Fighting Obesity Across the Border

Prevention is goal of partnership with Mexican university and health care agencies

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Photo by Kelly Lacefield

What is Type 2 Diabetes?

Type 2 diabetes is the most common form of diabetes. A Type 2 body does not produce enough insulin or cells ignore the insulin.

- When food is eaten, the body breaks down all of the sugars and starches into glucose, which is the basic fuel for cells. Insulin takes the sugar from the blood into the cells.
- When glucose builds up in the blood instead of going into cells, the cells may be starved for energy and, over time, high blood glucose levels may cause heart disease, blindness, nerve damage and kidney damage.

Source: American Diabetes Association

SHARI MCMAHAN

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What’s exciting is that we are using a social ecological model of obesity prevention and training the Tlaxcalan students to use components of this model in their home country. We know that behavioral change is difficult, and providing information on diet and exercise simply is not enough. We must look at the broader picture, including community-based efforts and policy-making strategies to reduce obesity and further prevent Type 2 diabetes.”

About 40 percent (41 million people) of U.S. adults, ages 40 to 74, have pre-diabetes, a condition in which blood glucose levels are higher than normal but not high enough for a diagnosis of diabetes.

People aged 65 or older account for nearly 40 percent of the population with diabetes.

By 2030, 1 out of 3 adults (35 percent) will have diabetes.

The National Institute of Public Health reports that in Mexico:

- The percentage of women considered obese spiked 160 percent between 1988 and 1999.
- In 2000, about 60 percent of men and 64 percent of women were overweight or obese.
- In 2002, a government study in Mexico City found that 30 percent of elementary school children and 45 percent of adolescents were overweight or obese.
- Obesity has created a spike in diabetes, which now is the leading cause of death among adults. Eleven percent of Mexican adults have diabetes.
- Diabetics, if not treated, can lead to serious health problems and cause blindness, lower limb amputations, kidney failure, heart disease and stroke, public health care officials report. “This project ties right into our efforts to prevent diabetes and obesity in the community,” McMahan said. “What’s...