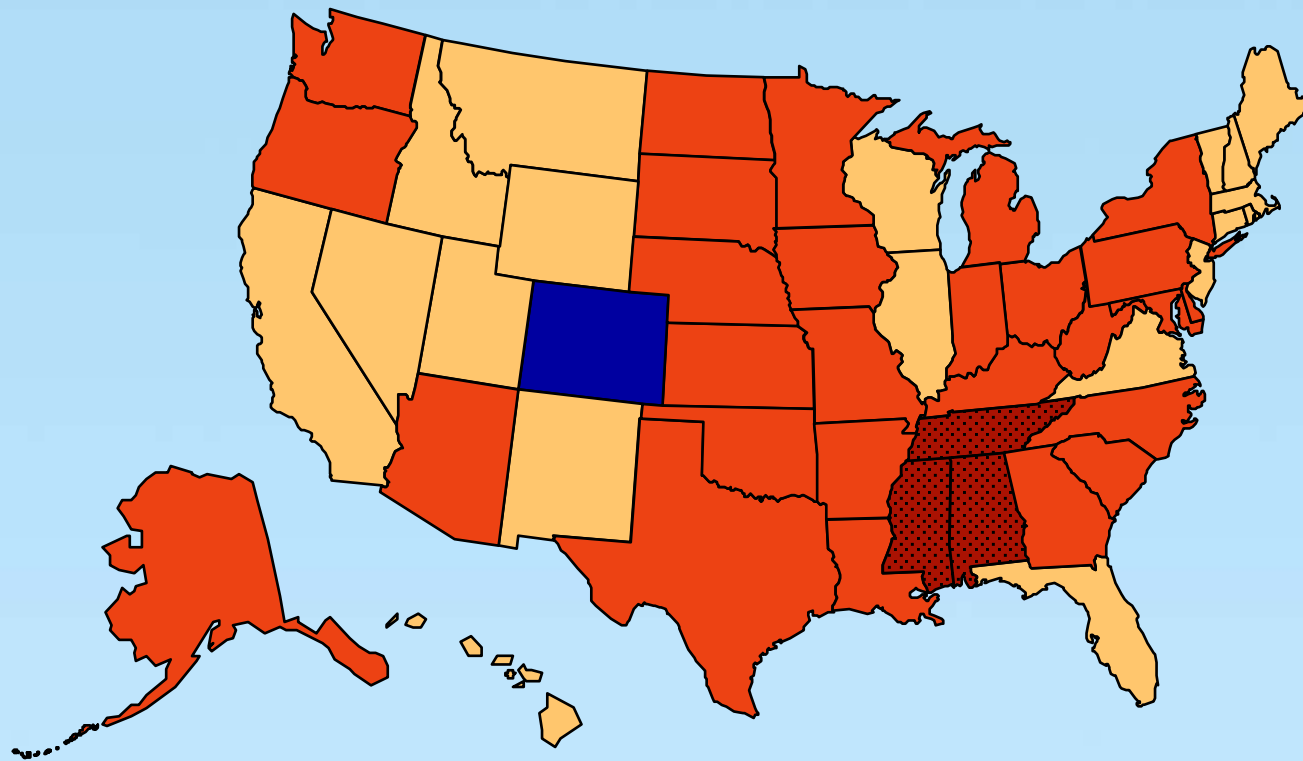
| | < 10% | | 10%–14% | | 15%–19% | | 20%–24% | | 25%–29% | | ≥30% |

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2008

(*BMI ≥30, or ~ 30 lbs overweight for 5' 4" woman)
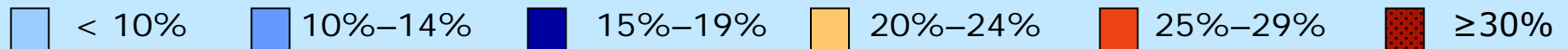
< 10%	10%–14%	15%–19%	20%–24%	25%–29%	≥30%

