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# Buddy Up Program Evaluation: Creating an Overall Lifestyle Change

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BUDDY UP PROGRAM EVALUATION:  
CREATING AN OVERALL LIFESTYLE CHANGE

By

Kathryn Hansen

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## **A. Executive Summary**

The purpose of this thesis is to evaluate the Buddy Up program in Westland, Michigan, as part of the city's "Passport to a Healthy City" campaign. Westland's mayor, William Wild, created the campaign after attending a meeting by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. It relates well with the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan, which will also be discussed. From this evaluation, I hope to determine if the program creates an overall lifestyle change.

The City of Westland recently initiated a "Passport to a Healthy City" campaign aimed at targeting citizens who are overweight, or who are looking to be healthier. According to their website, the mission of the program is as follows:

*"The 'Passport to a Healthy City' campaign will promote healthy, active lifestyles for all of Westland's residents through the development of fun, convenient programs created as a result of strong public/private partnerships between the City of Westland, local businesses, and its residents. By encouraging our residents to work towards a healthier lifestyle through education, diet, and exercise the goal of this campaign is to become recognized as one of the healthiest cities in America."*

As mentioned above, as part of this campaign, the city's mayor, William R. Wild, introduced "Buddy Up," a free health program to Wayne and Westland residents. Allen "Buddy" Shuh, a contestant from season 13 of NBC's "Biggest Loser," and various other volunteers, run the program and provide nutritional information and exercising tips.

In evaluating this program, I will look at the program's sponsors, trainers, and marketing efforts, including social media integration, online components, etc., to measure their success. Various metrics will be used to validate if the program has proven to be beneficial by April 6, 2013.

I will also include a brief description of obesity in America and the related weight loss programs (fad diets, etc.). As mentioned above, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan will also be detailed as a pre-requisite to the "Passport to a Healthy City" campaign and Buddy Up program.

Results gathered from a lifestyle change survey distributed during week 9 of the Buddy Up program will also be analyzed. This will help determine the feelings of those participating in the program and if they find it beneficial to their personal goals. My personal testimonial will also be added, as I am a participant-observer in this program.

The thesis will conclude with research about other cities or entities that may be hosting this same type of program. A brief marketing plan will also be created so as to promote this campaign to neighboring cities and states.

## **B. History of Obesity and Fitness**

Unfortunately, obesity is a common word in today's society, as over one-third (35.7 percent) of U.S adults have this condition (Adult Obesity Facts). It is usually used to describe someone who is severely overweight. However, there are instances when a person can be

considered obese, but be in perfect health. These types of people are usually larger, but their classification of obese is from being muscular, i.e. professional athletes. Since muscle weighs more than fat, these people could fall into the obese category on the Body Mass Index (BMI) scale without succumbing to the typical definition that most use.

To exemplify this, two students at Eastern Michigan University fall into this latter category. Both Jordan Janowitz and Daniel Setser are training to be bodybuilders. Setser recently competed in his first competition weighing in at 180, with four percent body fat. He is 5 feet 6 inches tall, which gives him a BMI of 29. This places him in the overweight category on the BMI scale. After competition he usually weighs 200 pounds, which gives him a BMI score of 32.3, labeling him obese.

Janowitz has a similar situation. He is 5 feet 7 inches tall and in the off-season weighs 232. These measurements give him a BMI rating of 36.3, under the classification of obese. During any given competition, he weighs between 190 and 195 and has a body fat percentage of less than 12 percent. At the 190 weight, his BMI score is 29.8, labeling him overweight. At the 195 weight, his score is 30.5, labeling him obese.

Neither of these two men are overweight or obese by the typical definition that most think of. However, as one can see, this is usually the case for athletes and therefore the BMI scale should not be used for these types of people.

The obesity epidemic has been prevalent not only in Americans, but all around the world. However, this thesis will focus strictly on the United States and the obesity rates over the past 25 years. More specifically, it will single out the state of Michigan for certain examples.

Please reference the graphs in Appendix A for the following information.

Over the past 25 years, the United States as a whole has seen an enormous increase in the percentage of obese adults. The term obese is classified as a BMI rating of over 30. In 1985, limited data was available on the percentage of obese Americans as indicated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) diagrams (Adult Obesity Facts). These maps show only 21 states reporting obesity percentages during that year. Of these states, 13 reported having less than a 10 percent obesity rate. This means that of that state, less than 10 percent of adults were classified as obese. The remaining states had a 10-14 percent obesity percentage meaning that 10-14 percent of their population was classified as obese.

Looking forward 10 years to 1995, the entire country reported data, but no state indicated having less than a 10 percent obesity percentage. Of the 50 states, 23 had an obesity level of 10-14 percent. These states were predominately in the west half of the country, but a majority of the northern east coast states were included as well. The remaining 27 states had an obesity percentage of 15-19 percent. This huge increase can be attributed to numerous factors, which may include, but is not limited to, poor eating habits and lack of exercise.



In 1997, Indiana, Kentucky, and Mississippi, were the first three states to report the percentage of obese adults in their state being between 20-24 percent. They were not the only states to see an increase in obesity rates, however. A total of 34 states, compared to 27 states in 1995, listed over 15-19 percent of their adult population obese and only 16 states listed their population as having an obesity percentage of 10-14 percent. Most of the states reporting 15-19 percent of their population obese were in the eastern half of the United States.

In 2000, the results were even more drastic. According to the CDC diagrams, only one state, Colorado, labeled the number of obese adults in their state as 10-14 percent. 27 of the remaining 49 states considered their population in the 15-19 percent range, leaving 22 states with an obesity percentage among adults as 20-24 percent. These states were predominantly in the Midwest and Southern areas of the United States.

As if the previous percentages weren't shocking enough, 2005 saw even more disturbing results. Of the 50 states, only Hawaii, Colorado, Vermont, and Connecticut, classified their states as having an adult obesity percentage of 15-19 percent. 29 states labeled their states as having a percentage of 20-24 percent obese, and 14 states listed their obesity percentages as 25-29 percent. Three states, Louisiana, Mississippi, and West Virginia were the first to classify their population as having an adult obesity level of greater than 30 percent, and are mainly located in the South.

The most recent data, collected in 2010, is by far the most surprising. No states classified their adult population as having below a 19 percent obesity level and only 14 reported a 20-24 percent obesity level. A majority of the states listed their obesity over 25 percent, with 24 states reporting 25-29 percent obesity levels and 12 states listing their population as greater than 30 percent obese. Again, most of these states were predominately located in the South and Midwest regions of the United States. Michigan is among the 12 states in the last category with a population obesity rate of greater than 30 percent.

With this staggering information, the CDC had to re-establish a new baseline for estimating a state's adult obesity prevalence, which began in 2011. Due to these changes, any information collected from 2011 and beyond cannot be compared to the previous data listed above.

However, the numbers gathered seem to be very similar. According to the CDC, in 2011, no state had a prevalence of obesity less than 20 percent. Likewise, 39 states had a prevalence of 25 percent or more, and 12 of those states had a prevalence of 30 percent or more. Again, Michigan was listed among those 12 states with a prevalence of 31.3 percent. The southern United States has the highest prevalence of obesity with 29.5 percent. Following were the Midwest with 29.0 percent, the Northeast with 25.3 percent, and the West with 24.3 percent. Since the obesity epidemic has been growing at an alarming rate, it is not surprising that many adults have tried to find ways to lose weight. This has taken various forms including dieting and exercising. At the end of 2012, Marketdata Enterprises, a marketing research firm that has been following the U.S. weight loss market since 1989, published some information regarding the weight loss market and what it expects to see in 2013 (PRWeb).

According to their findings, 83.3 percent of dieting consumers prefer “do-it-yourself” types of programs or using diet books. They have also used fad diets, which are mainly promoted by celebrities. Also, there are over 100 million dieters in the United States and they attempt to diet four to five times each year. As for a potential cause of the obesity epidemic, Marketdata Enterprises did find a correlation between the recession and weight gain (PRWeb).

In 2013, Marketdata Enterprises expects there to be a continued double-digit gain for diet websites like Weight Watchers and other weight-loss programs. They also expect more programs that cater to other demographics such as Hispanics and African Americans (PRWeb). This is most likely due to the CDC’s report that non-Hispanic blacks have the highest age-adjusted rates of obesity with 49.5 percent, compared to Mexican Americans with 40.4 percent, all Hispanics with 39.1 percent, and non-Hispanics whites with 34.3 percent (Adult Obesity Facts).

Clearly, obesity is an extreme epidemic in today’s society, no matter what nationality, gender, age, etc. In fact, according to the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan, obesity is the root cause of most chronic illnesses and seven out of 10 deaths each year are a result of chronic illnesses. Also listed in the plan are the consequences of obesity, which include Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, stroke, and dementia. The obesity condition is mainly caused by a sedentary lifestyle and unhealthy eating habits, so engaging in a healthier lifestyle can significantly reduce the risk of becoming obese and becoming susceptible to chronic illnesses (Michigan Plan).

It was previously stated that Michigan has an obesity prevalence of almost 32 percent. This means that 2.5 million adults and 400,000 children are obese in the state. Many of these 2.9 million Michiganders currently show signs of a chronic illness (Michigan Plan). To fight this devastating condition, many entities around the world have made an effort to correct this problem.

Two such entities are the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the State of Michigan. Both have recognized the increasing level of obesity among Americans and have set forth plans to help reduce this risk in adults and children. With these plans and the state and local governments backing the programs, they anticipate a drop in the obesity prevalence percentage.

### **C. U.S. Conference of Mayors**

The United States Conference of Mayors aided in the creation of Westland's Passport to a Healthy City campaign. According to their website, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) is the official non-partisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. It also notes that, "In addition to the ongoing work of the Conference's standing committees, mayors are organized into task forces to examine and act on issues that demand special attention such as civic innovation, exports, hunger and homelessness, and brownfields." These issues would also include the obesity struggle in today's society.

In April 2004, the USCM launched the Mayor's Healthy Cities campaign. According to their website, this campaign was enacted due to the nation's growing obesity epidemic and its

relationship to chronic diseases and certain types of cancer (Organization Overview). The campaign focuses on two things:

- Establishing policies and programs that facilitate physical exercise and healthy eating, particularly among low-income individuals and racial and ethnic minorities; and
- Promoting the benefits of physical activity and healthy eating.

As of now, the campaign focuses on childhood obesity.

With this strategic campaign in place, the mayors were asked to create a campaign to promote health in their cities. It was then that Mayor Wild began plans for the Passport to a Healthy City campaign.

#### **D. The Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan**

The Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan was created in June 2012 as an attempt to tackle the growing issue of obesity in America (Michigan Plan). As previously mentioned, Michigan is one of the most obese states within the United States.

Outlined in the plan are various parts on how the state plans to handle the obesity epidemic. According to a press release within the booklet from former director of the Department of Community Health, Olga Dazzo, the plan contains Michigan's priorities for obesity prevention over the next five years. This includes the public health crisis, components of the

4 x 4 tool, strategies and goals for the next five years, and organizations that are partnering with the state to help the cause (Michigan Plan).

As one can imagine, to create this plan, many were involved. Dazzo listed in the same press release that the Department of Community Health worked with various entities to help design the plan. These included the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Wayne State University, and an Obesity Steering Committee. The department also held an Obesity Summit, which attracted almost 500 participants from around Michigan, to discuss and identify key strategies that the state should implement (Michigan Plan). With their help, the State of Michigan has a more positive outlook on tackling the obesity epidemic and becoming a healthier state.

To aid in the promotion of this new plan, Governor Rick Snyder discussed the topic during his Health and Wellness Message on September 14, 2011 saying, "Our vision is for Michiganders to be healthy, productive individuals, living in communities that support health and wellness, with ready access to an affordable person-centered, and community-based system of care," (Michigan Plan). The governor also put this initiative on the Michigan Dashboard, which is used to easily track the state's performance regarding this health issue and various others (MI Dashboard).

According to the plan, the goal of the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan is "for every Michigander to adopt health as a personal core value." In order to encourage adopting this value, the plan is centralized around the 4 x 4 tool, which can be used to maintain and/or

achieve a healthier way of living. This 4 x 4 tool hopes to instill four healthy behaviors and keep four health measures under control (Michigan Plan). Each of the categories are listed below:

<b>Healthy Behaviors</b>	<b>Health Measures</b>
Maintain a Healthy Diet	Body Mass Index (BMI)
Engage in Regular Exercise	Blood Pressure
Get an Annual Physical Examination	Cholesterol Level
Avoid all Tobacco Use and Exposure	Blood Glucose Level

In order to implement a plan of this scale, collaboration among various entities is needed. As listed in the plan, these entities include state, tribal, and local governments; businesses, industry, and other private sector partners; schools and community organizations; and individuals and families (Michigan Plan). With this collaboration, it is likely that the state will be able to reduce its obesity percentage over the next five years. This reduction, however, will be dependent upon the willingness of Michiganders to live healthier lifestyles and their belief in this plan provided by the state.

The Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan also laid out five goals it hopes to accomplish over the next five years (Michigan Plan). These include:

1. Develop a multimedia public awareness campaign to reduce obesity and promote a social movement encouraging every Michigander to adopt health as a personal core value through promotion of the 4 x 4 Plan.
2. Deploy 46 community coalitions throughout Michigan to support implementation of the 4 x 4 Plan.
3. Engage partners throughout Michigan to help coalitions implement the 4 x 4 Plan.
  - a. Employers
  - b. Trade and other professional organizations
  - c. Education systems
  - d. Departments of state government
4. Within the Michigan Department of Community Health, create the infrastructure to support 3 x 3 Plan implementation energizing the local coalitions and partners.
5. Seek funding to finance the plan for a projected first-year cost of \$18.25 million.

The strategies they plan to use for each goal vary, but all promote a simple and straightforward way on how to encourage citizens to be involved and live healthier.

Through these steps, the obesity prevalence percentage should decrease, but only time will tell if this will actually be the case.

