The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans
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About this Study

*The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans* is based on a survey of more than 1,130 Americans ages 18 and older and 463 healthcare providers representing a variety of specialties and disciplines. The research was conducted in collaboration with Kelton Research using an email invitation and an online survey format.

In the case of individuals, quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population ages 18 and over. Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.
In a supersized world, it is difficult to single out things that are “average.”

We are buying bigger houses, driving larger vehicles, and wearing bigger clothes. As a whole, the waistline of our nation is larger today than it was 20 years ago. This supersized label has now become a growing issue in the medical field, as the American Medical Association has recently deemed obesity to be a disease. The rise in obesity rates is expected to increase America’s already high healthcare costs. According to the AMA, all states across the U.S. could have obesity rates above 44 percent by 2030. The numbers are increasing at an alarming rate, and the negative effects and results of obesity—including diabetes, heart conditions, and an increase in healthcare costs—are going to grow unless something is done to change it.
The Obesity Epidemic:
Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans

According to the Center for Disease Control, more than one-third (35.7 percent) of adults are currently obese, and no state has an obesity rate that is less than 20 percent. These numbers have continued to rise in recent decades. In 1990, no state had an obesity rate higher than 15 percent, and 10 states had an obesity rate lower than 10 percent. With the increase of these numbers, it is no surprise that the majority of the nation feels they could lose weight. According to The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans, 78 percent of Americans said they could benefit from losing weight right now, and more than half of all Americans (52 percent) currently describe their weight as overweight or obese. The number grows when looking at obesity from the providers’ side, as 97 percent of providers reported that many of their patients could do a better job of managing their weight.
In addition, among those Americans struggling with weight management, the vast majority (70 percent) said that obesity in the United States is a significant problem. And providers agree: 86 percent of providers said that obesity in adults is a significant problem in the United States. From both the provider and patient standpoints, if this disease continues to expand, more of our family members and friends are likely to struggle with the adverse effects.

The good news is that the majority of Americans know the cause of obesity doesn’t lie within our ethnicity, gender or who our parents are. In fact, according to The Obesity Epidemic, 90 percent of Americans—and 97 percent of providers—believe that diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity. And while the majority of Americans believe that a poor diet and lack of exercise leads to obesity, 50 percent of the nation said that not getting enough physical activity has negatively impacted their life. Patients understand the direct correlation between diet and exercise and obesity. However, it is time for patients to find time and motivation to get to the gym and the discipline to choose fresh and healthy foods. It will make a difference.

Getting better connected with doctors and healthcare providers is a crucial part of a patient’s ability to overcome obesity. According to The Obesity Epidemic,

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The number of times the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight.

the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times in their life, and just 37 percent reported being completely successful with these plans. Part of the reason behind this is a lack of provider-patient communication, as The Obesity Epidemic found that just 40 percent of Americans have taken the step of discussing weight management with their doctors. Even fewer providers, just 27 percent, said that the majority of their patients have discussed this issue with them. However, 61 percent of Americans said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips on how to manage their weight, and nearly a fourth (24 percent) reported that communications from their doctor between office visits,
such as emails, text messages, or phone calls, would help them better manage their overall health. Opening the door for better and more frequent communication with doctors is important, as information, education and support received between visits can help people make lifestyle changes to better manage their weight and overall health.

And while patients have their views on communication, healthcare providers report that they believe their patients would benefit from many types of between-visit communications. Thirty-five percent of providers said that communications between patients and doctors could help to better manage a patient’s weight. Providers also believe that the information that is relayed in this communication is key. Fifty-seven percent of providers said they would give patients advice to lose weight but not exact steps in the treatment of obesity. Additionally, just under half of providers (48 percent) said that this type of communication is vital in promoting weight management among patients. Providing guidelines while giving patients the freedom to create their own personalized plan allows patients to have a better chance of successfully managing their weight.