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

Safe Routes training

Obesity trends among U.S. adults: 2009

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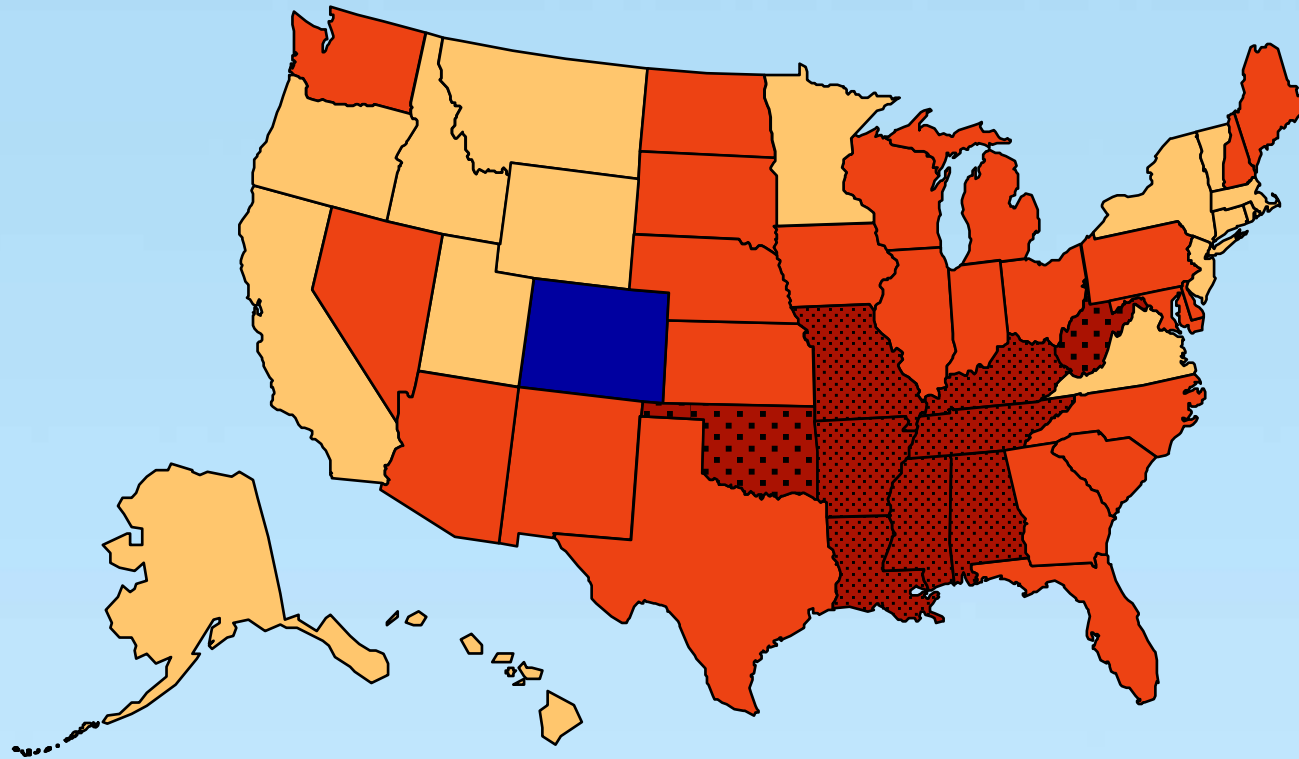
< 10%	10%–14%	15%–19%	20%–24%	25%–29%	≥30%

(Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, CDC, 2010)

