



**For Immediate Release:**

November 4, 2010

## **Type 2 Diabetes Number Highest Ever in LA County Increasing rate coincides with alarming upswing of obesity**

LOS ANGELES - Today the Department of Public Health released a report showing the number of adults with diabetes continues to rise in Los Angeles County. The report, "Trends in Diabetes: A Reversible Public Health Crisis", reveals that from 1997 to 2007, diabetes increased from 6.6% to 9.1% among all adults. Type 2 diabetes, which is primarily caused by obesity, accounts for over 90 percent of all diabetes cases in the county. This coincides with rising rates of obesity which increased from 14.3% to 22.2% (1997-2007) in adults.

"It is unacceptable that so many people are suffering from a disease that, in most cases, can be prevented or controlled. Exercising regularly, making healthy eating choices and controlling or reducing weight can help prevent, control or even reverse diabetes," said Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director of Public Health and Health Officer. "Diabetes has been the 6<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in LA County since 1997, and contributes to cardiovascular disease, the number one cause of death. These healthier habits improve quality of life and save lives."

"Diabetes has become the defining epidemic of today's generation. But, while the incidence is staggering, this trend is reversible," said Peter Braun, Executive Director, American Diabetes Association of Los Angeles. "Everyday ADA works to focus resources on fighting and preventing diabetes and the vital race for a cure. Together with leaders across Los Angeles County, our coalition is striving to encourage healthier lifestyles and improve the future outlook of our families, friends and colleagues."

There are three different types of diabetes, including type 1 where the body (pancreas) produces little to no insulin, type 2 where the body's cells resists the affects of insulin, and gestational which can occur during pregnancy. In addition to obesity, other risk factors for type 2 diabetes include physical inactivity, age, family history of diabetes, race/ethnicity, and history of gestational diabetes. Some common symptoms of diabetes are blurry vision, increased thirst and/or urination. However, in its early stages, people with diabetes may not have any symptoms. Diabetes can lead to nerve and blood vessel damage, heart disease, stroke, kidney disease, blindness, loss of sensation in extremities, and amputation. Diabetes is estimated to cost over 6 billion dollars a year in medical expenses alone in Los Angeles County.

### **Statistics for Los Angeles County:**

- In 2007, diabetes affected about 650,000 adults.
- Obesity rates among adults with diabetes (44%) were more than double that of adults without diabetes (20%).
- Among young adults ages 18-39 years old, obesity rates were as follows:
  - Latinos: 27%



- African Americans 23%
- Asians/Pacific Islanders: 12%
- Whites: 14%
- A greater percentage of Latinos and African Americans were diagnosed with diabetes before age 40 than whites and Asians/Pacific Islanders.
- Adults living in households below the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) were twice as likely to have diabetes compared to households at or above 200% of the FPL. This disparity is likely due to higher rates of risk factors for diabetes among those living in poverty, such as obesity and physical inactivity.

**What you can do to prevent diabetes:**

- Follow a healthy meal plan consisting of whole grains, fruits, and vegetables; low-fat dairy products; lean cuts of meat, fish, and poultry; and limited intake of foods high in salt and sugar.
- Be physically active 30-60 minutes on most days of the week.
- Lose excess weight through a healthy diet and increased physical activity.

The report was issued in collaboration with the American Diabetes Association of Los Angeles. For more information on diabetes, including living with diabetes, view the entire report online at <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha> or visit <http://www.diabetes.org>.

The mission of the American Diabetes Association is to prevent and cure diabetes and to improve the lives of all people affected by the disease. In Los Angeles, the ADA works to raise awareness about type 1 and type 2 diabetes and to support the community through educational programs, advocacy, comprehensive resources and fundraising to support research and care. To find out how to get involved in the nonstop effort to Stop Diabetes, visit <http://www.diabetes.org>.

The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting and improving the health of the nearly 10 million residents of Los Angeles County. Through a variety of programs, community partnerships and services, Public Health oversees environmental health, disease control, and community and family health. Public Health comprises more than 4,000 employees and has an annual budget exceeding \$750 million. To learn more about Public Health and the work we do, please visit <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov>, visit our YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/lapublichealth>, or follow us on Twitter: LAPublicHealth.

###