While Americans realize that weight management is a problem, attempts to prevent or treat obesity are currently not working for many patients. More effective engagement of patients by providers using high-tech, personalized messaging is a key tool that doctors can use to help their patients better manage their weight. As reported by The Obesity Epidemic, 61 percent of Americans think obesity in adults is a significant problem in the United States. In addition, 21 percent of Americans report that they have experienced obesity in their life, and 51 percent say they could do a better job of managing their weight. Talking to a doctor, sticking to a healthy diet and exercising regularly can all help in the struggle against obesity. Not only will this benefit adults looking to slim down their waist, but it will also aid in our country’s attempt to educate youth about obesity. If children see their parents eating better and making time to go to the gym, the next generation will be encouraged to develop healthy habits while they are young.
Women and Obesity

Women are always putting other people, such as their family and friends, ahead of themselves. But obesity is just as prevalent in women as it is in men. Finding a solution that will empower women to manage their own weight is a concern among doctors and healthcare providers. With the AMA recently deeming obesity as a disease, what will help women move past obesity? Better patient engagement that uses technology to communicate with women between office visits about the importance of healthy lifestyle choices is a key to giving women the encouragement they need to make managing their own health a priority.

The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans reports that nearly two-thirds of women (62 percent) said that obesity in adults is a significant problem in America. And, according to the Center for Disease Control, 36.2 percent of women are obese, contributing to a total obese population of close to 78 million total adults. But fighting obesity involves more than just a number on a scale. It requires a certain mindset and long-term behavioral changes. When women fail to take time to get themselves on the right path, they won’t be able to effectively ensure their family members are also making healthy lifestyle choices.

Additionally, obesity can be linked to many health conditions that can affect women’s lives. According to the CDC, more than 30 conditions—ranging from arthritis and cardiovascular diseases to cancer, heart disease, and stroke—are directly related to obesity. And obesity becomes more prevalent as women age, as 42.3 percent of women 60 and older are obese, while 31.9 percent of women 20-39 are obese. Women across the nation see these stats reflected when they look in the mirror daily. According to The Obesity Epidemic, 81 percent of women reported they could benefit from losing weight right now.

But what steps can women across the country take to improve their weight management? With more than three-fourths of women currently concerned about their weight, communication with healthcare professionals can have an impact on curbing obesity rates. The good news is that many women do communicate with their

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doctor, as nearly 10 percent more women than men report discussing weight management with their doctor. Forty-three percent of women have already talked with their doctors about weight management, and 56 percent said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with additional tips on how to manage their weight. Additionally, nearly a fourth of American women (23 percent) said that communication from their doctor between office visits, such as emails, text messages, or voicemails, would help them better manage their overall health.

And while at one point many Americans’ thoughts about the causes of obesity gravitated toward genetics, those feelings have shifted to diet and exercise. Currently, more women than men think it is what we eat and how active we are that has the greatest impact on our health. In fact, according to The Obesity Epidemic, a vast majority of women (92 percent) believe that diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity. The bad news is that many women are not taking action based on their knowledge of what causes obesity. Unfortunately, 53 percent of women reported that they are not getting enough exercise or physical activity, and that it is negatively impacting their health. It isn’t surprising then that 57 percent of women currently describe their weight as overweight or obese. However, consuming a healthy diet and making time for regular exercise is an important first step that women can take to put themselves first and focus on their own health. If women don’t put an emphasis on making healthy choices, obesity will be a natural consequence. Furthermore, by the choices they make, women have the power to influence the choices of their families and the health of America’s future. It starts with putting a balanced meal on the table, being active with their kids and talking about the importance of a healthy lifestyle.

As reported in The Obesity Epidemic, the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times, yet just 31 percent of women reported being completely successful with the diet or attempt to lose weight. But women need to be more successful with weight management, as 24 percent said they have experienced obesity, and 55 percent report they could do a better job of managing their weight. Women need to take time to ensure they are doing what is best for their health, and the health of their family, by consulting doctors and healthcare providers and interacting with them more often than just once a year. By sending out text messages or emails or making a phone call regularly between office visits, doctors can also help women by empowering them with the information, support and encouragement they need to fight obesity.

It is time for women to take action! It starts with taking the necessary steps of interacting with healthcare providers on a more regular basis. Additionally, formulating lifestyle plans that include healthier eating and regular exercise will lower obesity rates. Sticking with the plan and keeping open the lines of communication will help many American women succeed at getting their weight under control.
Men and Obesity

Men tend to be viewed as strong and prone to a “fix-it” mentality. So when something is going wrong, be it a disease or a few extra pounds, men take it upon themselves to try to find a solution. Unfortunately, despite their do-it-yourself nature, many men are struggling to find solutions to the problems of obesity and weight management.

