

Obesity

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She said this isn't always intentional, especially with children from poor, single parent households, who are just trying to make ends meet.

"Their parents have to make really hard decisions on how their money is going to be spent," Moffitt said. "Eating healthy is not going to be the thing they spend money on, because they're just overwhelmed trying to pay bills and put food on the table, much less what kind of food."

Moffitt said such scenarios leave her with more questions than answers.

"With children who come from those kinds of backgrounds or those who have the means to do that and still make poor choices for their families, the challenge is, 'How do we educate to prevent this?'" Moffitt said. "How do we get them what they need to know on how to make better choices?"

She said the challenge she and others face is to educate and give people different resources. This will help them make better choices, regardless of their situation, she said.

"Part of my job is to make people aware that we have to make tough decisions," Moffitt said. "Nobody should be, in my opinion, branded as inconsiderate or uncaring of their child because they're choosing to not feed them well. I'm one of those people that really tries to look at the individual's situation before I put any blame on anything. I just focus on getting

prevention and education materials out, so that we can do the best to help them."

According to Terri March, nutrition coordinator for Buncombe County and the Healthy Buncombe Coalition, the major contributor in obesity lawsuits is the result of people looking for meals at a value price.

For some families, this is all they can afford, she said.



Jill Moffitt

"They're not going in to this with the understanding or concept of the huge amount of calories involved in supersized or value-added meals," March said. "When you are in families who are poor, they're just worried about getting something on the table to feed

their child. The less nutritious products are cheaper and they can afford them and they keep folks from going hungry. So then you can't really blame a parent for trying to get food on the table."

She said it's important to make nutritious foods available to those who can't otherwise afford it.

"Perhaps there is a pricing structure that can be put in to place, where nutrient rich foods, such as fruits and vegetables, are more affordable," March said. "That might be a valuable strategy that we can put in to place."

Many families don't have access to healthy food options because they can't afford it, she said.

"In many lower income neighborhoods, especially those with transportation issues, the closest place to find food is a convenience store," March said. "You're not going to find fresh fruits and vegetables there and if you do they're not going to be quality products."

She said parental responsibility is certainly a key element in addressing obesity.

"There have been numerous studies that have shown that it's very difficult for parents to recognize the extent of the problem in their kids," March said. "We can't put the blame entirely on them. We need to educate and support our parents."

For Danny Dawkins, lawsuits in relation to obesity are not an issue for his company.

They avoid such issues by doing what's necessary, he said.

"From being in the industry, we have an obligation to listen to our customers and what our customers are saying," said Dawkins, senior director of UNC Asheville's Chartwells Dining Service. "We're always cognizant of all demographics. That's why we have our own registered dietitian on staff, who does nothing but handle those kind of concerns."

He said some people rely on such food for comfort without realizing the effects it can have.

Seminar

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Smith, the chief economist at Parsec Financial, resides in Arden and says he and his wife love living in the Asheville area. The Wall Street Journal named him the best economic forecaster twice.

"U.S. voters are impatient. If the current guys in office do not fix this mess in two years, we will have a Republican president after the next election," Smith said.



Joe Sulock

Smith noted that when consumers feel better, they spend more, and that will be the job of small business owners' positive attitudes. He has more than 25 years of experience as an economics forecaster

and his career spans private industry, government and academic institutions including tenures with Wharton Economics, Union Carbide and the Federal Reserve.

"Small businesses are the backbone of the U.S. There are about 27 million of them," Smith said.

Smith predicts the U.S. will bounce back from the recession first, China second and then Canada, but Europe has a long way to go.

"If you think it's bad here, go somewhere else in the world; it's far worse."

Grant

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nificantly improving local and regional air quality, Miller said.

"Using cleaner fuels help the environment. It's part of our plan with the university to be environmentally sustainable," Miller said. "Allowing the public to utilize these fuels will make it easy for everyone to reduce their contributions to air pollution."

Miller estimates this project will result in a 20 to 25 percent reduction of emissions in one year. The amount of emissions reduced in 10 years using E10, E85 and B50 would be 550 tons, according to estimations in the grant application.

"The funds are only to install the fuel system and will be available for one year," Miller said. "Just because we applied and won doesn't mean we won't be eligible in

the future. If we want to buy alternate fuel vehicles or electric vehicles, we can ask for those in the next grant. We're not making new plans yet, though. First I want to get this one bedded down."

Miller hopes UNCA will serve as an example to other universities and state institutions. Bill Eaker, environmental services manager of the Land-of-Sky Clean Vehicles Coalition, supports the university's endeavors.

"The CVC is thrilled that UNCA is expanding its use of alternative fuels and advanced technology vehicles," Eaker said. "Through the installation of this multi-fuel station, we encourage other public and private fleets to follow their examples."

Miller hopes the switch to alternative fuels will assist the LOSRC in obtaining the

U.S. Department of Energy's "Clean Cities" designation for the Asheville region.

Mark Combs, director of public works for the city of Asheville, believes the project



Corey Scheip

will strengthen the commitment among the city of Asheville, the university and the community at large to promote environmental stewardship.

"A tree grows large from a sea," Combs said. "All of these new technologies and fuels require training and knowledge, so even starting out with a small number of vehicles is a way to get the staff and the city council thinking that way. UNCA is absolutely pushing to

be a leader in reducing mobile source emissions, which is something everyone needs to pay attention to because we all drive."

Steve Baxley, associate vice chancellor of campus operations, wrote a letter of support for the grant application, commending the project as an important step in keeping with the university's commitment to environmental stewardship.

"Our challenge is to do what's right for us," Baxley said. "If that becomes a model for other folks, then great. Plenty of universities in the U.S. are doing far more than we are; unfortunately, plenty also aren't doing as much as we are. We're all blessed here at UNCA to have faculty and students that are concerned about the environment and responsible stewardship. We do the best we can with what we have."