

## Group: 39 US states' obesity to pass 50 percent

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(AP)—A group campaigning against obesity predicts that more than half the people in 39 U.S. states will be obese—not merely overweight, but obese—by 2030.

Mississippi is expected to keep its crown as the fattest state in America for at least two more decades. The report predicts 67 percent of that state's adults will be obese by 2030. That would be an astounding increase from the current 35 percent.

The new projections were released Tuesday by Trust for America's Health with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Trust for America's Health regularly reports on obesity to raise awareness, mostly relying on government figures.

But in this case, their forecast goes beyond the 42 percent national obesity level that federal health officials project by 2030.

About two-thirds of Americans are overweight now. That includes those who are obese, a group that accounts for about 36 percent. Obesity rates have been holding steady in recent years. The highest rates are in the South and Midwest.

Trust for America's Health officials said the projections were based on state-by-state surveys by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from 1999 through 2010. They said their projections are reasonable.

But their outlook suggests that even in the thinnest state—Colorado, where about one-fifth of residents are obese—45 percent are predicted to be obese by 2030. It says New York, at 25 percent, will jump to 51 percent and that California, at 24 percent, will jump to 47 percent.

The report didn't detail why some states' rates were expected to jump more than others.

CDC officials declined to comment on the new report.

Whichever estimates you trust most, it's clear that America's weight problem is going to continue, escalating the number cases of diabetes, heart disease and stroke, said Jeff Levi, executive director of Trust for America's Health.

By 2030, medical costs from treating obesity-related diseases are likely to increase by \$48 billion, to \$66 billion per year, his report said.

The focus of so much of the ongoing debate about health care is over controlling costs, Levi said. "... We can only achieve it by addressing obesity. Otherwise, we're just tinkering around the margins."

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