Men know what the problem is. According to The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans, 88 percent of men believe that diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity in Americans. But many men are not taking action to combat the causes of obesity, making it a growing problem. Nearly half of men in America (47 percent) said that not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted their health. While there are some things that cannot be controlled, it is important for men to remain on top of the things they can control. What we eat and how often we exercise are both things that can be managed on a daily basis. Not only will it help weight management, but it will help to prevent many other diseases and conditions. Given that many children see their fathers as role models, men making healthy lifestyle choices will also encourage the next generation to do the same.

However, the number of men across the country that need to lose weight continues to grow. Seventy-five percent of American men said they could benefit from losing weight right now. Whether it means losing a couple of pounds, or a more significant change, men are no exception to the growing obesity trend. Currently, 47 percent of men report they could do a better job of managing their weight. According to the CDC, the obesity rate among men increased from 27.5 percent to 35.5 percent in the last decade — a massive jump in just 10 years. Men have noticed the increase, as 60 percent think that obesity in adults is a significant problem in the U.S.
On the positive side, there are many men across the nation taking the right steps to seek help with managing their weight. Thirty-six percent of men report talking with their doctor about their weight, according to The Obesity Epidemic. In addition, 64 percent of men said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips on how to manage their weight, and 25 percent said that communications from their doctor between office visits, such as emails, text messages, or voicemails, would help them better manage their overall health. This indicates that providers can make a difference in the fight against obesity by using technology to engage patients between office visits.

While some men have taken the initiative to discuss obesity with their doctors, obesity remains a real problem for many American men. Providers taking the step of communicating regularly between office visits through text messages, emails or phone calls can help ensure that men receive the information, support and encouragement they need to follow through with adopting a healthy lifestyle. Simple lifestyle changes can help men that are currently struggling with obesity to lose weight now and also solidify habits that ensure a healthier future.
After decades of increasing incidence in America, obesity has now been labeled as a disease that is responsible for millions of hours of lost time, billions of dollars of additional healthcare spending, and adverse affects on the health of countless Americans of all ages. From children to the elderly and everyone in between, our nation is facing a serious epidemic. And, unfortunately, not a lot is currently being done to control these issues at any age level. Success in the fight against obesity relies on forward-thinking practitioners that empower patients in every age group in making the necessary lifestyle changes to ensure a healthy future.

According to the CDC, obesity among Americans is up 50 percent in the last two decades, affecting almost 78 million adults. Led by the oldest group surveyed, The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans highlighted the fact that more than half of Americans currently describe their weight as overweight or obese: Fifty-two percent of 45-54 year olds, 51 percent of 35-44 year olds and 44 percent of 18-34 year olds reported currently being overweight or obese. But these numbers also highlight that none of the younger age groups are learning from struggle with obesity facing the oldest generation. Younger adults can look forward to a future filled with more health issues and higher medical bills if changes are not made.

And this isn’t a problem that is all of a sudden striking Americans. A fifth of all Americans report that they have experienced obesity at some stage in their life, including 26 percent of 45-54 year olds, 22 percent of 35-44 year olds, and 17 percent of 18-34 year olds. However, these numbers are slightly surprising because the majority of Americans feel that obesity in adults is a significant problem in the U.S. Sixty-two percent of 45-54 year olds, 59 percent of 35-44 year olds and 56 percent of 18-34 year olds said they are concerned with the health of our nation.

Luckily, all generations feel there are steps that can be taken to solve this epidemic. The solution can be a simple change in eating habits or adding in a workout three days a week. But talking with a doctor is also an integral part of creating a wellness plan. Healthcare
professionals have seen the epidemic grow. They also have seen people successfully change their lifestyle to combat the disease. And many Americans want to open the lines of communication with their doctors. According to The Obesity Epidemic, more than half of Americans (68 percent of 18-34 year olds, 60 percent of 35-44 year olds and 63 percent of 45-54 year olds) said that they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips throughout the year.

Additionally, nearly a third of all Americans—33 percent of 18-34 year olds, 32 percent of 35-44 year olds and 18 percent of 45-54 year olds—said that communications from their doctor between office visits, such as email, text messages, or voicemails, would help them better manage their overall health. It is no longer enough for people to talk with their doctors at a yearly checkup. Rather, they want and need to hear from their healthcare providers with health tips and various other communications between office visits in order to be empowered to take control of managing their own health.