U.S. youth obesity rates

Source: National Survey on Children's Health, 2007.
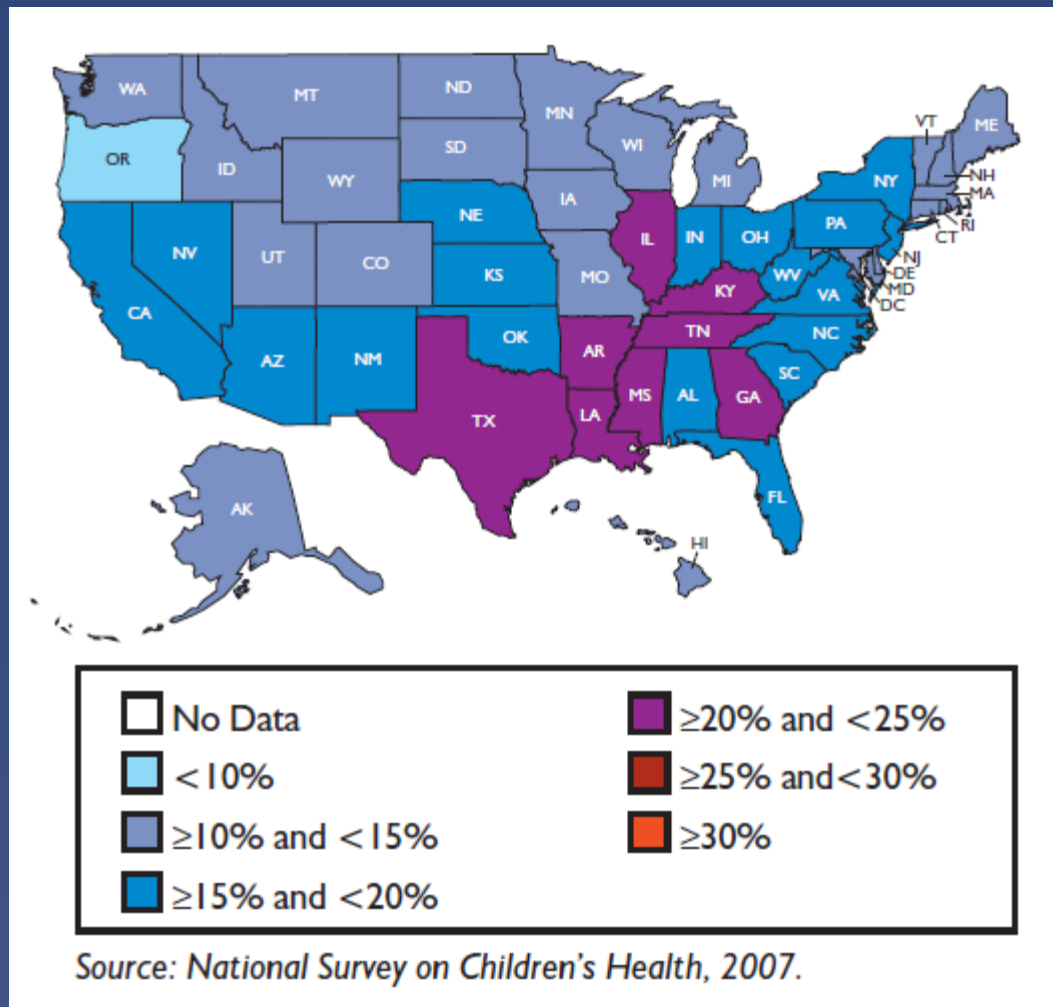
(Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2010)

Overweight children have an increased risk of…

- Type 2 Diabetes

- Low self esteem

- Aggravated existing asthma

- Sleep apnea

- Decreased physical functioning

- Many other negative emotional & physical effects

(Ogden, 2010; CDC, 2009)

Physical activity

Most kids aren't getting the physical activity they need.

(Surgeon General, 2007; Trust for America's Health and Robert Wood Johnson, 2010)

Physical activity recommendation for children and adolescents:

At least 60 minutes of physical activity daily.

(US Depts. of Health and Human Services, 2008)

Physical activity and academic performance

The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Adolescent and School Health
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth

Revised Version — July 2010
(Replaces April 2010 Early Release)

The Good:

Communities are taking action on behalf of their kids

Safe Routes **training**

Safe Routes to School programs are part of the solution...