There are 76 partnering organizations helping to promote the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan (Michigan Plan). Some of these organizations include: American Cancer Society; American Heart Association; Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan; Healthy Kids, Healthy Michigan; Michigan Chamber of Commerce; Michigan



Departments of Agriculture and Rural Development, Community Health, Education, Human Services, Natural Resources, and Transportation; Michigan Governor's Office, Michigan State University, University of Michigan, Wayne State University, and Weight Watchers. Through their support of the program, citizens have a variety of resources to turn to in order to gain and understanding about how to live a healthier lifestyle.

As an added note, some restaurants and other entities are looking to help in the fight against childhood obesity by altering their menus (Michigan Plan). Schools are looking to provide lower calorie milk with lower sugar and fat. Likewise, Darden restaurants, which include Bahama Breeze, LongHorn Steakhouse, Red Lobster, and Olive Garden, among others, are making a commitment to provide healthier choices. They plan to have a fruit or vegetable as one of the sides for every kid's menu item.

#### **E. City of Westland's "Passport to a Healthy City" Campaign**

Coupled with the aforementioned U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan, Mayor William Wild decided to help the City of Westland become one of the healthiest cities in not only Michigan, but also America. For this goal, he created the "Passport to a Healthy City" Campaign designed to help people reach their goals by eating better and exercising more (Passport).

The mayor launched the campaign on Wednesday, November 2, 2011 at the grand opening of the MJR Westland Grand Digital Cinema 16 (Ackron, Oct. 2011). The City partnered with St. Mary Mercy Livonia Hospital for this campaign, and according to a

press release, the hospital plans to provide around \$11 million in low-cost and free health programs and services. Mayor Wild was pleased with his decision to implement the campaign. "It is with much enthusiasm that I announce this exciting new partnership between the City of Westland, St. Mary Mercy Hospital, local businesses, and residents to launch Westland's Healthy City Campaign. The "Passport to a Healthy City" promotes healthy, active lifestyles through education, diet, and fitness with a goal of being one of the healthiest cities in America," the mayor said in the release (Ackron, Oct. 2011).

David Spivey, president and CEO of St. Mary Mercy Hospital had similar sentiments. "It is a stellar example of how strong partnerships help improve the health of our communities and ensure that everyone has access to the health care they need," (Ackron, Oct. 2011).

As mentioned in the title, the campaign is focused around the passports that citizens are able to pick up from any of the Passport Partners listed on the City's website. These included Best Buy, LongHorn Steakhouse, Leo's Coney Island, and many more.

According to Lori Fodale, director of Economic Development, the goal after receiving the passport was to fill it with stamps from various locations around the city. "The whole idea was that people would read the tips in their passport, they would take the passport to the places listed on the website, and they would get their passport stamped," Fodale said in an interview. After completing the passport, which requires 24 stamps, citizens would redeem their passport for prizes such as gift cards from other local businesses around Westland. Those citizens would then be considered Rewards Partners.

In a press release after the campaign began, it was mentioned again that the overall goal of the program was to “promote healthy, active lifestyles for all of Westland’s residents through the development of fun, convenient programs created as a result of strong public/private partnerships between the City of Westland, local businesses, and its residents,” (Ackron, Nov. 2011). Mayor Wild also added in the release that, “The overall health of a community plays a major role in the viability of communities as healthier people statistically live longer, less stressful, and happier lives. With that said, I am putting for a challenge to all residents of Westland and the surrounding area to make a commitment to a healthier lifestyle.”

In another press release, Mayor Wild emphasized his reasoning for the Passport campaign, “We had to come up with an easy way to get people engaged, and it had to be fun. The goal of the Passport program is that, the more we get people to practice these healthy lifestyle choices, the better chance it has to become habit,” (Gladstone, Jan. 2013).

For the first two years of the campaign, not many participated and completed the passports, despite the huge turnout of about 300 people at the campaign’s launch. However, this could potentially change in 2013 with the new Buddy Up program.

#### **F. History of Allen “Buddy” Shuh**

Allen “Buddy” Shuh is best known for his participation on season 13 of NBC’s The Biggest Loser reality television show. The 43-year-old was born in Landstuhl, Germany

on an Army base and was then raised in Michigan, Ohio, and Florida with his four siblings. He now resides in Wayne, Michigan.

During a recent speaking engagement, Shuh mentioned that while in high school, he was captain of both his football and wrestling teams. He was also voted “Most Athletic” his senior year. After high school, he attended Ohio State University, played football, and then received his bachelor’s degree in mathematics from Eastern Michigan University.

After college, Shuh stopped playing sports and exercising. He had never had a severe problem with his weight because he had been used to his metabolism helping him keep weight off, but this was no longer the case. In 2002, he found himself around 330-340 pounds due to his lack of exercise, not eating right, and eating too much. This continued for a few more years, but he was able to keep his weight around that level.

Things changed drastically for Shuh in 2005 when he and his wife were expecting a baby. After attending a routine checkup, they discovered that their unborn daughter was missing a spleen and kidney and six months after the birth, she passed away. This was when he started to put on the most weight. He had a dismal view on life, and over the next two years gained 100 pounds to a total of 430-440 pounds.

It was at this moment when a light “clicked” for Shuh. He realized that although the sadness of losing his daughter was still there, he didn’t want to give up on his other children. He recalled realizing that he wasn’t going to be able to walk his other daughters

down the aisle if he kept living his life the way he was, so he knew he had to do something. As he put it, "If not for me, which should be enough, I'm going to do it for my kids." Because of this, he then began to search for and try diets with some success. After a couple years and he lost about 30-40 pounds, but still wanted to lose more.

Over the years he had been telling his family that he wanted to get in shape and wanted to figure out his weight problem. Then one day his brother called and mentioned that The Biggest Loser was having a tryout at Gardner White in Troy, MI in July 2011. Shuh didn't believe there was any way he would get on the show originally, but agreed to go. They stood in line for six hours and had a one-minute interview. He, like the other potential contestants, was told if they liked him, they would give him a call. He received a call the next day. The next step was a one-hour interview with NBC. He recalls not wanting to be on the show because he had seen what the contestants go through and, "It didn't look fun. At all." However, he and his brother, who also got a callback, went to the interview.

Going into the interview, he knew he wanted to lose weight, but still wasn't trying to get on the show. He figured that most people would be trying to get on the show and would be acting as such, but he acted normal and relaxed. This however, backfired on him, as the show was looking for people like him. In August 2011, he received another phone call. The executives at NBC had liked what they saw in his interview tape and invited him out to California. At this point he was a finalist, but wasn't on the show.

He then had to make a decision about whether or not to travel to California. As previously mentioned, he originally thought there was no way he would be chosen. However, with the invitation to travel to California awaiting his reply, he needed to seriously consider his options. One thing he had to consider was his three small children and wife, who was pregnant. He also needed to consider his job as a pastor in Wayne and who would be able to cover for him in his absence. In relation to missing work, Shuh mentioned in the presentation that many people ask how he got paid while on the show. To this he responded, "NBC pays you \$100 per day to be on their shows."

After taking everything into consideration, he and his brother decided to fly out to California in September 2011 where they were then sequestered in a hotel for two weeks. This was the same for the other finalists as well, as NBC brought out 50 people, 20 of which they would keep for the show. During this time, each contestant was run through IQ tests, psychological tests, physical tests, interviews, etc. After the two weeks, NBC told him that he had been chosen. He then was told to call home and say goodbye because in three hours they were sending people to the hotel room to take their phones, computers, etc. There was no contact with anyone from home while on the show, including his pregnant wife. He was on the show for almost a half year, about five and a half months.

Shuh then mentioned that people always ask what's it like to be on TV and if the workouts are really that hard. To this he responded, "Yes! Very much so." As with most contestants on the show, he was out of shape. He mentioned he hadn't run in probably 15

years and on the first day he trained with world-class trainers. His first workout is his worst memory, as there were 12 cameras watching each of the contestants. Naturally, his heart was racing from being nervous as this was his TV debut and everyone back home was watching.

For their first workout, the trainers worked them for an hour, hour and a half with both trainers. After this time, they would then pick a trainer, and he and his brother would split up. Shuh recalled that he only made it through about 45 minutes of the first workout. In the presentation he described it saying, "I'm lightheaded, I'm like actually seeing stars, and my stomach started to churn and I'm like, 'I am going to throw up.' And now, they know what they're doing to you because there's white buckets, like all around the gym. So I run over to the white bucket and I remember I had this horrifying moment of thinking about the fact that I'm going to puke, and I pick up the bucket and I'm about to just heave into this bucket. And I see one cameraman sprinting for a close-up in front, and another guy zooming in from the side, and in my mind I'm going, 'Oh, man' because I had daydreamed about this, and I'm going, 'I'm gonna be awesome at this show,' and now I'm going, 'Nope.' Everyone I know is going to see me vomiting from like close range and I'm going, 'This is not actually what I pictured.' "

He then mentioned how he looked around the gym and realized that he wasn't the only one feeling like this. Half of the contestants (9/18) were either vomiting or unconscious, and what we at home didn't realize is that it was 103 degrees that day. He also said that

they wouldn't turn on the fans because it was disrupting the volume, so that was also one of the reasons as to why contestants were getting sick and passing out.

On the show, Shuh mentioned that they do a variety of different workouts and take contestants out of their comfort zone. An example of this is the week they took the contestants to Zumba. He recalled from earlier that morning, "I had this epiphany. It was probably life changing for me. I was realizing that on the show up to this point that I was defensive and I was basically just trying to survive. And I had this rhyme come into my head and thought 'It is now time to stop surviving and start thriving.' It's time to really go for it."

An average day on *The Biggest Loser* consists of about six to eight hours of working out. As previously mentioned, Shuh was there about 150 days, and during those days, he mentioned there were very tough times, which included not being able to talk to anyone he knew, but there were also a lot of fun times too. One such time was about four months in when the contestants traveled to Hawaii. While there he was able to learn how to surf with Bethany Hamilton, a professional surfer, whom he had known since she was a child at the age of 13.

Two weeks after Hawaii, the show decided to do a big reveal. Shuh recalled, "They cut our hair, and I got contact lenses and shaved, and gave me a suit. And I got to meet my wife and my two sons who flew out and I met them in the White House. I mean, what a cool experience. I'm standing on the seal of the President and in walks my wife and she's



kind of looking oddly because she's not sure it's me and my sons didn't recognize me at all because I was down 140 pounds and I had always worn glasses that he knew. It was just really cool. And then we got to workout with Michelle Obama that day."

After the show, Shuh mentioned that a lot of things are still the same such as the love for his family and working at the same church. However, some things are different. One such example has a backstory. While planning his daughter's funeral, he didn't have any money, as he was a private school teacher and the school was going under, which led to serious financial problems. It was then that his family and friends at church took up a collection to help pay for his daughter's funeral. Now, through The Biggest Loser, the TEARS foundation found him and he has become the president of the Michigan chapter. The TEARS foundation helps raise money to pay for caskets, grave markers, and grief counseling for parents who lose an infant.

Shuh also does a lot of races after his time on the show. He plans to race in the AAA Race for Life in May and has the goal to run the Detroit Half Marathon as well, later this year. "It's [planning to run the Detroit Half Marathon] still kind of crazy to me because when I started the show, I remember being on the treadmill walking at 2.0 miles per hour. And I had to stop after 20 minutes. Like I didn't finish a mile in 30 minutes. I couldn't. And now here I am this year and I'm going to try to finish 13 [miles]."

Lastly, Shuh also helped initiate the Buddy Up program in Westland, Michigan after being on the show. "When I came back, I just really decided that I had a lot of gifts and a

lot of good that had been put in me. And I'm a big believer that life isn't just all about you and that you want to be a contributor to your community and to your friends and to your family and you'll be more fulfilled in life if you're helping others as well."

Because of this, he decided that he wanted to help people who might be going through the same types of problems that he did before his journey on *The Biggest Loser*. A type of "pay-it-forward," if you will, with his nutritional and exercise information. With this idea, he went to the mayor's office and offered to endorse the "Passport to a Healthy City" campaign. About a month later, he met with the mayor's office and they started to layout the program. They asked him if he were running a program, what would he do. To this he said, "Well, first I'll admit I'm not a nutritionist. I'll admit I'm not a certified trainer. But, what I do know, I'm willing to share for free, so I'd be willing to volunteer. I would like the City to back the program and St. Mary Mercy of Livonia to back it and do weigh-ins, blood pressure testing, sleep apnea testing, blood sugar testing—all of it free."

He also mentioned that he wanted \$2 per person per week to buy food for the participants of the program to sample. However, this did not happen, as Kroger offered to donate food each week. "I feel that if you tell an overweight person that you need to try a spinach shake they never will, but if you say, 'Take a sip of this and if you like it, tell me you'll drink it,' I'm finding that people find it actually tastes good and then they'll make the change."

Shuh also offered to teach nutritional information and how to exercise at home so that participants could exercise for free and not have to buy a membership. After hearing his plan, the mayor agreed to all aspects and after a few more months of planning, the program kicked off in January 2013.

### **G. Buddy Up Program**

The Buddy Up program is a free health program that was launched on January 26, 2013. It will run for 12 consecutive weeks, from 8:30-10 a.m. every Saturday, and finish with a 5K run on the last day. Each week, participants will weigh-in (8:30-9 a.m.), hear nutritional information from Buddy Shuh and other volunteers from St. Mary Mercy Hospital (9-9:30 a.m.), and exercise (9:30-10 a.m.). Due to the large number of participants, and limited space, two groups were formed. One half listens to nutritional info, while the other exercises, and then the two groups switch. The following week, the group who received nutritional information first in the prior week, will exercise first, and the group who exercised first in the prior week, will receive nutritional information first.

According to a press release at the beginning of the year, Shuh said, “You’ll lose weight, you’ll have energy, and in your own life, you’ll find there’s more to the story... Maybe you’ll be the biggest loser,” (Ackron, Jan. 2013).