Sixty-eight percent of 18-34 year olds, 60 percent of 35-44 year olds, and 63 percent of 45-54 year olds would be interested in receiving communications from their doctor with tips on how to manage their weight. The majority of Americans believe that diet and exercise, not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity. Sadly, almost half of the population (49 percent of 18-34 year olds, 49 percent of 35-44 year olds, and 45 percent of 45-54 year olds) reported that they are currently not getting enough exercise or physical activity, and it is negatively impacting their health.

Instead of just talking the talk, Americans of all ages need to begin to walk the walk. Literally. And with the support of their doctors. While the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times, just over a third of all age groups (39 percent of 18-34 year olds, 32 percent of 35-44 year olds, and 41 percent of 45-54 year olds) reported being completely successful with a diet or attempt to lose weight. Taking steps such as staying on the outside of the grocery store (avoiding processed foods), making time to exercise daily with a workout buddy, parking farther away or taking the stairs instead of elevator can all help combat obesity.

Yet even with the understanding of what can be done to help combat this disease, the nation as a whole continues to sit on the losing end of the battle. Currently, according to The Obesity Epidemic, the majority of Americans said they could benefit from losing weight right now. In fact, 82 percent of 35-44 year olds, 79 percent of 18-34 year olds, and 77 percent of 45-54 year olds report that they could shed a few pounds to improve their

Americans understand that diet and exercise have the potential to combat obesity. But sadly, not enough Americans are taking the steps necessary to prevent obesity through a healthy diet and regular physical activity. Led by the 45-54 year olds at 91 percent, the
health. Additionally, more than half of all Americans said they could do a better job of managing their weight, led by 55 percent of 35-44 year olds, 50 percent of 18-34 year olds, and 49 percent of 45-54 year olds.

Taking the appropriate steps toward fighting obesity is the key to getting the skinny on the growing problem of obesity. Talking to doctors, taking preventive measures, and mixing in a healthy diet with exercise all can lead to a healthier life. By learning from the issues facing other generations and working together with doctors, Americans can collectively beat this disease. All of these steps will lead to a much healthier America.

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- **82%** of 35-44 year olds
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Americans of all ages need to begin to walk the walk. Literally. And with the support of their doctors.
The Obesity Problem Across the Nation

The single fastest-growing health issue in America is the increase in our waistlines. Obesity is an epidemic that is affecting all ages in all regions of our country. It is felt in from the lakes of Minnesota down to the swamps of the Deep South. It hits both coasts and is being battled by Americans in the heart of the country. Unfortunately, many Americans know the answer to this struggle, but aren’t taking the necessary steps to combat it. The good news? The cure starts with conversations with doctors, and simple changes involving a healthy diet and more exercise. The cure is in the hands of every American across the nation.
As a region, the Northeast is known for tourism, travel, and, of course, New England clam chowder. An area that both coined the phrase “in the deep woods” and is full of beautiful scenery along the coastline, the Northeast also introduced the country to New York style thin-crust pizza and street-cart hot dogs. It is also a region where residents have been in control of their health. Research shows that Northeasterners smoke less, exercise more, and weigh less than people living in other parts of the country. But as the obesity epidemic is stretching across the country, it is also beginning to hit the Northeast at an alarming rate.

According to The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans, the Northeast region is tied for first with the West, with about half (49 percent) of each region’s population currently describing their weight as obese or overweight. In addition, 50 percent of Northeasterners report they could currently do a better job of managing their weight, and 79 percent of Northeasterners said they could benefit from losing weight right now.

The good thing is that region’s residents know the cause of this growing problem, which is no surprise given the area’s reputation for healthy choices. As is true with the rest of the nation, the vast majority of the Northeast (91 percent) believes that diet and exercise, not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity, according to The Obesity Epidemic. And nearly half of Northeasterners, 44 percent, report that not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted their health. The Northeast has historically prided itself in the amount of exercise its residents have gotten, with walking trails and outdoor activities smothering the region. It is time to get back to where they once were.

The lack of activity, along with a mentality that is more accepting of obesity, is leading to a growing problem in the Northeast. As reported by The Obesity Epidemic, more than two-thirds (64 percent) of those in the Northeast think that obesity is currently a significant
problem in the U.S., and a fifth of Americans (20 percent) say that they have experienced obesity in their life. The Northeast region does lead the nation in successful dieting, as 41 percent of the Northeast (as much as five percent higher than the other regions) reported being completely successful with a diet. Add in more exercise and the region can easily get back on the right path.

