



**THE PROBLEM**

**For the first time, we are raising a generation of children who may live sicker and shorter lives than their parents.**

Where we live, learn, work and play has a greater impact on how long and how well we live than medical care. And while health care is critical, we must broaden our view and find ways to enable more people to lead healthy lives and avoid getting sick in the first place.

**Overcoming Obstacles to Health.** This Robert Wood Johnson Foundation report looks at how income, education, and race and ethnicity play a role in Americans' health. <http://bit.ly/bFqooB>

**...BY THE NUMBERS**

**20 years** Based on where they live and their racial or ethnic group, some Americans can expect to die 20 years earlier than others living just a few miles away.

**5 years** Adults with a college degree live on average five years longer than those who have not completed high school.

**33%** A boy born in the U.S. in 2000 has a 33% chance of being diagnosed with diabetes in his lifetime. For girls, it's 39%.

**1 in 3** Among U.S. children, 1 in three is overweight or obese.

**RESOURCES: SOCIAL FACTORS THAT AFFECT OUR HEALTH**



**Early childhood issue brief:** <http://bit.ly/aj3kID>

**Early Childhood**

The early years of life set us on paths leading toward – or away from – good health. Brain, cognitive and behavioral development early in life are strongly linked to health later in life, including risk factors for cardiovascular disease and stroke, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, smoking, drug use and depression.



**Nutrition fact sheet:** <http://bit.ly/afrSkV>

**Nutrition**

More than one in every 10 American households does not have reliable access to enough food for an adequate diet. We know that good nutrition is essential to good health throughout life. For children, proper nutrition supports not only physical health but also learning, growth and development. For adults, a healthy diet helps prevent illness.



**Work and health issue brief:** <http://bit.ly/b9vull>

**Workplace**

On average, American adults spend nearly half of their waking hours at work. Where we work influences our health, not only by exposing us to physical conditions that have health effects, but also by providing a setting where healthy activities and behaviors can be promoted.



**Community issue brief:** <http://bit.ly/bPLcmW>

**Communities**

Our communities have enormous impact on our health. Living in unhealthy communities can severely limit choices and resources. Healthy environments – including safe, well-kept neighborhoods with sidewalks, playgrounds and full-service supermarkets – encourage healthy behaviors and make it easier to adopt and maintain them.



**Activity resources:** <http://bit.ly/9pe56Z>

**Physical Activity**

Physical activity can improve children's and adolescents' cardiovascular, musculoskeletal, emotional, mental and psychological health. However, kids face a number of barriers to becoming more active, including access to safe, walkable streets, open spaces, playing fields and parks.

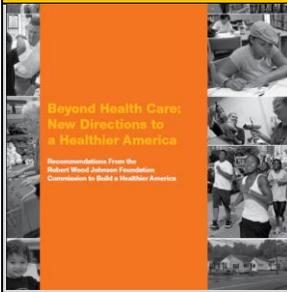


**Housing issue brief:** <http://bit.ly/bseQcJ>

**Housing**

Where we live is at the very core of our daily lives. For most Americans, home represents a place of safety, security, and shelter, where families come together—and it is often a family's greatest single expenditure. Given its importance, it is not surprising that factors related to housing can help—or harm—our health in major ways.

## SOLUTIONS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION TO IMPROVE HEALTH



### ***Beyond Health Care: New Directions to a Healthier America***

The Commission to Build a Healthier America focused on people and the places where we spend the bulk of our time – homes and communities, schools and workplaces – to identify where people should make healthier choices and where society should remove the obstacles preventing too many Americans from making healthy decisions.

The Commission report provides recommendations for moving forward to ensure all Americans have an opportunity to lead healthier lives. Available as full report or executive summary, to order or download, at [commissiononhealth.org](http://commissiononhealth.org).



### **Communicating about Social Determinants of Health**

The Commission issue brief, “Message Translation,” addresses how to frame highly-specific and technical information about social determinants and health disparities into language that resonates with the public and policy makers. <http://bit.ly/cpZ0rA>

## STATE-BY-STATE RESOURCES

Across America, how long and how well people live is strongly linked with the education they receive. The Commission released a series of reports with new data – at the national, state and county level – that show how leveraging education can improve the health of *all* Americans.



### **50-State Chart Books**

***America's Health Starts with Healthy Children: How Do States Compare?*** This chart book examines the health of children from different socioeconomic backgrounds in every state. Full report and state snapshots: <http://bit.ly/cJXHhV>

***Reaching America's Health Potential among Adults: A State-by-State Look at Adult Health*** This chart book examines the differences in adults' health based on their levels of education. Nationally and in each state there is a consistent and striking pattern: as levels of education rise, health improves. Full report and state snapshots: <http://bit.ly/c5kqv>

***Additional state data charts*** on child and adult health indicators are available at: <http://commissiononhealth.org/StateData>

### **Education and Health Calculator**



***How Do Your State and County Compare?*** See how many deaths could be averted in your county if education levels were different. Select your county and learn how education is linked to mortality. <http://commissiononhealth.org/Calculator>

## STORIES

### **Meet Kenyon McGriff**



It's easy to be healthy in a nice neighborhood, with tree lined streets, sidewalks, good grocery stores and farmers' markets – but Kenyon McGriff didn't grow up in a neighborhood like that. Weighing 270 pounds

by the time he was in 10th grade, Kenyon learned that his environment, with all of its fast food restaurants, corner markets, and dimly lit sidewalks, was more of a challenge to his health than he had ever imagined.

***Read the whole story:*** <http://bit.ly/dbU6nX>

### **Meet the Farrington and Singleton Families**



Beginning at even the youngest ages, the educational, social and other opportunities that children have are strongly linked to their health later in life. Although worlds apart in

many respects, two North Carolina families both credit their children's experiences in the same Chapel Hill preschool with providing not only the skills in reading and writing that prepare them for kindergarten, but also the motor and social skills that are also critical for succeeding in school.

***Read the whole story:*** <http://bit.ly/dqKX1W>

**Find these stories and many more at** <http://commissiononhealth.org/Stories.aspx>

**Learn more about the social determinants of health at [commissiononhealth.org](http://commissiononhealth.org)**