The program is part of the “Passport to a Healthy City” Campaign that was launched in November 2011. Since that time, the campaign has been stagnant, as citizens are not utilizing the passports as the Mayor hoped they would. To encourage its use, citizens will

receive one stamp each week that they attend a Buddy Up session. In order to fill the passport, 24 stamps are needed, so participants will be able to fill up half of their passport if they attend every Buddy Up session.

In the same press release most recently mentioned, it was stated that, "Buddy Up will allow residents to reach their fitness goals together while learning important nutritional information," (Ackron, Jan. 2013). Mayor Wild added, "This is a great opportunity for residents of both cities to take advantage of a free fitness class taught by a local resident who has inspired a nationwide audience. Not only does it provide a fun way to maintain an active lifestyle throughout the winter, but it does so through an individual who truly knows first-hand how living a healthy lifestyle can change an individual's life."

#### **a.) Statistics**

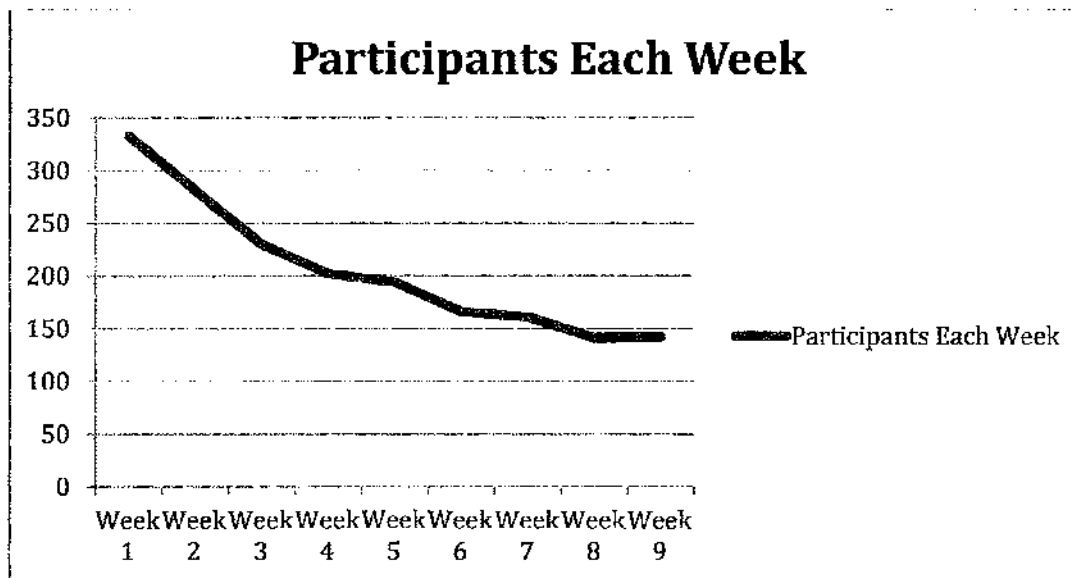
The Buddy Up program was open to 500 Wayne and Westland residents and 416 registered (Buddy Up Info). These were not all from the Wayne/Westland area however, as the program was opened up toward the end of registration to the surrounding communities as well. On the first day of the program, about 450 citizens were in attendance to hear Shuh and others introduce the program.

As previously mentioned, each week participants weigh-in to keep an accurate measurement of where they are at in their weight loss journey. During the past nine weeks, 422 participants have been recorded on the weigh-in charts. Of these participants, 78, or 18.48 percent, have not weighed in. There have been 106 citizens,

or 25.12 percent, who have weighed in one to three weeks during the program (Buddy Up Info).

There have also been 48 participants, or 11.37 percent, that have weighed in four or five times, (roughly half of the sessions, 44-55 percent). Those who have weighed in six to eight times during the past nine weeks, account for 136 of the 422 participants, or 32.23 percent. Lastly, 54, or 12.80 percent, of the participants in the program have weighed in all nine weeks as of March 23, 2013 (Buddy Up Info).

It should be noted that the above numbers are skewed because it was discovered that participants were showing up to the sessions, but not weighing in. Therefore, as you can tell from the chart below, there seems to be a decline in the number of participants each week. It should also be noted that a decline was expected, but not this severe. In most weight-loss situations, many have the intention to lose weight, but aren't always able to keep up with their journey. This seemingly severe decline should be corrected in weeks 9-12, however, as it was mentioned that participants should at least check-in with the volunteers conducting the scales in order to receive the weekly packet.



In regards to gender, a majority of the participants are female. They account for 301 of the 416 participants, or 72.36 percent. There were 77 males registered, or 18.51 percent, and 38, or 9.13 percent, did not list a gender when registering (Buddy Up Info). It is not surprising that a majority of the participants are female as women are more concerned about their weight than are men. Men do regularly go to the gym, however, in the age range that these participants are in, it is more likely women would participate in this type of program.

The Buddy Up program was open to all citizens, no matter their age. With this being the case, participant's ages range from 11-79. Of the 416 participants, 24, or 5.77 percent, fall between the ages of 11 and 19. Similarly, 37 participants, or 8.89 percent, are in the 20-29-year-old age range. A majority of the participants fall between the ages of 30-59. There are 79 participants, or 18.99 percent, that identify in the 30-39 range, 93, or 22.36 percent, that fall within the 40-49 range, and 82, or

19.71 percent, of the participants consider themselves in the 50-59 age range. There are also 57 participants, or 13.7 percent, classified as 60 years of age or older. Only 44 of the 416 participants, or 10.58 percent, that did not list an age when registering (Buddy Up Info).

As for location of the participants, it was previously mentioned that the program was open to Wayne and Westland citizens, but was then opened to the surrounding communities. According to the United States Census, the 2011 population estimate in Westland was 83,239 and Wayne was 17,414. Therefore, it should be no surprise that a majority of the participants are from the originally targeted areas. As predicted, 242 of the 416 participants, or 58.17 percent, are from Westland and 70, or 16.83 percent, are from Wayne. Like gender, 38 participants, or 9.13 percent did not list a city on their registration form. Of the remaining 66 participants, 65 come from various cities surrounding Wayne and Westland including Canton (17); Dearborn Heights (6); Belleville and Taylor (5); Farmington Hills, Flint, and Redford (4); Garden City, Inkster, and Livonia (3); Dearborn, Romulus, Lincoln Park, and Brownstown (2); and Plymouth, Northville, and Bloomfield Hills (1). One participant listed their residence in Florida (Buddy Up Info).

#### **b.) Layout of Weeks**

As previously mentioned, the Buddy Up program runs for 12 consecutive weeks. Each week a different topic is discussed for the nutritional aspect, and for the most part, a different exercise is also demonstrated (Buddy Up Packets). A breakdown of

the 12 weeks follows, first listing nutrition topic, then exercise:

Week 1: Meet and Greet; No exercise

Week 2: Goals, tips, diabetes; General exercise/Strength and Spirit

Week 3: Cardio heart rate, water consumption; General exercise by Strength and Spirit

Week 4: Breakfast options; Anytime Fitness

Week 5: Mid-morning snacks, exercise techniques; Zumba

Week 6: Cravings, sleep; Kickboxing

Week 7: Eating out; General exercise by Strength and Spirit

Week 8: Afternoon snacks, walking pedometer; BodyFlow by Ypsi Powerhouse

Week 9: Problem solving, positive attitude; Jazzercise

Week 10: Dinner options; General exercise by Strength and Spirit

Week 11: Maintenance; No exercise

Week 12: 5K Fun Run

Sunday, April 21, 2013: Special wrap-up of Buddy Up program

In addition to the above layout, the 5K Fun Run is available to the entire community.

Non-Buddy Up members can register for \$20, and will also receive a Buddy-Up t-

shirt. Buddy Up members are not charged. Registration starts at 7:30 a.m. on

Saturday, April 20, 2013. A small ceremony will be held around 8:30 a.m. and the

race begins at 9 a.m. As an added bonus, Buddy Up members will be participating in

a flash mob before the race, around 8:15 a.m. It should also be noted that the five



finalists of season 13 of The Biggest Loser are expected to be at the finish line of the 5K Fun Run, cheering on the Buddy Up members.

**c.) Sponsors of the Program**

The Buddy Up program hopes to not only motivate its participants to lose weight and lead healthier lives, but also to encourage the use of the passports provided by the City. When the Passport Campaign began, residents were told to visit participating locations to earn stamps. These locations include Planet Fitness, GNC, Biggby Coffee, Best Buy, Leo's Coney Island, Carpet One, Parkside Dental, OptimEyes, Anytime Fitness, D&D Bicycles & Hockey, Zumba, Community Dental Implant Associates, Longhorn Steakhouse, The Vitamin Shoppe, Culver's, Max & Erma's, Famous Dave's, and the City of Westland itself (City of Westland). As previously mentioned, the program had been stagnant, and many were not visiting the locations.

Major sponsors of the program include St. Mary Mercy Hospital, which provides the funding, and Kroger, which provides the samples each week. These places, however, do not provide stamps for the passports.

A few of the sponsors, including Anytime Fitness, Zumba, Community Dental Implant Associates, OptimEyes, Culvers, and Wayne-Westland Parks and Recreation have been featured at Buddy Up sessions. Community Dental Implant Associates provided information and giveaways the first week, and OptimEyes provided information a few weeks into the program.

As listed above, Anytime Fitness provided the exercise portion of week 4. At the end of the session, they provided participants with coupons for either a Free 7-Day VIP Pass, one free month of tanning, or one free month of membership. When asked if they saw a return from their visit, it was mentioned that only a handful of participants from the program turned in a coupon.

For other sponsors on the list, some have seen a return and others have seen no one from the Passport Campaign. The Vitamin Shoppe and Longhorn Steakhouse have seen some return, however, a majority of the sponsors have not. The lack of participation in the Passport Campaign will be discussed further in the marketing objectives section below.

Within the past few years, Wayne and Westland have combined their park and recreation facilities to become the Wayne-Westland Parks and Recreation Department. At the center, many classes are sponsored including Zumba, Jazzercise, and Strength and Spirit, all of which were mentioned above. One of the reasons these classes were demonstrated at Buddy Up sessions was to encourage participants to find something they enjoy. Exercising can be a boring task for some, but if you find an activity you enjoy, it makes you much more inclined to workout and become healthier.

For instance, as a participant-observer of this program, I enjoy swimming. Therefore, I joined the Wayne-Westland Rec because they have an indoor pool. Swimming

doesn't seem like exercise to me, but it can burn hundreds of calories per hour. This entices me to workout more often, therefore becoming healthier.

Through the Buddy Up program two special fitness classes were sponsored that featured a variety of different exercise classes offered at the Wayne-Westland Rec. Again, these were to entice participants to find something they enjoy, and encourage them to register for those classes. The first program was held in February, called the Water Fitness Jam, and was free to the first 100 residents to sign up. About 90 registered for the session, and approximately 75 attended according to Nathan Adams, director of the Wayne-Westland Parks and Recreation.

The second program was held in March, called the Land Fitness Jam, and was also free to the first 300 participants. For this session, however, 108 registered and only 38 attended. These less than ideal numbers seems to mirror the decline in participation in the Buddy Up program.

At both the Water and Land Fitness Jams, participants in attendance received discount cards for either fitness classes and/or memberships. For the Water Fitness Jam, the discount card was for 25 percent off any water classes. The Land Fitness Jam discount card was for 25 percent off a 3-month or one-year membership. According to Adams, about 10 percent of the 113 "Jam" participants registered for a class and/or membership.

When asked if there had been an increase in memberships, appointments with personal trainers, and/or in the attendance at various events, among other things, Adams said, "I would assume the traffic from the Buddy Up program has elicited participants to sign up for Massages, Personal Training, Pool or Ice Birthday Parties, Banquet Rentals, Swim Lessons, etc. However, there has been no study/analysis on this. I would bet that there has been an increase in all services/programs offered through the Wayne-Westland Parks and Recreation due to the Buddy Up program and its marketing/advertising. Memberships are always at a high in January due to many factors such as Buddy Up and the New Year's resolution market."

**d.) Social Media and Media Aspects**

As with many things these days, the Buddy Up program started a Facebook page for its participants. The page is open for anyone to "like," but is assumed to be most frequented by the participants in the program. On the page, a variety of information can be found. This includes healthy recipes, uplifting stories from participants, questions for each other, mid-week messages from Shuh, and much more.

Taking a look at the insights on the page as of March 5, 2013, there had been 223 people to "like" the page. As of April 7, 2013, there are 267 people following the page. Of these 223 people in March, it should be no surprise, just as in the location demographics above, that a majority of the followers are from the Wayne and Westland areas (Buddy Up Info). It was recorded that 85 followers are from Westland and 29 followers are from Wayne. Other cities that show a large number of followers

to the Buddy Up program are Plymouth (10); Canton (8); Garden City and Dearborn Heights (7); and Redford, Livonia, and Belleville (6). These cities are similar to the locations listed above in the location demographics and are no surprise to be high in followers. However, two other cities, Detroit and Houston, TX (6), are surprising to find as high followers to this page. Detroit, however, could be listed high because many do not list a specific city on their Facebook profiles and list Detroit as their location.

The Buddy Up program also uses media on a regular basis. This includes pictures and video. Pictures are taken each week and uploaded to the Buddy Up Facebook page. Also, each session is recorded and aired on WLND, the Westland cable channel. In addition to each week's session, one woman from WLND is monitored during the week to add to the experience. Her workout routines are recorded and she also adds mini diary sessions where she explains her journey.

Shuh also incorporates his own mid-week motivational videos that are emailed to the Buddy Up participants around Wednesday or Thursday of each week. These videos serve to provide inspiration for those in the program and help them stay on track and continue with their journey. Shuh talks about various topics, but each video is a quick summary of one of his thoughts. Most videos have over 100 views, but like the decline in participation, there seems to be a slight decline in video views each week as well.

**e.) State of Michigan Interest**

Since the Buddy Up program was designed to coincide with the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan and the U.S Conference of Mayor's initiative, it has attracted some attention from the State of Michigan. After the program began, Westland's Deputy Mayor, Jade Smith, and Fodale met twice with Melanie Brim, deputy director of the Michigan Department of Community Health. Their goal was to invite her to Westland to see the Buddy Up sessions and to see what they are doing to encourage a healthy lifestyle. They will also be sending her some of the recordings of the show.