It is important for doctors and healthcare providers to initiate conversations encouraging their patients to implement a healthy diet plan and exercise routine as part of weight management. Using high-tech communication, including taking advantage of mobile devices and social media, can help doctors better reach their patients. Currently, according to The Obesity Epidemic, the Northeast sits in the middle of the pack in terms of discussing their health with their doctors. Almost two-thirds of Northeastern residents (62 percent) said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips to help manage their weight. Additionally, a fourth of people in the Northeast, 24 percent, report they would be interested in hearing from their doctor between office visits, via emails, text messages, or voicemails in order to help them manage their overall health. But they need to start talking, as currently just 40 percent of the Northeast has taken the initial step of discussing weight management with their doctor.

The Northeast knows what it takes to be healthy. The people in the region have the tools necessary to change their lifestyle and get back to being the healthiest region in the nation. It is time for residents of this region to take the steps—eating healthy, regular exercise, and talking with healthcare providers—to combat obesity and live healthier lives.

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Out of any region in the United States, the Midwest is best known for four distinct seasons which offer a variety of season-specific activities, including snow skiing in the winter, lake time in the summer and the beautiful scenery in the fall. While these seasons offer flexibility and a range of activities that can benefit the emotional side, they also can be contributing factors to obesity, as heavier foods and less activity come with colder weather, and barbecues are the norm during the summer, easily leading to weight gain.

The Midwest has been stung by the obesity bug. Sixty-six percent of the Midwest, a number that leads the nation, believe that obesity is a significant problem in the U.S., and 22 percent of the region—which also leads the nation—report that they have experienced obesity in their life. In addition, the Midwest has the highest percentage of residents, 56 percent, reporting that they are currently overweight or obese. Obesity in the region is growing at an alarming rate, and something needs to be done to help patients better manage their weight. A majority of the Midwest believes that communications from a doctor or healthcare professional could be the answer and would benefit them in the fight against obesity.

According to The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans, 57 percent of the Midwest said that they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips to help manage their weight, and just over a fourth of Midwesterners (29 percent) said that receiving this communication would really help them manage their health. However, currently only 42 percent of Midwesterners have taken that step of talking with their doctor or healthcare provider about their health.

The Midwesterner’s attitude toward exercise and the alteration of other lifestyle habits must develop a sense of urgency by changing daily routines to include healthier eating and more exercise. Ninety-one percent of people in the Midwest believe that diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity, as reported by The Obesity Epidemic. Yet, the Midwest leads all regions with 53 percent saying that not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted
their health, and 82 percent admitting they could benefit from losing weight right now. There is no better time than the present to make the effort to change these habits. And implementing long-term behavior changes that last through all seasons of the year is important for success in the fight against obesity.

Sadly, many people turn to fad diets, which often do not lead to long-term behavior changes. According to *The Obesity Epidemic*, the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times, and only 36 percent—which ties with the South for the lowest in all regions—of Midwesterners have been successful with a diet or attempt to lose weight. This region must look to adjust their lifestyles as a whole, instead of relying on temporary or short-term changes. This belief is supported by the fact that 55 percent of the region believes they could currently do a better job of managing their weight.

Midwestern residents know what good food is. They know how to enjoy outdoor activities, regardless of the season. However, given the increase in obesity in this region, it is important for Midwesterners to make positive lifestyle changes now that will allow them to enjoy beautiful sunsets and family cookouts for years to come.

A majority of the Midwest believes that communications from a doctor or healthcare professional could be the answer and would benefit them in the fight against obesity.
The South

In a region where the sun is shining throughout the year, bringing on warmth and outdoor activities alike, the South is full of endless possibilities for recreation. Unfortunately, a good portion of the South doesn’t take advantage of the weather and resources available. Furthermore, many Southern residents consume a diet that consists largely of salty, high-fat foods and sugary drinks. This type of diet has been proven to pack on the pounds, leading to an increased risk for obesity and the numerous health conditions that come along with it.

