



**Childhood Obesity Rates Slightly Increase for
Redondo Beach Elementary School Students During COVID-19 Pandemic**
*Beach Cities Health District and Redondo Beach Unified School District Continue
Efforts to Combat Childhood Obesity*

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REDONDO BEACH, Calif. (May 31, 2022) – Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) and Redondo Beach Unified School District (RBUSD) are continuing their partnership for school health programming to address a slight increase in childhood obesity among Redondo Beach elementary school students during the pandemic.

After a brief pause in data collection due to COVID-19, BCHD resumed its annual Body Mass Index (BMI) assessments throughout RBUSD elementary schools. The current childhood obesity rate for participating RBUSD elementary students is 7.9%. While this is a slight increase from 2019 (6.4%), obesity rates among RBUSD Kindergarten, 1st, 3rd and 5th grade students have been declining since 2007, and are far below the county, state and national obesity rates.

Since 2007, when BCHD created its LiveWell Kids obesity prevention program, there has been a 60.5% decline in RBUSD student obesity. Healthy school programming, policy changes in school lunch programs and increased overall awareness and education surrounding childhood obesity in the population have all contributed to the decline. Programming includes BCHD's LiveWell Kids Nutrition and Garden Programs, Walking Wednesdays, School Wellness Councils and 8-Minute Morning Exercises.

The LiveWell Kids curriculum is delivered in school gardens and classrooms by approximately 250 trained BCHD volunteers—incorporating nutrition lessons, mindfulness meditations and garden education to teach students healthy habits they can utilize for the rest of their lives. Each year, BCHD also inspires thousands of local children to start their day on a healthy note and walk to school in celebration of International Walk to School Day in October.

In spring 2020, as schools shifted to distance learning due to COVID-19, BCHD was able to adapt its LiveWell Kids program to a virtual format. At-home exercise and mindfulness programs were also provided to families.

“We believe the slight increase in Redondo Beach childhood obesity can be attributed to the stressors our children are experiencing due to the pandemic.” said Tom Bakaly, Beach Cities Health District CEO. “With children back in classrooms, we’re hopeful our programming can turn this recent increase around, and we can continue to support our youth’s physical and mental health.”

BCHD's LiveWell Kids program was recently recognized in an abstract published in the peer-reviewed [*Journal of Health Promotion Practice*](#). The abstract covered the period from the 2008-09

school year to 2018-19, using body mass index (BMI) data calculated for each RBUSD student based on their measured height and weight. In 2020, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health also published a [Community Health Report](#) detailing the accomplishments of BCHD's LiveWell Kids success.

“For the past 10 years, RBUSD has been at the forefront of the ‘whole child’ movement. These numbers are a testament to our strong partnership with Beach Cities Health District, as their leadership and programs are key components of our success,” said Dr. Steven Keller, RBUSD Superintendent. “When we partnered with BCHD and instituted their LiveWell Kids program, we all had lofty goals. Staff, parents, kids, the board of education as well as BCHD have all contributed to a program that continues to exceed those goals.”

BCHD is currently exploring an opportunity to expand its “LiveWell Tots” school health program to early childhood development centers throughout the Beach Cities. Additionally, allcove Beach Cities, a youth wellness center, will be opening this fall at Beach Cities Health District, 514 N. Prospect Ave., 4th Floor, Redondo Beach. allcove Beach Cities will offer mental and physical health services, education and employment assistance, peer and family support, and substance use prevention programs for young people ages 12-25 in the greater South Bay.

For more information about BCHD's LiveWell Kids program, please visit www.bchd.org/LiveWellKids.

About Beach Cities Health District

Beach Cities Health District (BCHD), named the 2021 “Healthcare District of the Year” by the Association of California Healthcare Districts, is focused on preventive health and serves the communities of Hermosa Beach, Manhattan Beach and Redondo Beach. Established in 1955 as a public agency, it offers an extensive range of dynamic health and wellness programs, with innovative services and facilities to promote health and prevent diseases across the lifespan. BCHD also operates AdventurePlex, a health and fitness facility where kids play their way to good health, and the Center for Health & Fitness, a comprehensive fitness center that is the only Medical Fitness Association-certified facility in California. Visit www.bchd.org or call (310) 374-3426 for more information.

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