Smith and Fodale have also talked with the governor about the program and said he was intrigued since he had just initiated his program. "He was really excited to hear that there was a community out there that already had something put together and was kind of curious about if it could be modeled for other communities," Fodale said.

Currently, Smith and Fodale are still trying to have Brim attend a session of the Buddy Up program so she can witness first-hand the changes it has made.

The Michigan Department of Community Health also announced a new initiative a few days before the Buddy Up program started. According to a press release a after the start of the program, the new statewide initiative is called MI Healthier Tomorrow and "aims to get Michigan residents to pledge to lose 10 percent of their body weight," (Gladstone, Jan. 2013).

In the same press release, Brim said, “We recognize that Michigan’s future will be drastically affected by the decisions we make today. By launching a new statewide campaign and working closely with the already well-established local community initiatives, such as Mayor Wild’s successful “Passport to a Healthy City” campaign, we hope to change the future of our state for the better by improving the health and wellness of Michigan citizens,” (Gladstone, Jan. 2013).

It should be noted that this initiative is separate from the Michigan Health and Wellness 4 x 4 Plan and 21,291 Michigan residents have pledged to lose 10 percent of their weight as of April 7, 2013, according to the MI Healthier Tomorrow website.

**f.) Results as of April 6, 2013**

The Buddy Up program has shown tremendous success as of April 6, 2013. Specific numbers that detail this success are listed below in the results of the lifestyle change survey. Aside from those numbers, many stories detail the triumphs of the participants of the Buddy Up program. Some of these heartwarming stories include:

- “I felt this program might be something that would help my son emotionally and physically. He has a sensorineural and cognitive impairment. Until this program he sat at home alone. He now has buddies and is trying to become a Zumba instructor.” This participant started the program at 306 pounds and as of April 6, 2013, is at 283 pounds, a 23-pound loss in 12 weeks. He has also gained

confidence from his weight loss and the program itself, and is looking to date.

- On April 6, 2013, one woman was seen crying after her weigh-in. Another woman consoled her by saying, "Don't be sad, it's just one week." To this she replied, "They're happy tears. I just reached below 300 pounds. I haven't seen this number in at least 10 years."
- Two other participants have found the program to be very rewarding. The people they have met during the program have become family so much so that they will be getting married on April 21, 2013 by Buddy Shuh and have invited all Buddy Up members to attend. It should also be noted that the soon-to-be husband has lost over 46 pounds since the start of this program.

#### **H. Results of Lifestyle Change Survey**

On week nine of the program, March 23, 2013, a lifestyle survey was conducted among approximately 140 Buddy Up members in attendance. This number is based on those who weighed or checked in that day, so as mentioned before, this number could be skewed.

Regardless, 127 surveys were collected from this sample.

The survey aimed to identify if the Buddy Up program was indeed making a change in the participant's lives on a personal level. This was done in order to determine if this type of program could aid in making an overall change in a person's lifestyle. The results were positive.



All 127 respondents agreed that the program had helped them in some way (Lifestyle Survey). This could be mentally, physically, spiritually, etc., however they define “help” in their lives. The positive response could be used to encourage others to try the program, but a greater measure that could be used to entice citizens to lead a healthier life, is the fact that 100 percent of the respondents noted that they plan to continue a healthy lifestyle after this program (Lifestyle Survey). This was somewhat surprising, but is the most important information gathered because it proves that the program works in encouraging people to lead a healthier life and fight obesity.

Another positive measure was that 126 respondents, or 99.21 percent, noted that they feel better after participating in this program. This is most likely due to the fact that 125, or 98.43 percent, of the respondents agreed that the program has taught them about health and exercise. Most of the respondents, 124, or 97.64 percent, have noticed themselves making healthier choices, which is also potentially aiding in their feelings. Likewise, 115 respondents, or 90.55 percent, say they have a more positive outlook on life as a result of this program (Lifestyle Survey).

As for motivation, 125 respondents, or 98.43 percent, agreed that the program has motivated them to have a healthier lifestyle. Also, 123, or 96.85 percent, say that the other participants have motivated them to have a healthier lifestyle. It was also recorded that 106, or 83.46 percent, of the respondents have connected with participants that are similar to them in the program. This is important, because many do not want to journey down a weight-loss path alone. It is the support of family and friends that can truly help

in weight loss. To aid in this, Shuh mentions throughout the program to continue “Buddying Up” with other participants. This could be going for workout, or to talk about their respective journeys, among other things. However, despite Shuh’s request, less than half, 61, or 48.03 percent, listed actually “Buddying Up” with someone they met at the sessions (Lifestyle Survey).

In regards to exercising, which is another integral part of the program, it was asked if participants have utilized the Wayne-Westland Rec or other fitness centers/gyms since the program began and if they plan to continue utilizing such areas. Of the 127 respondents, 83, or 65.35 percent, noted as having used the Wayne-Westland Rec or other fitness centers/gyms, and 90, or 70.87 percent, said they plan to continue using such facilities. It should also be noted that 122 respondents, or 96.06 percent, agreed that when the weather gets warmer, they would be more inclined to exercise outdoors. To go along with these numbers, 108 respondents, or 85.04 percent, said they are more willing to exercise now than before this program (Lifestyle Survey).

The survey also aimed to determine a health aspect of the participant’s lives. They were first asked if they had a health condition (other than obesity) prior to joining the program. Health conditions included, but were not limited to, diabetes, sleep apnea, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc. Of the 127 respondents, 44, or 34.65 percent, agreed that they had a condition prior to this program. A little more than half, 69 respondents, or 54.33 percent, responded they did not have a condition, and 14, or 11.02 percent, did not respond. When asked if their health condition had improved as a result of the program,

64, or 50.39 percent, of the respondents agreed that the program has improved their condition. Only 10, or 7.87 percent, of the respondents noted the program did not help, and 53, or 41.73 percent, of the respondents did not answer (Lifestyle Survey). This could be because they did not have a condition prior to the program, or because they do not know if their condition has been improved because they have not seen their doctor.

Overall, however, 112 respondents, or 88.19 percent, agreed that their health has improved as a result of participating in the program. This high percentage is most likely due to the fact that people are losing weight from eating better and exercising. Likewise, 107 respondents, or 84.25 percent, said that they have noticed a physical change in their body since the program began (Lifestyle Survey). This physical change could be defined in a variety of ways including being more muscular, having a flatter stomach, their pants are looser, etc.

The participants were then asked what motivated them to become part of the Buddy Up program. Many mentioned the weight-loss aspect and the idea of being healthier. Some also mentioned it was Shuh that inspired them to try the program. Others listed family and friends as their motivation to join. Accountability to a program, other than themselves, was also another major reason as to why people joined the program (Lifestyle Survey).

It was then asked what the participant's goal was after joining the program. A majority responded with continued weight loss as their main goal. As noted previously, all of the

respondents plan to continue with this healthy lifestyle, so their continued weight loss should be a relatively easy goal to achieve. A few others mentioned sticking with the lifestyle changes was their goal, as they do not want to fall back into eating the way they used to before the program began. Some others also mentioned wanting to exercise more as their goal after the program (Lifestyle Survey).

The final questions asked respondents if they were on track to meeting their goal, and their weight loss total to this point of the program. Of the 127 respondents, 98, or 77.17 percent, agreed that they were on track to reaching their goal. As for weight loss, 39, or 30.71 percent, of the respondents have lost between zero and five pounds. Likewise, 37 respondents, or 29.13 percent, have lost between six and 10 pounds. Of the 127 respondents, 49 have lost more than 10 pounds. This includes 23, or 18.11 percent, losing between 11 and 15 pounds; 15, or 11.81 percent, losing between 16 and 20 pounds; 4, or 3.15 percent, losing between 21 and 25 pounds; and seven, or 5.51 percent, of respondents losing 26 or more pounds. One of the participants in the 26+ pound loss group has lost 46 pounds as of March 23, 2013 (Lifestyle Survey).

Finally, it was calculated that of the 127 contestants, based off the lowest number in their weight-loss range (except 0-5 pounds), these respondents have lost a minimum of over 1,100 pounds (Lifestyle Survey). The breakdown is as follows:

0-5 pounds:	5 x 39 respondents=	195 pounds
6-10 pounds:	6 x 37 respondents=	222 pounds
11-15 pounds:	11 x 23 respondents=	253 pounds
16-20 pounds:	16 x 15 respondents=	240 pounds
21-25 pounds:	21 x 4 respondents=	84 pounds
26+ pounds:	26 x 7 respondents=	<u>182 pounds</u>
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,176 pounds</b>

### **I. Personal Testament**

As a participant-observer of the Buddy Up program, I found it important to give my back story as to why I find this program to be of such importance.

Over the past 23 years of my life, I didn't always have an interest in health and fitness; it was only until the past two years that I took an interest in this field. When I was a child, I played outside with friends and neighbors, went to the park, and just had fun. There was really no need to worry about obesity in the '90s; I feel obesity is more of a recent occurrence since technology has become an influence in our lives.

I was thin for most of my childhood until about fifth grade; you can tell in my school pictures. My face was fuller and it stayed that way. You could call it puberty, but looking back, it was most likely my diet in addition to nature. In middle school, I packed a lunch, but also frequently went to the snack line. I didn't need snacks, but I wanted them. We never had junk food in the house, and I felt this was my only time to have them. This

trend continued for the three years in middle school, and when I was a freshman in high school, I weighed around 200 pounds.

Realizing that I needed to make a change, I looked around at a few different diets and followed Weight Watchers, which a few of my family members had been trying. I had no success with that diet, I actually gained a few pounds, so I tried South Beach, and was able to lose 40 pounds during my freshman year and the summer following.

In middle school I was a member of the track team, but hardly ran, instead I threw shotput. I continued this sport in high school, still not running, just participating in shotput and discus. I also joined the swim team my sophomore year when I was at my lowest weight, 160 pounds. These sports helped me keep some weight off, but also built a lot of muscle so my weight crept up on occasion.

Throughout the years I had been going to my family physician for sports physicals, so he was able to monitor my weight changes. During this time he and I also noticed other changes besides my weight and so he sent me to have an ultrasound on my ovaries. It was then, around 2007, that I was diagnosed with polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS).

PCOS is a disorder that causes a hormone imbalance in females and affects all women differently. It is fairly common and affects about 1 in every 15 women. Some common signs and/or symptoms of PCOS include menstrual disorders, infertility, acne, excess facial hair, and obesity/insulin resistance (PCOS).

With this diagnosis, I continued living just as I had before. I was placed on a few common medicines and tried to eat healthier and exercise more, but usually was only able to do so for short periods of time. When I entered college I fought the “Freshman Fifteen,” but eventually put that on, plus some. During my first few years of college I had utilized the gym at school, but with my hectic schedule, it was sometimes difficult to find time, and the food choices I made weren’t always the best. I worked in an office that managed the various clubs on campus and many times each week they had meetings with pizza to entice students to join. The office workers always got the leftovers, and since it was quick, I consumed a fair amount of pizza in the four years that I was there.

At the end of December 2010, three years into college, I weighed 230. Vowing I would never see that number on the scale again, I turned toward thinking differently. I knew fad diets weren’t going to work, so I altered them and made my own plan. The doctor mentioned that having PCOS made it more difficult to lose weight, so I accepted that as a challenge. Once I graduated and transferred to Eastern Michigan, while following the plan I laid out for myself, I was able to lose 50 pounds between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011.

I kept this weight off until about September 2012 when I then put on about 20 pounds, reaching 200 on January 1, 2013. I knew I needed to focus again, and did just that. I enrolled in a fitness class at Schoolcraft and also became part of the Buddy Up program. I originally had joined the Buddy Up program to get my mother involved in exercising, but I was interested in the nutrition aspects for myself the most.

Ten weeks into the program, and it is one of the best decisions I have ever made. There is no judging, everyone is friendly, and the people are inspiring. The nutritional information is very helpful and the variety of exercises from week to week is also beneficial for people to see what different kinds of activities are out there other than the typical running. I can't say I've learned a lot, since over the past year or two I've done a lot of my own research, but I am truly inspired by the difference it has made in the lives of those around me. My mother now enjoys working out and I couldn't be happier for her. She has always been supportive of my weight loss in the past, but it helps when you have others going on the journey with you. As of April 7, 2013 I have lost 19.4 pounds, weighing 180.4 pounds, and am only a couple away from reaching that 50 pound mark again. After I reach that goal, I hope to lose another 20 pounds and be at my ideal weight.

#### **J. Other Cities/Entities With Similar Programs**

With the Buddy Up program being such a success, research was conducted to see if any other cities or entities were engaging in similar programs. One such program was found at Eastern Michigan University, called The Get Fit Challenge. According to their website, "The Get Fit Challenge is a semester-long program where students, faculty, and staff will team-up to compete for points to earn weekly prizes. Points will be earned by working out, participating in Get Fit Challenge activities, keeping food journals, and utilizing on-campus fitness, nutrition, and wellness resources. Participants will have access to various fitness/nutrition seminars and workshops that will be put on each week. There will also be periodic assessment opportunities done by fitness and nutrition professionals.



Additionally, Dr. Julie Jahn's HPHP students will be collecting data as part of a research project." The program began on January 21, 2013 and concludes on April 18, 2013.

Jeff Phillips, an A.C.S.M. Certified Personal Trainer for B Young B Fit at the REC/IM, is in charge of the program with Kristi Teasdale, assistant director of the REC/IM. Gina Morelli works with Phillips on the program, as a student in a directed study course for Health Promotion and Human Performance.

