N.D. Children are On the Move to Better Health
2016-2017

The Situation
Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Some researchers consider children to be "overfed" but "undernourished." Obese children are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease, with 70 percent showing at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and osteoarthritis.

Extension Response
On the Move to Better Health is a five-week school-based curriculum for fifth-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for good nutrition. The curriculum aims to increase fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods in the diets of children and improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts
From 2007 to 2017, 22,212 children and their families participated in On the Move to Better Health. In 2016-17, 25 counties participated in the program. Post-surveys with 3,040 children showed the following as a result of the program:

- 50 percent consumed more dairy
- 55 percent drank less pop
- 52 percent chose more healthful snacks
- 57 percent increased daily physical activity
- 50 percent ate more fruits and vegetables

Surveys with 896 parents in 2016-17 showed the following:
- 80 percent of parents/caregivers read the newsletter and 33 percent set a weekly goal.
- 37 percent increased their fruit consumption and 28 percent increased their vegetable consumption.
- 16 percent increased whole-grain intake.
- 18 percent increased their dairy consumption.

Feedback
Children said:
- "I liked that it encouraged me and my family and class to eat more fruits and veggies and drink more water!"
- "I liked that I got to try new fruits and veggies. I also liked that I could set healthy goals and could complete them."

Public Value Statement
Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective health-care costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

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