While many in this region do not take advantage of the moderate weather the region has by exercising regularly, the good news is that Southerners understand that they need to make changes in order to better manage their weight. According to The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Lifestyle Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans, 77 percent of the South believes they could benefit from losing weight right now. And there is plenty of weight to be lost across the region. Furthermore, 21 percent of the region reports that they have experienced obesity in their life.

The obesity epidemic has historically hit this region harder than many other parts of the country, and the bad news is that the situation has been getting worse in recent years. Currently, 54 percent of Southerners describe their weight as overweight or obese, the second highest total in any region next to the Midwest. It is going to take lifestyle changes among Southerners in order to reverse the trend of increased obesity. This means more Southerners need to take advantage of the myriad of outdoor activities available to become more active, while consuming a healthier diet that contains less of the traditional comfort foods.

The increase in obesity in this region is not surprising given the amount of Southerners reporting a lack of physical activity. According to The Obesity Epidemic, nearly half of Southerners (49 percent) said that

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<td>Describe their weight as overweight or obese</td>
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<td>Say that not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted their health</td>
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not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted their health. The South also has the lowest numbers, 88 percent, that believe diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest cause of obesity. While that is still the majority of people, it shows there are more people in this region than others that consider their obesity to be a direct result of who they are and the genes they were given, rather than something they can control by what they eat or how much exercise they get.

The South also reported the lowest percentage (57 percent) that feels obesity is a significant problem in the America. Yet, the region also ties with the Northeast with 50 percent reporting that they could currently do a better job of managing their weight. This suggests that some do not realize how much of a problem the obesity epidemic has become. But what steps can the region take to manage their weight effectively? Communication that starts with doctors and healthcare providers about lifestyle changes, including proper diet and exercise, is a great start. As mentioned above, most Americans believe that diet and exercise are the best ways to combat obesity. The average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times, yet just 36 percent of the South reported being completely successful with a diet or attempt to lose weight, according to *The Obesity Epidemic*. Getting information, support and encouragement from doctors on how to best manage weight is something that Americans need, as it can help in the fight against obesity.

Rather than jumping into a fad diet, managing obesity must involve lifestyle changes incorporating both better eating habits and an exercise plan. Talking with a doctor or healthcare provider can be a crucial first step. Less than half of the South (39 percent) has taken the step of discussing weight management with their doctor. But the interest is there. Sixty-three percent of Southerners said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communication from their doctor with tips to help manage their weight, and 23 percent of Southerners said that communication from their doctor between office visits, such as email, text messages, or voicemails, would help them better manage their overall health.

The moderate weather and widespread recreational activities give Southerners a unique opportunity to spend time outside and have active lifestyles nearly year round. By incorporating more exercise into their daily routine, Southerners could, quite literally, make great strides in reversing the obesity trend in their region. Additionally, regular communication between patients and healthcare professionals about the benefits of a healthy diet can slingshot this region back on the right path.
The West

The Gold Rush. Getting into Hollywood. The Rocky Mountains. Throughout the ages, there have been a whole host of reasons that people travel West with dreams of bettering their life and taking in the scenery. And while many people have successfully found money or a better career in the region, the struggle with obesity is just as prevalent in this area as it is in the rest of the nation.

According to *The Obesity Epidemic: Unhealthy Habits Result in a Growing Problem for Americans*, 63 percent of the West thinks that obesity is a significant problem in the U.S., and 49 percent of the region currently describes their weight as overweight or obese. And while a fifth of the region (21 percent) reports that they have experienced obesity in their life, 92 percent feel that diet and exercise, and not genetics, are the biggest causes of obesity. This means that many in the region realize they are obese but need help in taking the steps necessary to better manage their weight.

Providers need to start the dialogue and communicate with patients more regularly, opening doors for greater interaction throughout the year, not just at an annual checkup. *The Obesity Epidemic* highlights the fact that people value this communication, as 57 percent of Westerners said they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips to help manage their weight. And with recent technological advances and increased use of technology among people of all ages, the West is has a variety of options on how to get this communication. Twenty-two percent of Westerners said that communications from their doctor between office visits, such as emails, text messages, or voicemails, would help them better manage their overall health.