According to Morelli, "The Get Fit Challenge is a campus wide program where teams of four to eight people pay a fee to enter into the Get Fit Challenge hosted by the REC/IM. The program is based on a points system. Every week the REC/IM provides participating students with a point sheet. This is where students will record their workouts. Each workout is worth five points. If the workout was completed at the REC, then an extra three points is added. Participating in personal training or group fitness classes at the REC/IM is worth five points, and keeping a weekly food journal is worth 10 points. The REC also offers multiple fitness workshops, seminars, and body assessments every week which are worth anywhere from five to 15 points each."

Morelli also said, "At the end of every week, each team member is responsible for tallying their points and turning in their point sheets to the REC/IM. The REC then keeps track of each individual person's total points and each team's weekly and total points. Each week, the team with the most points is awarded a small prize, for example, free group fitness classes at the REC, water bottles, t-shirts, etc. At the end of the semester,

the team with the most points overall will win a much larger prize and the individual person with the most total points will win an iPad. Every participant in The Get Fit Challenge will be awarded a t-shirt.”

The program is very similar to the Buddy Up program in that you meet new people, workout with friends, learn from trainers, learn about nutrition, lose weight, gain muscle, and feel better about yourself. There are some differences as with the point system and the fact that for The Get Fit Challenge, participants must pay. However, the goal of both programs is the same: to lose weight and get fit.

Another program that is similar in that it encourages weight loss is the Let’s Move! campaign created by First Lady, Michelle Obama. According to the Let’s Move! website, Mrs. Obama is, “Dedicated to solving the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation, so that children born today will grow up healthier and able to pursue their dreams. Combining comprehensive strategies with common sense, Let’s Move! is about putting children on the path to a healthy future during their earliest months and years. Giving parents helpful information and fostering environments that support healthy choices. Providing healthier foods in our schools. Ensuring that every family has access to healthy, affordable food. And, helping kids become more physically active,” (Let’s Move!).

Although Mrs. Obama’s campaign focuses on childhood obesity, it is still a noteworthy program aimed at overall weight loss among Americans and should be treated on the

same level as other lifestyle change programs such as The Get Fit Challenge at Eastern Michigan University and the Buddy Up program in the City of Westland.

## **K. Marketing Plan for Buddy Up Program**

### **a.) SWOT Analysis**

#### **Strengths**

- Inspirational leader
- Funding and donations provided
- Large number of participants
- Positive feedback
- Proven to be beneficial in making a lifestyle change

#### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of continued participation
- Lack of variety in speakers
- No visible involvement of Mayor of Westland
- Little Passport usage among local businesses
- Little media reach

#### **Opportunities**

- New location
- More speakers and sponsors
- Use success of program to promote lifestyle change possibility
- State of Michigan involvement
- Testimonials

## **Threats**

- Similar programs
- Negative publicity if participants can't keep weight off
- Retraction of sponsors due to lack of passport involvement from citizens
- Lower obesity percentages
- Lack of interest in health and wellness programs

## **b.) Marketing Strategies**

### **i.) Target Market**

The primary target market for the Buddy Up program is any citizen between the ages of 18-80. Per the data collected above, it was mentioned that the current age range of participants in the Buddy Up program is 11-79. However, the Buddy Up program is more targeted toward adults, and therefore should have an ideal age range of 18-80. There is no secondary target market for this program.

### **ii.) Promotional Strategies**

Continue the utilization of various forms of media to promote the program including video and social media interaction. The cable show should also continue, as well as the column by Shuh in The Wayne Dispatch every month. Other forms of promotion could include periodic weigh-ins with giveaways and sponsorships of events such as the Wayne and Westland farmer's markets.

### **c.) Objectives, Strategies, and Tactics**

#### **Objective 1: Increase weekly participation in program**

##### **Strategies**

- Incorporate various giveaways and promotions at each session. Also, create more variety in speakers. Some participants would find it more interesting if there were more than one or two speakers.

##### **Tactics**

- Have a different giveaway at each session. Even something small.
- Reach out to local sporting teams and discuss the possibility of having their trainer or nutritionist come and talk to participants.
- Provide a “Bonus Stamp” if participants come to at least 80 percent of the sessions (nine or 10 sessions).

#### **Objective 2: Possibility of a new location**

##### **Strategies**

- Utilize other locations in Westland to host the Buddy Up sessions. One such example is Ss. Simon and Jude Catholic Church. The church has been a leader in providing help to the communities of Wayne and Westland. Also, according to a recent survey conducted at the parish, parishioners show an interest in leading a healthy lifestyle, but lack the proper resources.

##### **Tactics**

- Utilize parish halls (2) to provide nutrition and exercise information just as with the current Friendship Center location.

- Continue to encourage Wayne and Westland residents to participate, and perhaps focus on the NorWayne community since the church is within walking distance. Also, many are familiar with the location since the church acts as an outreach center to that community.
- This location also has the ability to cater to Inkster and Romulus residents as well, so the program might consider opening the registration up to those communities as well.

**Objective 3: Increase use of passports at local businesses**

**Strategies**

- Heavily emphasize to participants the benefits of the Passport program. Many are unaware that completing the passport will earn them rewards.

**Tactics**

- Challenge participants to visit one sponsored location each week.
- Encourage participants to fill their passports by the end of the 12-week session.
- Heavily promote that rewards are an integral part of passport completion.

**Objective 4:** Promote program and campaign in local papers and on various media platforms

**Strategies**

- Incorporate articles about the success of the program as well as video testimonials to encourage new participants.

**Tactics**

- Write articles for local papers including The Wayne Dispatch, The Observer, etc.
- Heavily promote YouTube videos on the Buddy Up Facebook page and encourage participants to share their own journeys using any form of media.
- Put all videos and episodes on YouTube as not everyone can view the local cable channel where Buddy Up sessions are shown.

**d.) Implementation**

**i.) Timeline**

The timeline for this program will vary. Since it has not been decided if the program will host another 12-week session, there cannot be a start time for the timeline. However, when a decision is made as to whether another session will be held, planning should start at that time.

**ii.) Budget**

The budget for this program is determined by the funding provided by St. Mary Mercy. Expenditure of this budget is then handled by the City of Westland.

## **L. Conclusion**

Throughout this paper, many topics were discussed leading up to the need for lifestyle change programs as a result of the obesity in America, focusing specifically on Michigan. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, the State of Michigan, and the Michigan Department of Community Health have all recognized the increase in obesity and have initiated programs to combat this epidemic. Through these programs and campaigns, it is hopeful that the obesity percentage in the state of Michigan will decrease over the next five to 10 years.

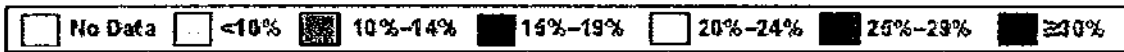
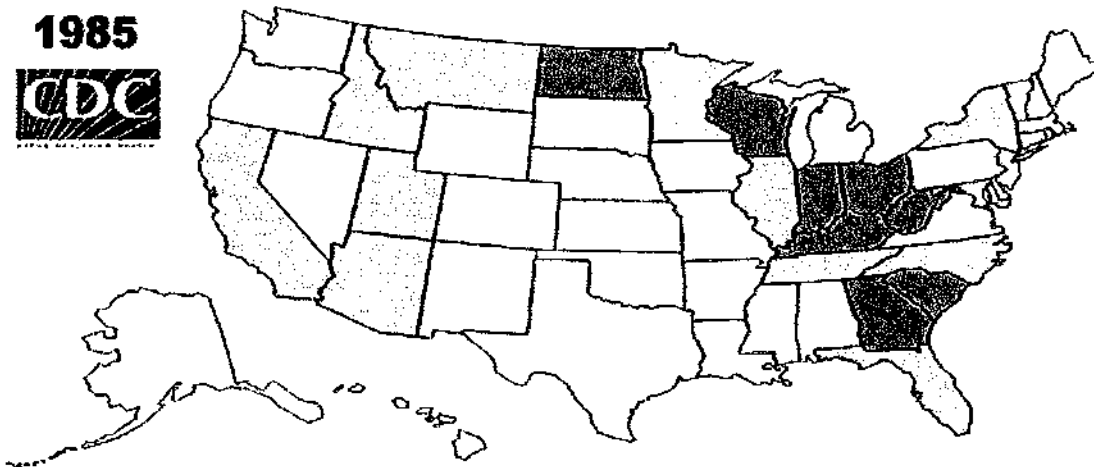
Research also found that the Buddy Up program in Westland, Michigan did indeed promote an overall lifestyle change in its participants. The citizens who agreed to become apart of this first-ever lifestyle change program showed success in their weight loss journeys and plan to continue a healthy lifestyle in the future.

The continuation of the program has yet to be determined. There is no word yet as to if there will be another Buddy Up session, or what participants can do after the program to keep on track with their goals. After evaluating all the information from the program, however, it is clear to see that this program did change the lives of many people.

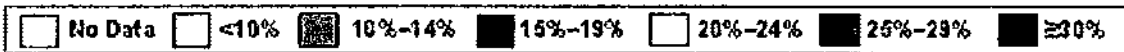
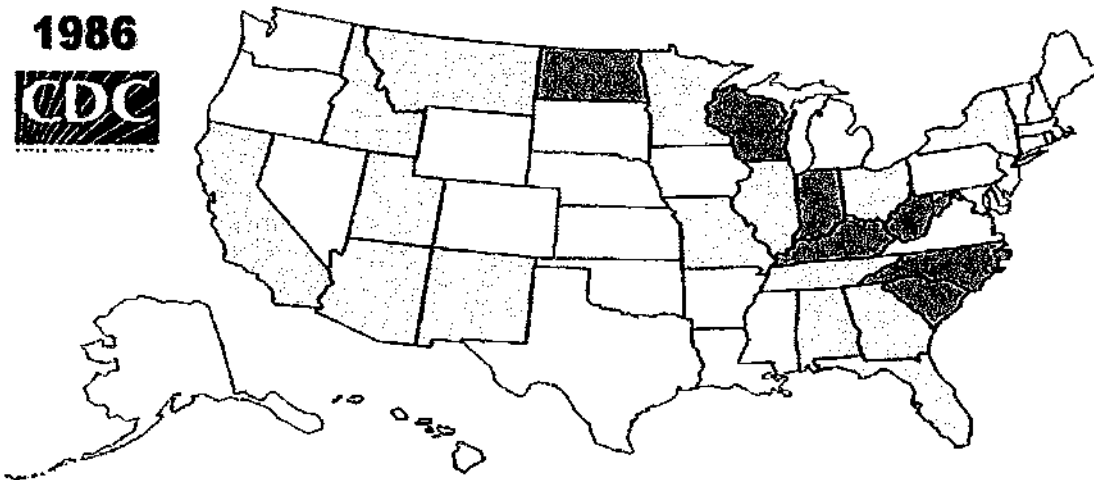


Appendix A- Graphs of Percent of Obese (BMI ≥ 30) in U.S. Adults (CDC)

