

Obesity and SC Medicaid Recipients

SFY 2009 Fact Sheet

Background

Overweight and obesity are both labels for ranges of weight that are greater than what is generally considered healthy for a given height. For adults, overweight and obesity ranges are determined by using weight and height to calculate a number called the “body mass index” (BMI), which correlates with the amount of body fat. An adult who has a BMI between 25 and 29.9 is considered overweight, 30 or higher is considered obese, and 40 or more is defined as severely obese. Obesity can lead to hypertension, heart disease, stroke, high cholesterol, diabetes, certain cancers, and respiratory difficulty.¹

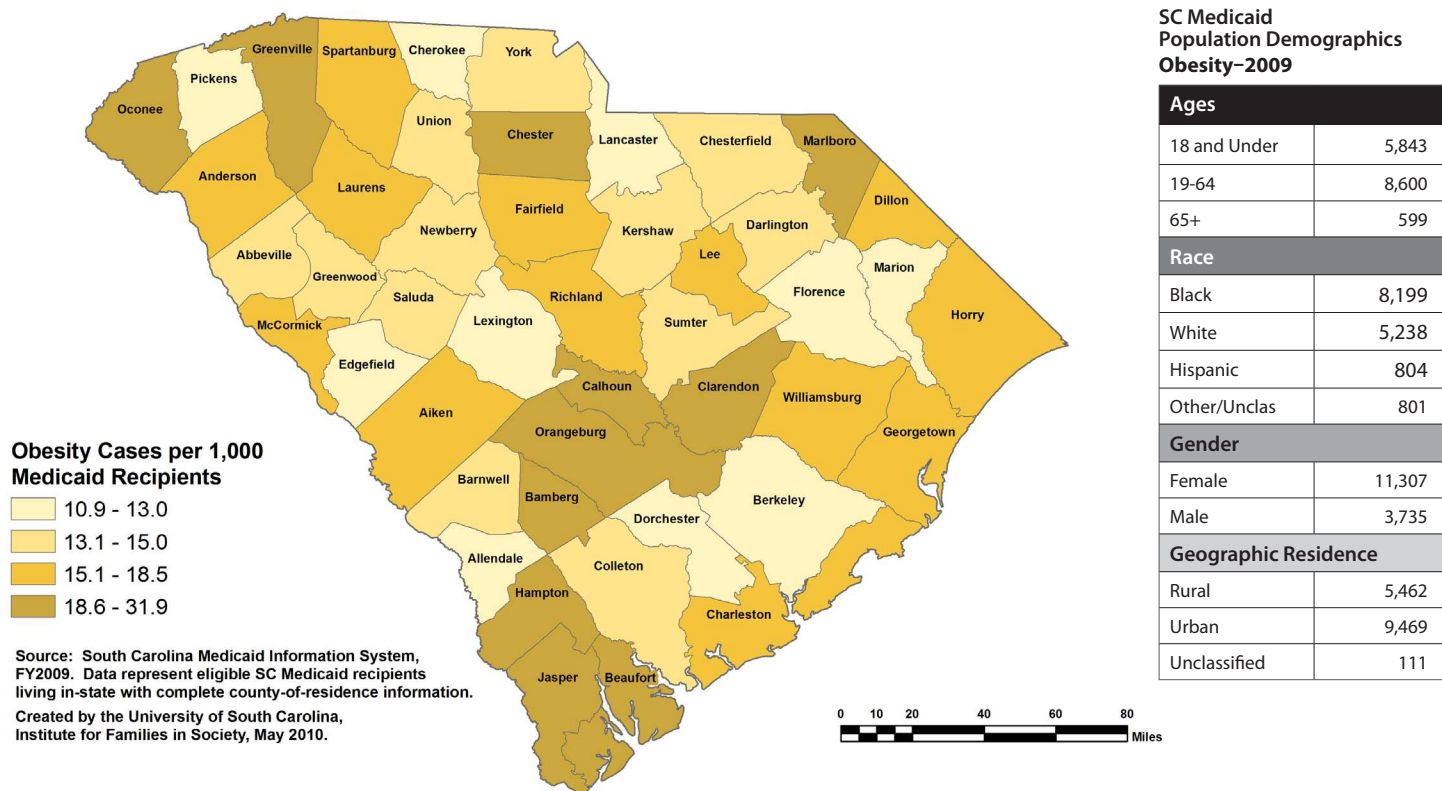
In 2007-2008, the prevalence of obesity in the United States was 32.2 percent among adult men and 35.5 percent among adult women. The increases in the prevalence of obesity do not appear to be continuing at the same rate as in the preceding 10 years, particularly for women and possibly for men. Studies show that relative to non-Hispanic Whites, the likelihood of being obese is significantly greater among non-Hispanic Blacks and Mexican American women, but not Mexican American men.² High body mass index (BMI) among children and adolescents continues to be a public health concern in the United States. Since 1980, the prevalence of BMI for age at or above the 95th percentile (sometimes termed “obese”) has tripled among school-age children and adolescents, and remains high at approximately 17 percent.³ One in seven low-income, preschool-aged children is obese, but the epidemic may be stabilizing as the prevalence of obesity in low-income, two to four year-olds increased from 12.4 percent in 1998 to 14.5 percent in 2003, but rose to only 14.6 percent in 2008.⁴

A 2009 study predicts that in 10 years, the US is expected to spend over \$343 billion on health care costs that are attributable to obesity, if rates continue to increase at their current levels. In 2018, the cost of obesity at a national level is projected to be \$1,425 per person, rising from \$361 per adult today. Direct health costs for obesity will be 4 times as much in 10 years as they are today.⁵

SC Fiscal Year 2009

A total of 15,042 Medicaid recipients had paid claims associated with a primary diagnosis of obesity or 1.61 percent of the total Medicaid recipient population. Total medical expenditures for this population were \$126,939,673, accounting for 2.94 percent of the state Medicaid expenditures.

Prevalence of Obesity among South Carolina Medicaid Recipients by County



SC Medicaid Population Demographics Obesity-2009

Ages	
18 and Under	5,843
19-64	8,600
65+	599
Race	
Black	8,199
White	5,238
Hispanic	804
Other/Unclas	801
Gender	
Female	11,307
Male	3,735
Geographic Residence	
Rural	5,462
Urban	9,469
Unclassified	111

Developed under contract for the SC Department of Health and Human Services. This factsheet and important information about its use and data limitations can be found at www.ifs.sc.edu/HSR/Factsheets. **Suggested citation:** López-De Fede, A., Mayfield-Smith, K., Stewart, J., Brantley, V., Liu, Q., Rodgers, M., & Sudduth, D. (2010). *Obesity and SC Medicaid recipients: SFY 2009 factsheet*. Columbia, SC: Institute for Families in Society, University of South Carolina.

¹ www.cdc.gov/obesity/defining.html

² jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/303/3/235?ijkey=ijKHq6YbJn3Oo&keytype=ref&siteid=amajnl

³ jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/2009.2012

⁴ www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/lowincome.html

⁵ www.americashealthrankings.org/2009/spotlight/Cost.aspx