



## ***Let's Move! in Indian Country***

*"I'm asking you to start a conversation about childhood obesity in your community. Sometimes all it takes is someone to start asking questions. How can we get healthier foods in our schools? Are our playgrounds safe enough? ... We know that every neighborhood, every community, every tribe is different...[b]ut we also know that one constant is that this problem won't fix itself. It takes people like you to lead the way if we're going to give our kids a brighter future." First Lady Michelle Obama*

### **The Facts:**

- In 2009, American Indian or Alaska Native children aged 2 to 4 had the highest prevalence of obesity (20.7%), more than any other racial or ethnic group studied.
- 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese before their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday in Indian Country.
- Since 2003, American Indian and Alaska Native children are the only ethnic or racial group that has shown a significant increase in obesity rates (1.7%).
- Between 1994 and 2004, diabetes cases soared 68% among American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- A national survey of American Indian and Alaska Native high school students from urban and suburban areas found that 18.9 percent are obese.

### **Making Changes in Indian Country:**

As a part of First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move!* initiative, *Let's Move! in Indian Country* (LMIC) brings together federal agencies, communities, nonprofits, corporate partners, schools and tribes to end the epidemic of childhood obesity in Indian Country. The initiative focuses on four areas: early childhood development, healthy learning communities, physical activity and increasing access to affordable, healthy foods. Everyone has a role to play and LMIC seeks to advance the work that Tribal leaders and community members are already doing to improve the health of Native youth. Throughout our country's history, Native communities have provided some of the best examples of healthy food and sustainable community-based practices. Many groups in Indian Country are continuing to lead by example by following traditional paths that have existed for thousands of years.

To build on the strength of tradition in Native communities and to address the health crisis that young American Indians and Alaska Natives face, the Obama Administration formed a collaboration with the First Lady's *Let's Move!* initiative, the White House Domestic Policy Council, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and Education, as well as the Corporation for National and Community Service. Tribal governments, Urban Indian Centers, private businesses and the non-profit sector are each asked to sign up and work together to raise the next generation of healthy Native children through *Let's Move!* in Indian Country.

### **Let's Move! in Indian Country**

Tribal leaders, non profits, Urban Indian Centers, schools and families can get involved and create healthier living environments for Native youth. Make these important changes in your communities with the help of our online toolkit.

- ✓ Help create a healthy start on life by promoting breast feeding among new mothers and at the workplace.
- ✓ Sign up for the LMIC Presidential Active Lifestyle Award (PALA) and ensure that American Indians and Alaska Natives of all ages get their daily amount of physical activity (60 minutes for ages 18 and under, 20 minutes for 18 and over) needed to create lifelong habits [www.presidentschallenge.org/lmic](http://www.presidentschallenge.org/lmic).
- ✓ Work with your local schools to create a school wellness policy, provide fresh fruits and vegetables, nutrition programs, and after school activity programs.
- ✓ Increase capacity at the Tribal, school, and community level by engaging AmeriCorps and VISTA summer associates and full-time members throughout Indian Country.
- ✓ Establish a tribal or inter-tribal food policy council/committee to enhance comprehensive food systems
- ✓ Plant community gardens and teach youth about traditional crops that were harvested by their ancestors.

**Visit [www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry](http://www.letsmove.gov/indiancountry), Sign up to be part of the solution!**