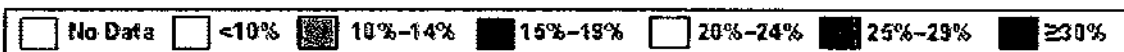
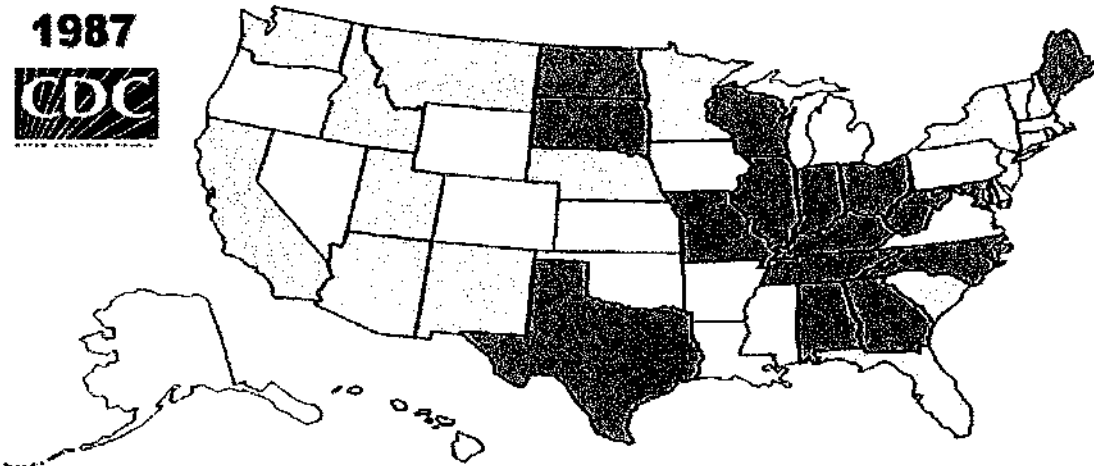
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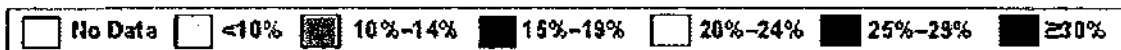
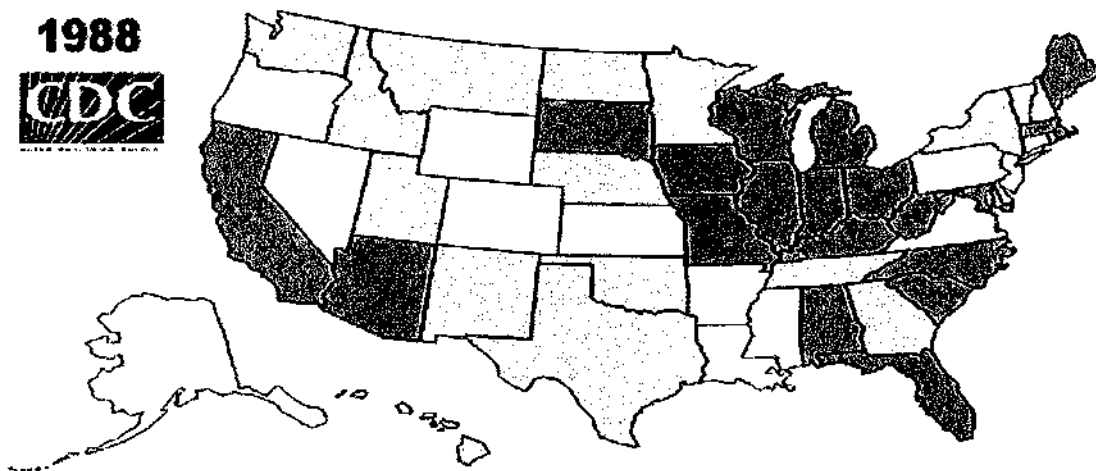
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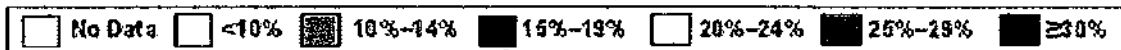
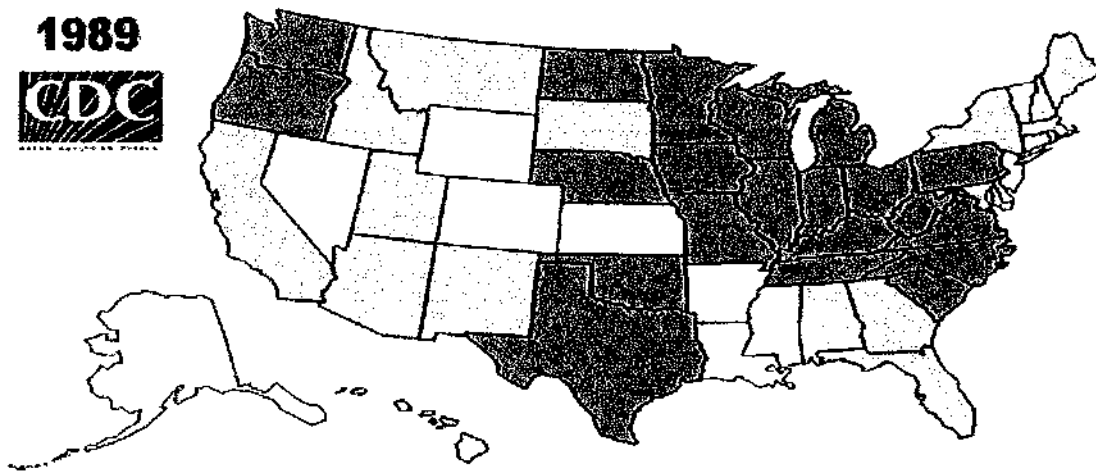
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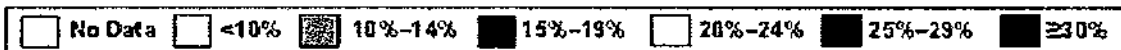
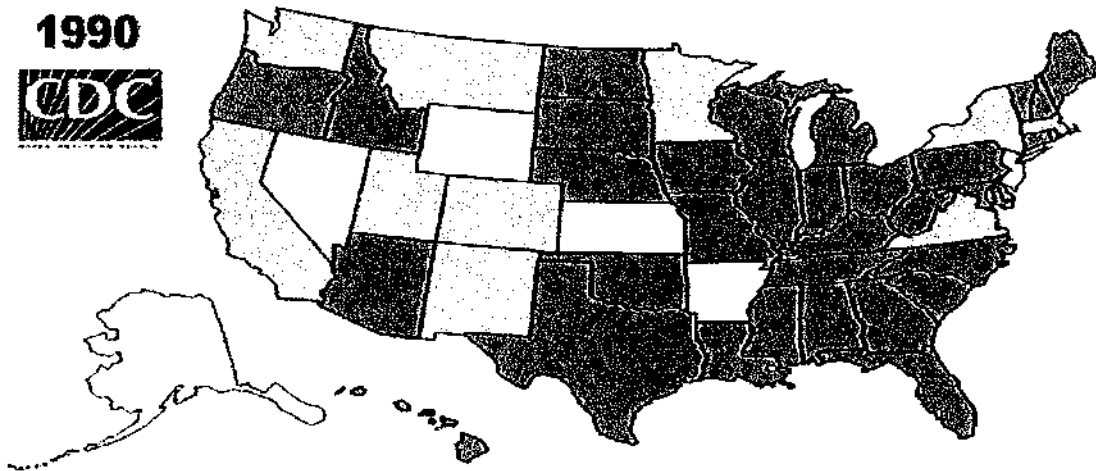
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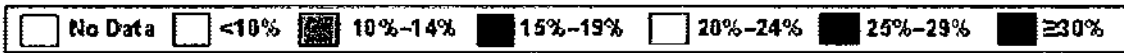
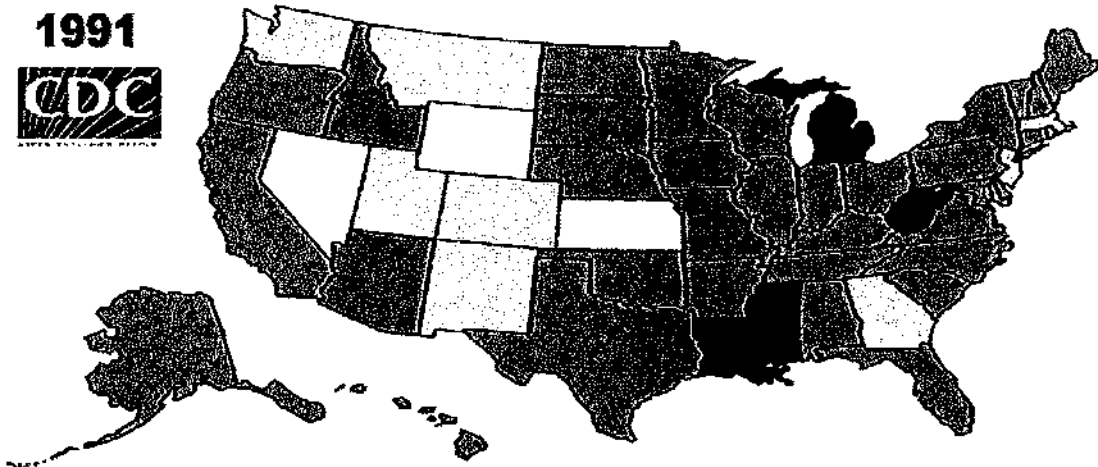
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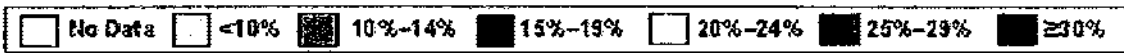
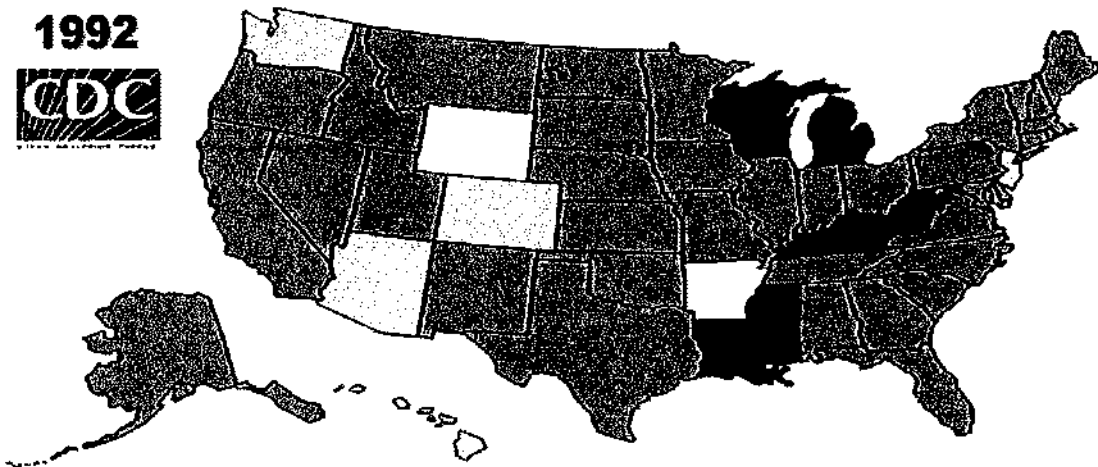
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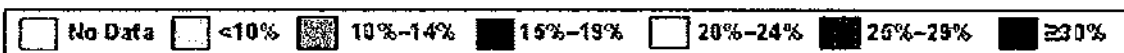
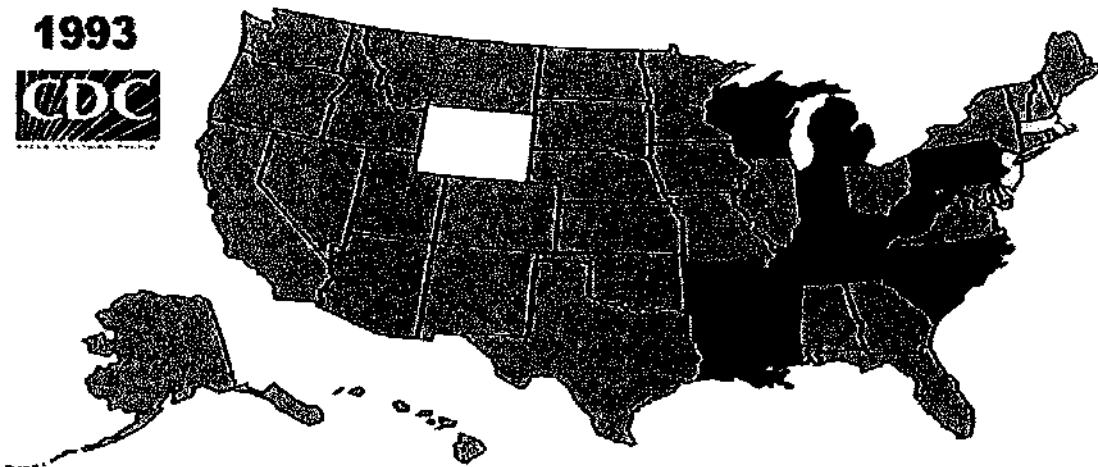
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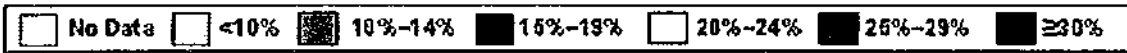
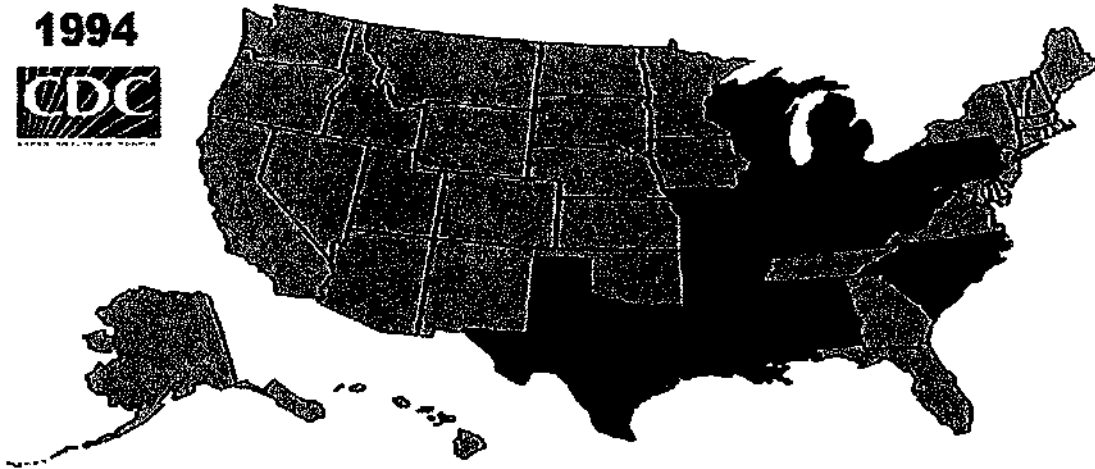
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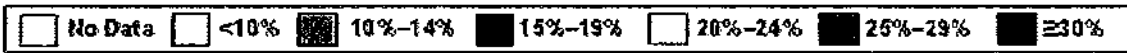
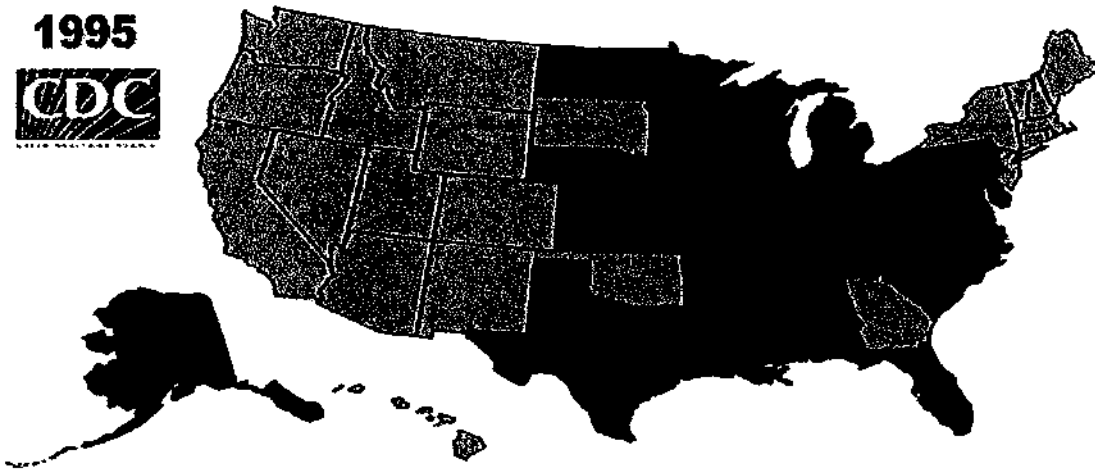
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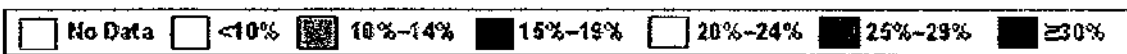
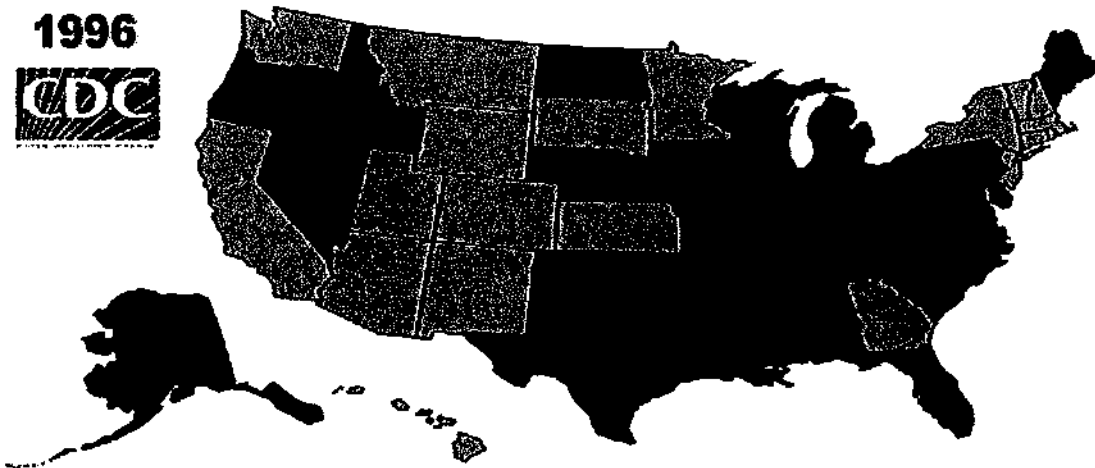
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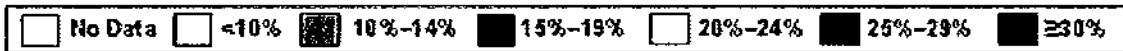
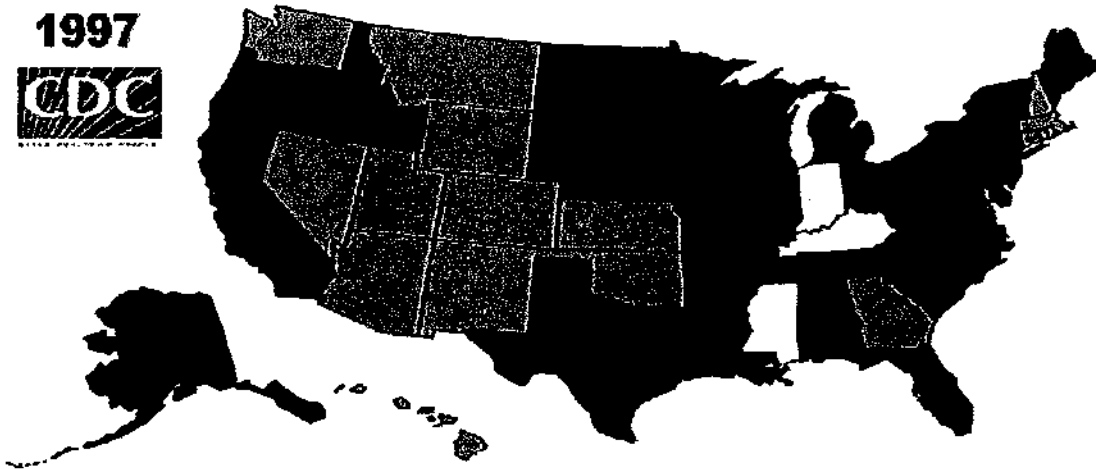
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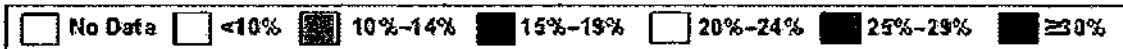