Westerners are known for their balanced lifestyle. They put in the hours necessary to get the job done but also are known for balancing work with play. Working full-time brings in income and provides numerous other perks that benefit our lives; however, it also takes time away from other activities. Add in responsibilities at home and making time for hobbies, and the amount of time available to devote to a healthy lifestyle runs dry. Seventy-six percent of the West reported that they could benefit from losing weight right now, but just 37 percent, the smallest of any region, have taken the crucial first
step of discussing weight management with their doctor. Additionally, 52 percent agreed that not getting enough exercise or physical activity has negatively impacted their health. Talking with healthcare professionals about a healthy diet and effective exercise plan is a crucial first step toward making a commitment to make behavioral changes that lead to a healthier life.

But at the end of the day, Westerners must be open to making changes. Advertisements and advice on how to lose weight and what exercise programs are most effective are common, but, sadly, patients aren’t receiving the ongoing support they need in order to successfully make behavioral changes. Healthcare providers should take that as a challenge. Finding ways to better communicate with their patients can help fight the obesity epidemic. As reported in *The Obesity Epidemic*, the average American has attempted to diet or lose weight nine times, and just 38 percent of Westerners reported being completely successful with a diet or attempt to lose weight. Furthermore, 51 percent of the region said they could do a better job of managing their weight.

It may only require simple steps—getting to the gym on a regular basis and eating healthy foods rather than fast food meals from a bag—but actually finding time and taking the steps to get there needs to be a priority for the whole nation. It can help Americans tackle the disease of obesity one pound at a time.

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**57%** say they would be interested in and/or happy to receive communications from their doctor with tips to help manage their weight.

**22%** report they would be interested in hearing from their doctor between office visits, via emails, text messages, or voicemails in order to help them manage their overall health.

Providers need to start the dialogue and communicate with patients more regularly, opening doors for greater interaction throughout the year, not just at an annual checkup.
Creating a Healthy World

No matter your age or gender, preventive action will not only improve patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs, but it will also improve quality of life and save lives. Patients want to be involved in their own care, but need the tools to stay educated, encouraged and motivated to follow through for their own health. Text messages, phone calls and emails from physicians get patients’ attention while providing this desired support and involvement.

Increasing patient communication efforts will require forward-thinking healthcare practitioners who understand that their continued involvement is critical to ensuring a healthy future for our patients. Many physicians understand that engaging patients between office visits can inspire them to embrace and build the habits to follow through with treatment plans. They know personalized, ongoing engagement can activate positive lifestyle changes that will help people lead healthy lives.
About Healthy World

A healthy world, while global by definition, actually happens one person at a time. It is driven by forward-thinking healthcare practitioners who understand their involvement is critical to ensuring a healthy population.

The Healthy World initiative, launched by TeleVox, aims at helping people — young and old — be healthy!

Three imperatives for creating a healthy world — one person at a time

1. Touch the hearts and minds of patients to drive positive behavior change.
2. Engage patients with information and encouragement between visits.
3. Activate patients to make positive behavior changes for a healthier life.

The driving force behind the goal of creating a healthy world are the healthcare professionals who take the time to engage patients with personalized, thoughtful, ongoing communications that encourage and inspire them to embrace and follow ongoing treatment plans.

They know every communication with a patient — including those that take place between office visits — is an opportunity to help that person understand the importance of good habits like nutrition, physical activity, taking their medications as prescribed and following new treatment recommendations. Engaging patients and their families between visits through proactive, relevant communications helps them to wake up and stay focused on positive behavior changes is the way to create a healthy world — one patient at a time.
About TeleVox

TeleVox is a high-tech Engagement Communications company, providing automated voice, email, text and web solutions that activate positive patient behaviors through the delivery of technology with a human touch.

Since 1992, TeleVox has been creating a comprehensive approach that breaks through and motivates people to live healthy lives. At TeleVox, we understand that touching the hearts and minds of patients by engaging with them between healthcare appointments will encourage and inspire them to follow and embrace treatment plans. We know personalized, ongoing patient engagement will activate positive lifestyle changes. TeleVox helps healthcare professionals touch, engage and activate every unique patient to lead healthy lives.

TeleVox. High-tech, human touch to create a healthy world — one patient at a time.
Our Healthy World Initiative utilizes ethnographic research to uncover, understand and interpret the patient point-of-view when it comes to managing their health. We focus on studying how people interact with healthcare providers and how they behave between doctor visits. As part of this program, TeleVox delivers research reports that provide healthcare professionals with timely insight for helping patients make healthy changes in their lives, follow treatment plans, and take accountability for improving their personal health.