...to increase physical activity

...to improve unsafe walking and biking conditions

...to improve poor air quality by reducing vehicle emissions

Safe Routes **training**

Every school faces a different challenge

Steps in creating a SRTS program

- Bring together the right people

- Gather information and identify issues

- Find solutions

- Make a plan

- Get the plan funded

- Act on the plan

- Evaluate and make changes if needed

Safe Routes SRS **training**

Elements of Safe Routes to School programs

- Education

- Encouragement

- Enforcement

- Engineering

- Evaluation

Education

- Teaches safety skills

- Creates safety awareness

- Fosters life-long safety habits

- Includes parents, neighbors and other drivers

Encouragement

- Increases popularity of walking and biking

- Is an easy way to start SRTS programs

- Emphasizes fun of walking and biking

Enforcement

- Increases awareness of pedestrians and bicyclists

- Improves driver behavior

- Helps children follow traffic rules

- Decreases parent perceptions of danger

Engineering

- Creates safer, more accessible settings for walking and biking

- Can influence the way people behave

Evaluation

Is the program making a difference?

Federal Safe Routes to School program

- $800 million to States 2005-2010

- Funds infrastructure and non-infrastructure activities

- Requires State SRTS Coordinators

- Funds National Clearinghouse (National Center for SRTS)
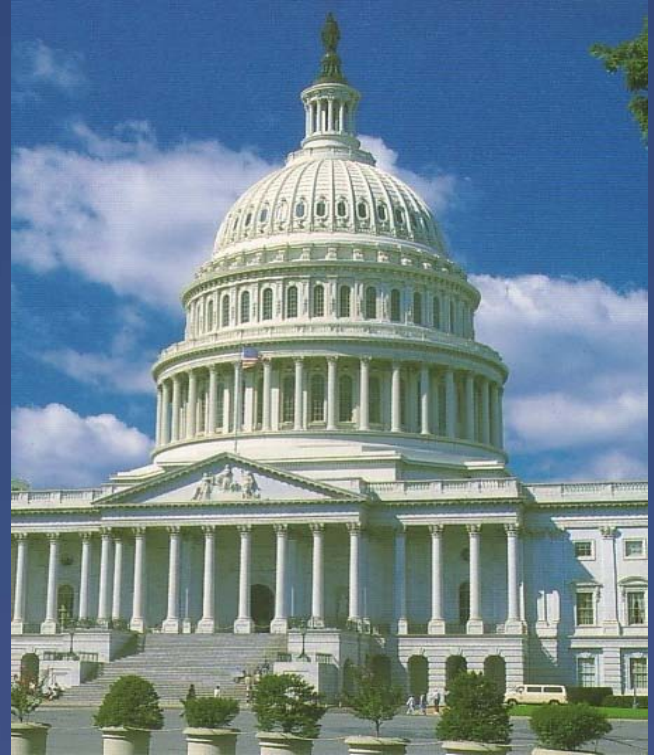
More Information:
www.saferoutesinfo.org

Oklahoma's SRTS Program

- Funding administered through ODOT

- Program Administrator Ernestine Mrbroh

- www.okladot.state.ok.us/srts/

- Federal funding requires compliance with federal policies

- First round of projects currently under construction

Success story: Columbia, SC

- Walk to School Day and Walking Fridays

- Safety messaging via flyers and announcements

- Reduced automobile speeds around school

- Increased parent driver awareness of walkers and bicyclists

Safe Routes training

Success story: Garfield, NJ

- Students involved with identifying unsafe routes

- Integrated safety education into the classroom

- City created safe routes maps

- Received United Way funding for a new family exercise path

Success story: Farmington, NH

- Small town without many sidewalks leading to school

- Using state grant funds, constructed the Tiger Trail

- Connects neighborhoods to local elementary schools

- Provide safety education, a walking school bus and evaluate the program

- Increased walking to school

Success story: Alpine, UT

- 2010 Oberstar Safe Routes to School Award Recipient

- Increased the number of children who regularly walk and bicycle to school from 35% to 50%

- Used engaging, creative strategies to encourage families to shift habits to a less car-focused commute.

Safe Routes to School goals

- Where it's safe, get kids walking and biking

- Where it's *not* safe, make changes

Safe Routes training