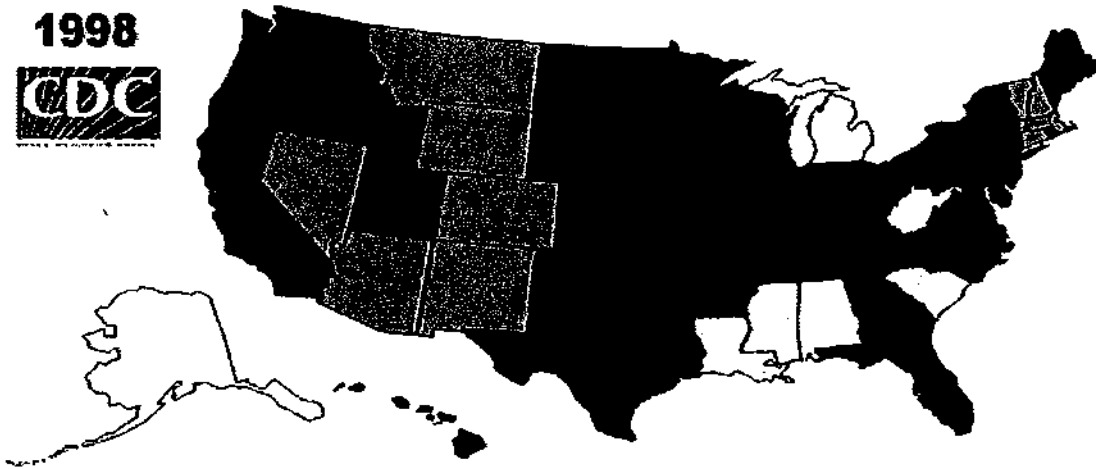
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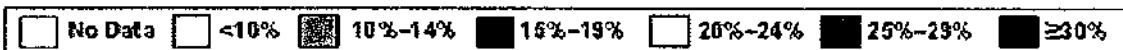
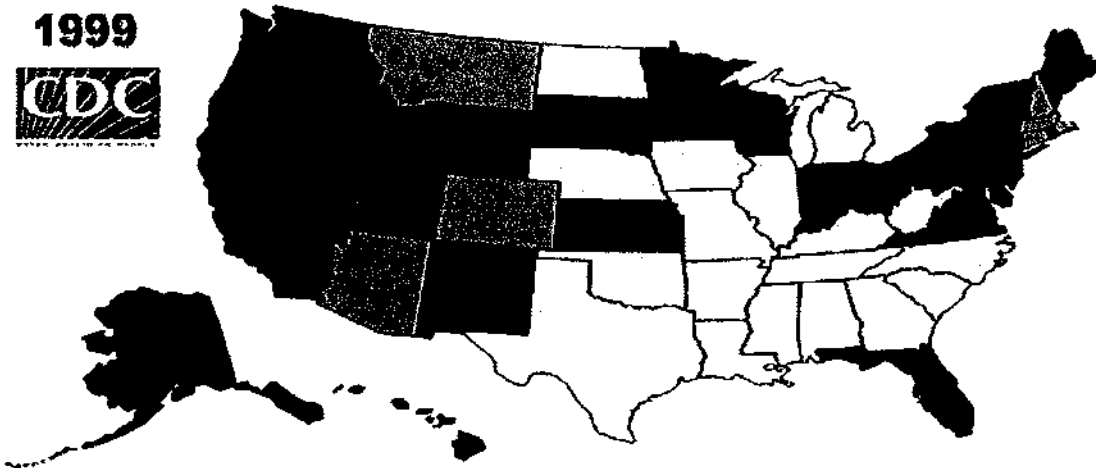
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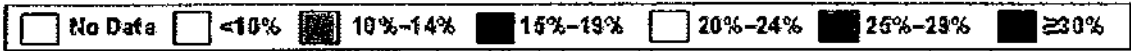
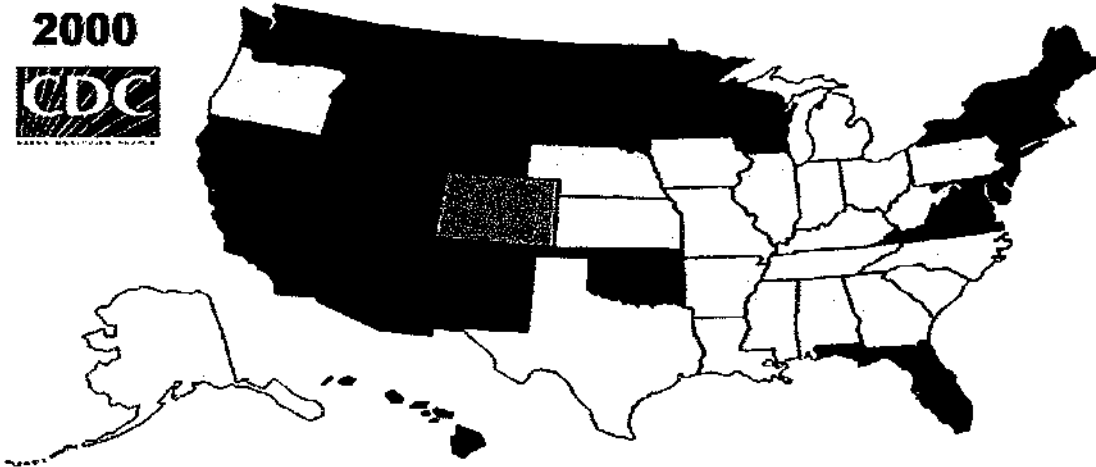
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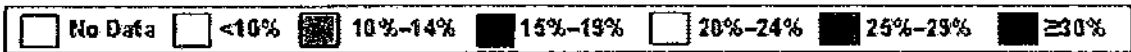
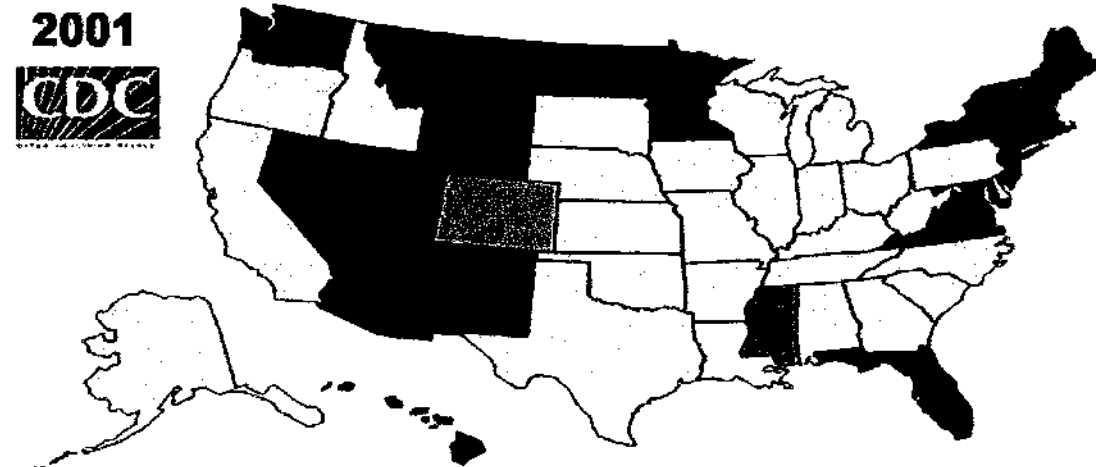
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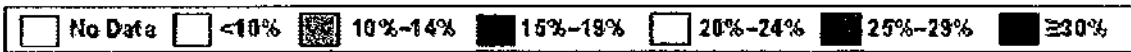
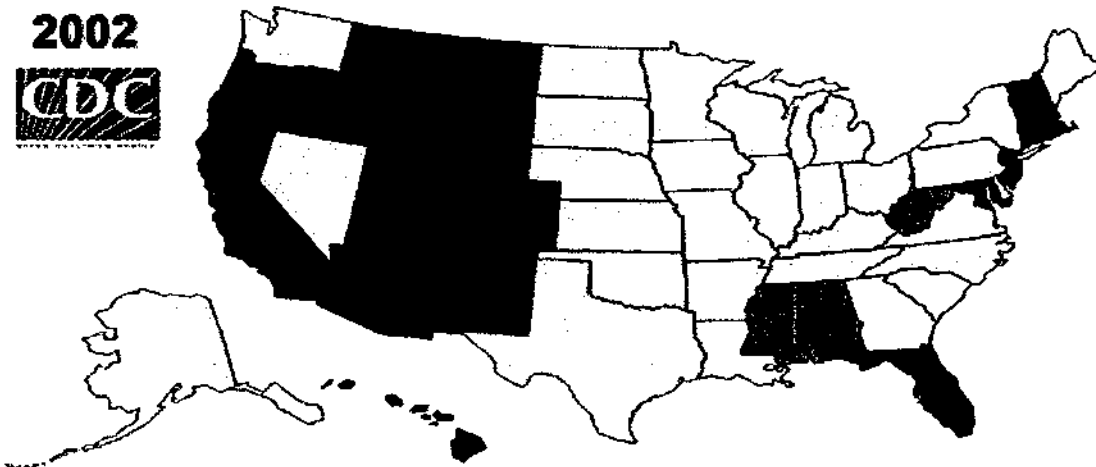
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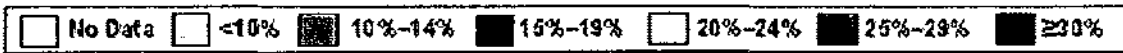
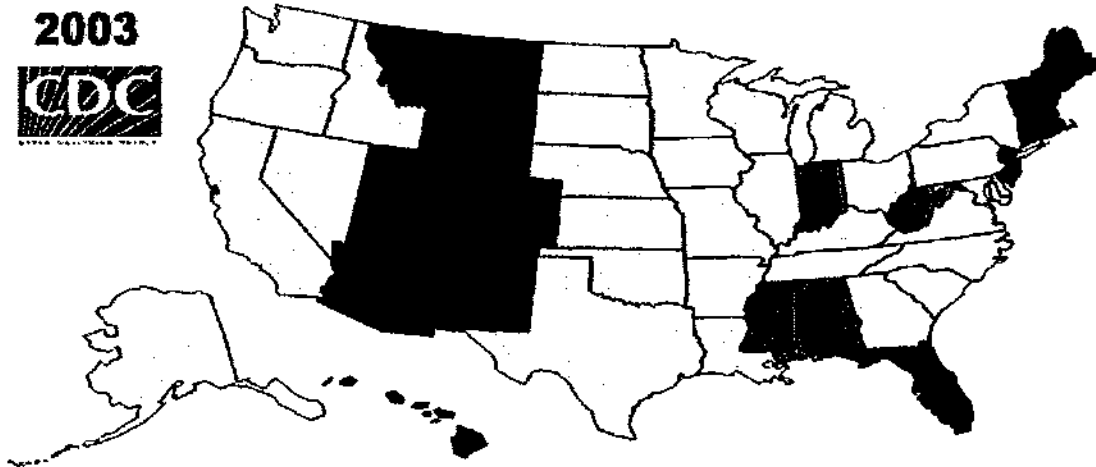
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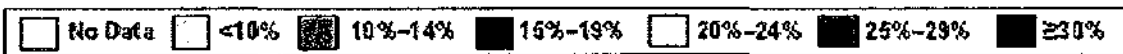
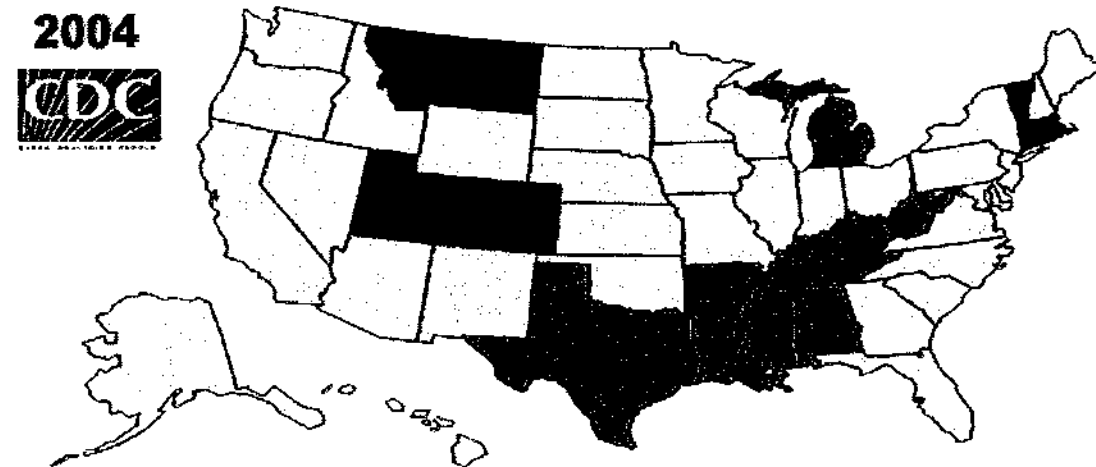
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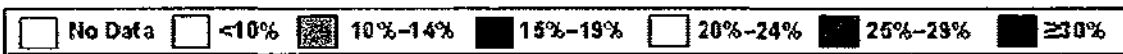
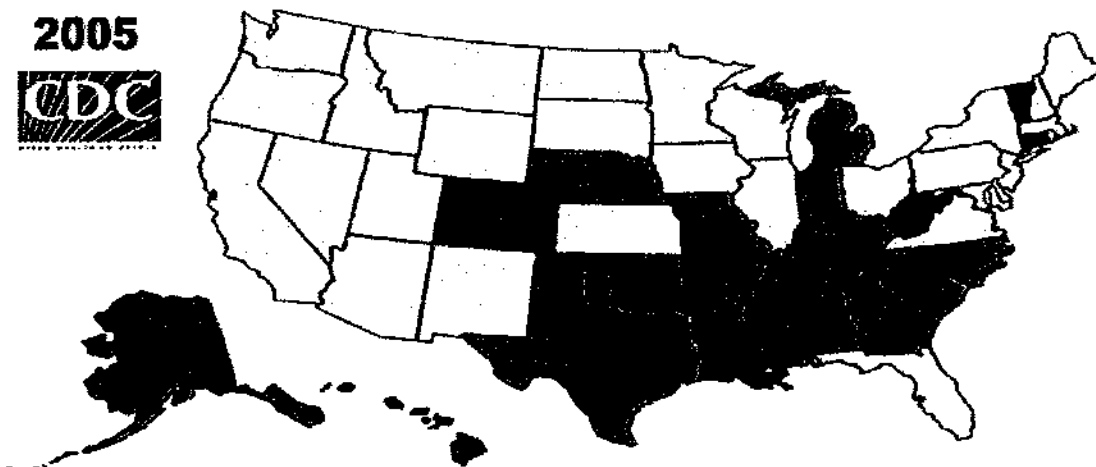
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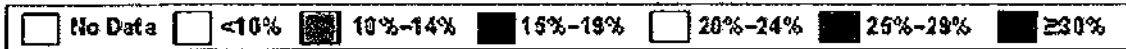
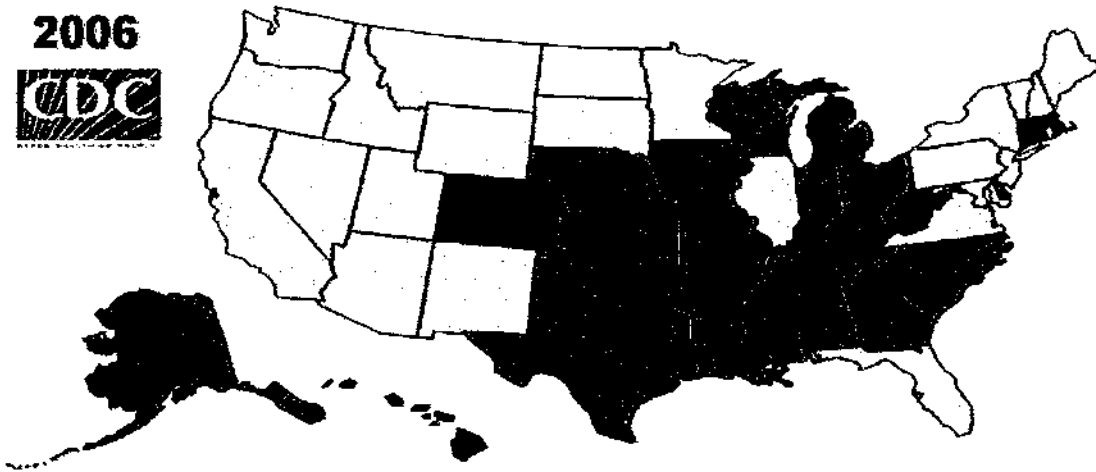
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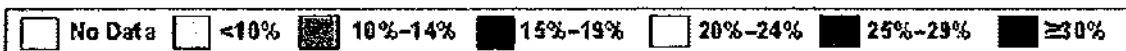
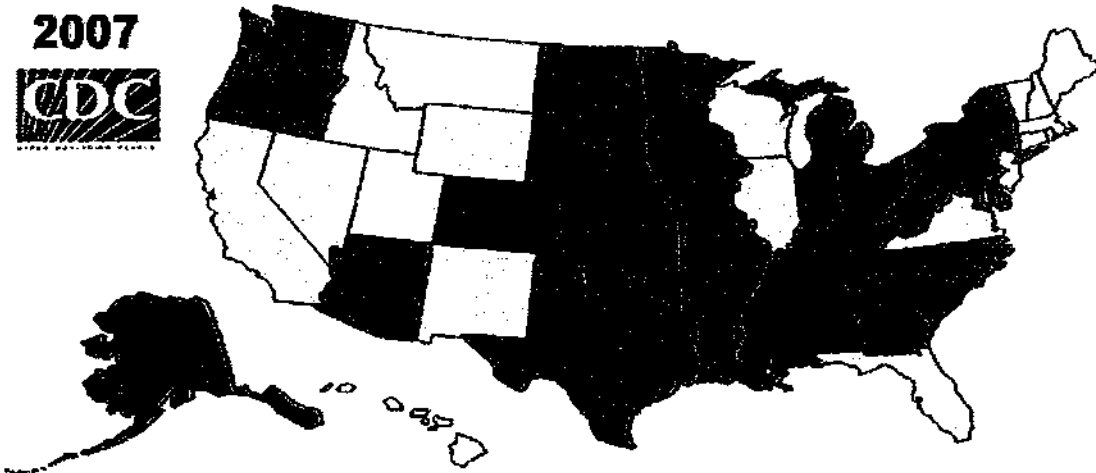
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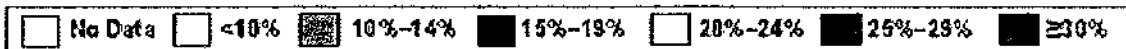
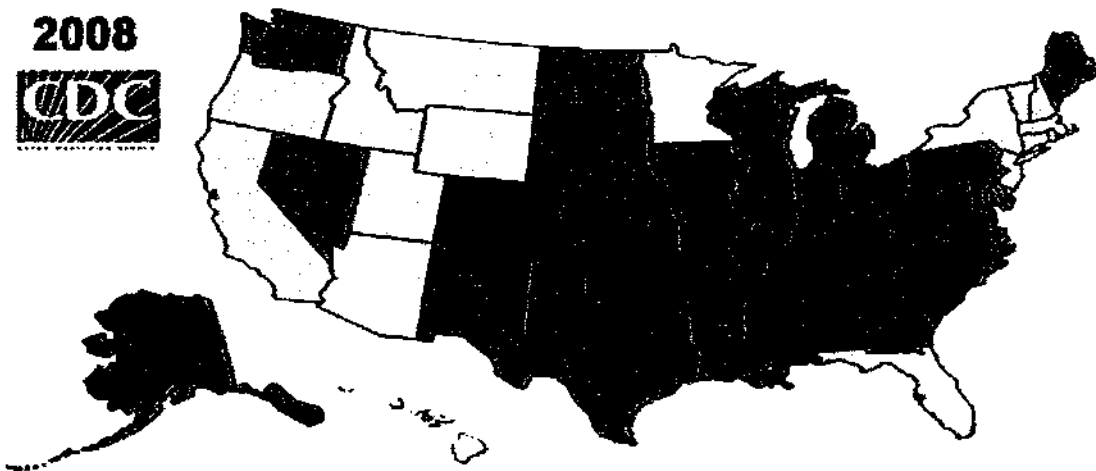
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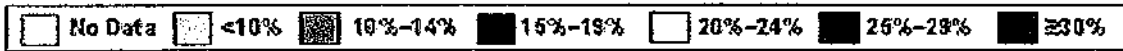
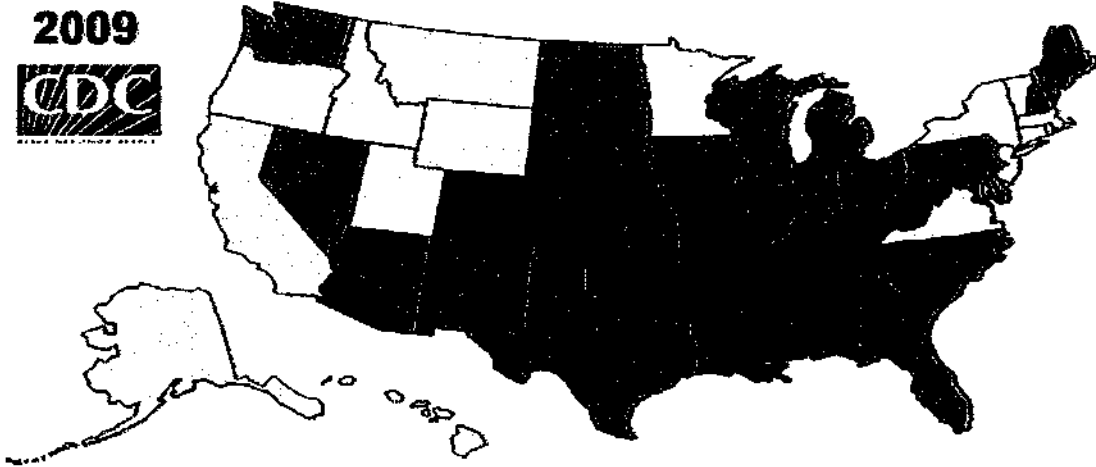


