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NEWS RELEASE

### **Health Quality Council of Alberta report finds nearly six out of 10 Albertans overweight or obese**

(CALGARY, AB) Today, the Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA) released a report that takes an in-depth look at overweight and obesity in the province. The report, *Overweight and Obesity in Adult Albertans: A Role for Primary Healthcare*, found that nearly six out of 10 Albertans are overweight or obese. This is 3.7 per cent higher than the national average (five out of 10 Canadians are overweight or obese).

“The rise in obesity is a worldwide public health issue, and is associated with an increased risk of chronic disease and more frequent use of healthcare services, and so the HQCA decided to explore this issue further,” says Dr. Tony Fields, Board Chair for the HQCA.

In 2014, the HQCA conducted a survey of adult Albertans about their use and satisfaction with healthcare services. As part of this survey, self-reported height and weight were collected from individuals in order to calculate their body mass index (BMI). Of the 4,424 adult Albertans surveyed, the estimated provincial prevalence of those with overweight was 35.2 per cent and those with obesity was 23.9 per cent. The greatest prevalence of overweight and obesity was found among men, individuals aged 45-64, and those living in the northern part of the province.

“With this report, we aimed to understand the impact of overweight and obesity on quality of life and our healthcare system and to provide rationale for the role of primary healthcare in weight management,” says Andrew Neuner, Chief Executive Officer for the HQCA.

Overweight and obesity is associated with an increased risk of multiple chronic conditions, such as arthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, congestive heart failure, and chronic pain. In addition, overweight and obese individuals reported using the healthcare system for more serious and ongoing issues. They also reported having a lower quality of life.

The report found that the role for managing overweight and obese populations falls predominantly on primary healthcare providers. Evidence showed that diverse strategies for weight management within primary healthcare can be extremely beneficial and there are opportunities for primary care providers and Albertans to engage in discussions about weight management.

Moving forward, the report findings suggest Alberta may benefit from working towards a more unified strategy for weight management. An evaluation of new or ongoing weight-management strategies in the province is needed to better identify those programs that are working well and benefitting the health of Albertans.



This report and supporting materials are available on the HQCA website at [www.hqca.ca](http://www.hqca.ca).

*The Health Quality Council of Alberta gathers and analyzes information and collaborates with Alberta Health, Alberta Health Services, health professions, academia, and other stakeholders to translate that knowledge into practical improvements to health service quality and patient safety in the healthcare system.*

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