



PRESS RELEASE
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How much weight do Virginians need to lose? 56,500 tons
Second Va. childhood obesity conference is Oct.4-5 at Richmond Marriott

RICHMOND- Virginia adults are carrying around a little extra weight – a scale-busting 113 million pounds or 56,500 tons, about the same weight as nearly 35,000 standard four-door sedans. (To put that in perspective, the largest parking lot in the world holds about 20,000 vehicles.)

Based on data from the U.S. Census and the Virginia Department of Health, this estimate of the excess weight of overweight and obese adults in Virginia will be among the facts presented at **Virginia’s second annual [Weight of the State](#) childhood obesity prevention conference**, which will be held **Oct. 4-5** at the **Richmond Marriott**. More than 400 attendees from around the state are expected at the conference, including educators, health professionals and physicians. **First Lady of Virginia Maureen McDonnell** is the honorary chair of the conference, which is organized by the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Prevention Connections.

Experts speaking at the conference will include **Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Bill Hazel, Dr. Terry O’Toole with the CDC and Margo Wootan, director of the Nutrition Policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI).**

More than 60 percent of Virginia’s adults are obese or overweight. (In total, Virginia’s 6 million adults weigh about 1 billion pounds.) Obesity is one of the two leading causes of preventable deaths in the United States and childhood obesity rates are skyrocketing. One in three children in the nation is obese or overweight.

Supporters of the conference include: Sanofi, Sentara, Optima Health, Dole Food Company, Bon Secours Virginia Health System, NFL Fuel Up to Play 60, the Virginia Department of Education and Martin’s Food Markets.

Other conference events include:

- **Retired New Orleans Saints Running Back Deuce McAllister and retired Pittsburgh Steelers Linebacker Matt Farrior** will be at the conference the evening of Oct. 4, appearing in support of the NFL's [Fuel Up to Play 60](#) **childhood obesity prevention initiative**. (Farrior and his brother James, a current Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker, received a key to the city of Richmond from Mayor Dwight Jones this summer for their charitable efforts on behalf of the city's children.)
- A celebration of **International Walk to School Day** will be held in connection with the conference on Oct. 5 with more than 350 children at **Crestview Elementary School** in Henrico County. The children will be joined on the walk by **First Lady of Virginia Maureen McDonnell, Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Bill Hazel, Virginia Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton and state Del. Dr. John O'Bannon**. Funded by a grant from Prevention Connections, the Walk to School Day event aims to promote increased physical activity among schoolchildren and will be sponsored by Prevention Connections, the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY), Henrico County Public Schools, the Virginia Safe Routes to School Network, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH), and the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Ridge, Longdale and Maybeury elementary schools in Henrico will also be observing International Walk to School Day, along with 40 other elementary and middle schools throughout the commonwealth.

About the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth:

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1999, the **Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY)** is responsible for leading statewide efforts to prevent and reduce youth tobacco use and childhood obesity. Through VFHY's efforts, smoking among Virginia high school students decreased by more than 30 percent over the last decade, and smoking among middle school students is down by 65 percent. For more information about the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth, please visit our website at www.HealthyYouthVa.org.

About Prevention Connections:

Prevention Connections (PC) is committed to the prevention and reduction of tobacco use and obesity — the two leading causes of preventable deaths in the United States — through education, intervention, policy development and community outreach to improve the health of individuals and communities. For more information about Prevention Connections, please visit our website at preventionconnections.org.

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Media Alert: Virginia holds second annual **Weight of the State childhood obesity prevention conference**, sponsored by **Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth and Prevention Connections**

When: Oct. 4-5

Where: **Richmond Marriott**, 500 E. Broad St., Richmond VA

What: **First Lady of Virginia Maureen McDonnell** is serving as honorary chair of Virginia's second annual Weight of the State childhood obesity prevention conference, which will be held Oct. 4-5 at the Richmond Marriott. More than 400 attendees are expected at the conference, including educators, health professionals and physicians. (Physicians can receive continuing education credits for the conference in connection with the Virginia chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.) Experts speaking at the conference include **Virginia Secretary of Health and Human Resources Dr. Bill Hazel**, **Dr. Terry O'Toole with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** and **Margo Wootan, director of the Nutrition Policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)**.

Retired New Orleans Saints Running Back Deuce McAllister and **retired Pittsburgh Steelers Linebacker Matt Farrior** will be at the conference on Tuesday Oct. 4 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., appearing in support of the **NFL's Fuel Up to Play 60** childhood obesity prevention initiative.

A celebration of **International Walk to School Day** will be held in connection with the conference on Oct. 5 at with more than 350 children at **Crestview Elementary School** in Henrico County. The children will be