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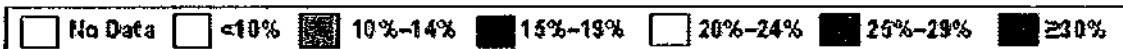
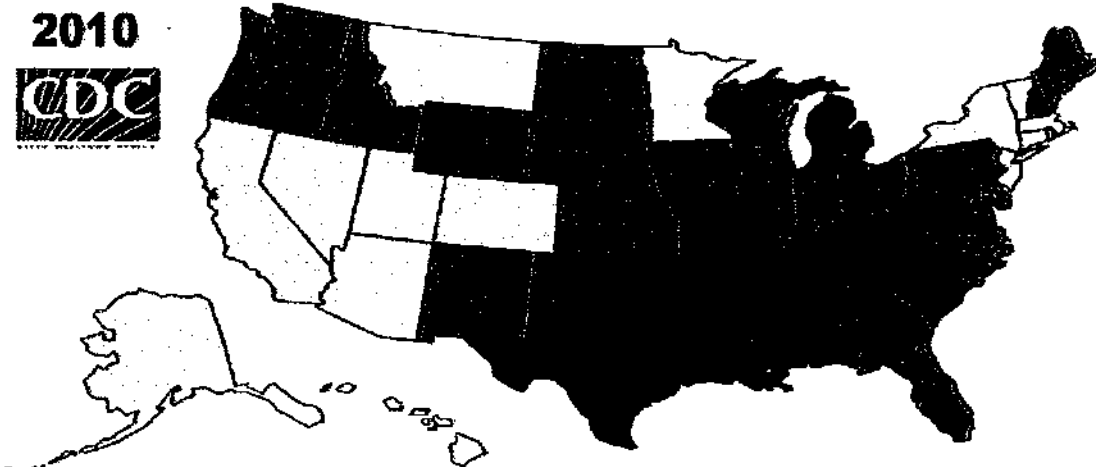




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