



# Letter to the President

Dear Mr. President,

I am pleased to present you with the White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity's action plan for solving the problem of childhood obesity in a generation.

Parents across America are deeply concerned about their children's health and the epidemic of childhood obesity. One out of every three children is now overweight or obese, a condition that places them at greater risk of developing diabetes, heart disease, and cancer over the course of their lives. This is not the future we want for our children, and it is a burden our health care system cannot bear. Nearly \$150 billion per year is now being spent to treat obesity-related medical conditions.

Fortunately, there are clear, concrete steps we can take as a society to help our children reach adulthood at a healthy weight. As you requested in the Memorandum you signed on February 9, our new interagency Task Force on Childhood Obesity has spent the past 90 days carefully reviewing the research, and consulting experts as well as the broader public, to produce a set of recommended actions that, taken together, will put our country on track to solving the problem of childhood obesity.

We heard from a broad array of Americans, and received more than 2,500 public comments with specific and creative suggestions. Twelve Federal agencies participated actively in the Task Force, and provided their ideas and expertise. They include the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Justice, and Transportation, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Communications Commission, and the Federal Trade Commission.

Our recommendations focus on the four priority areas set forth in the Memorandum, which also form the pillars of the First Lady's *Let's Move!* campaign: (1) empowering parents and caregivers; (2) providing healthy food in schools; (3) improving access to healthy, affordable foods; and (4) increasing physical activity. In addition, we have included a set of recommendations for actions that can be taken very early in a child's life, when the risk of obesity first emerges.

We cannot succeed in this effort alone. Our recommendations are not simply for Federal action, but also for how the private sector, state and local leaders, and parents themselves can help improve the health of our children. The Task Force will move quickly to develop a strategy for implementing this plan, working in partnership with the First Lady to engage stakeholders across society. Indeed, many Americans — including leaders in the public and private sectors — have already volunteered to join this effort, and are ready and waiting to put this plan in action.

Sincerely,

Melody Barnes

Chair, Task Force on Childhood Obesity, and Director, Domestic Policy Council

