



**Statement of the American College of Sports Medicine
Submitted to
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
Hearing on
Healthier America: Legislative Proposals to Improve Public Health.
April 15, 2026**

About the American College of Sports Medicine

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. With more than 50,000 members and certified professionals globally, ACSM is dedicated to educating and empowering professionals to advance the science and practice of health and human performance.

Our vision is to extend and enrich lives through the power of movement. As the founding organization and leader in the "Exercise is Medicine" initiative, ACSM works tirelessly to ensure that physical activity is considered a standard part of disease prevention and treatment in the United States healthcare system.

H.R. 6121, the Promoting Physical Activity for Americans Act

H.R. 6121, the Promoting Physical Activity for Americans Act, is a vital piece of bipartisan legislation designed to provide a permanent, stable framework for federal physical activity guidelines. Specifically, the bill:

- **Codifies Regular Updates:** Directs the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to publish a report every ten years titled "Physical Activity Recommendations for Americans" based on the latest scientific evidence.
- **Ensures Contemporary Relevance:** Requires a mid-decade "midcourse report" five years after each full set of recommendations to highlight best practices and address emerging issues or specific demographic needs.
- **Establishes Scientific Continuity:** Formalizes the process ensuring that physicians, educators, and lawmakers have access to reliable, updated

STREET ADDRESS:

6510 Telecom Dr., Suite 200
Indianapolis, IN 46278

TELEPHONE: (317) 637-9200

FAX: (317) 634-7817

WEBSITE: www.acsm.org

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standards for all age groups and populations without relying on ad-hoc administrative action.

The Critical Importance of Physical Activity for Americans

The urgency of this bill cannot be overstated. Physical inactivity remains a leading driver of chronic disease and escalating healthcare costs in our nation. Consider the following:

- **Economic Impact:** Inactivity is linked to more than \$100 billion in annual healthcare costs. Investing in preventive movement is a direct investment in the fiscal health of our national budget.
- **Chronic Disease Prevention:** Regular physical activity that is of a sufficient amount, intensity, and type can significantly reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, many types of cancer (including breast and colon cancer), and can reduce the likelihood of developing obesity. These effects appear to be present across the lifespan and health span. In head-to-head comparative effectiveness trials, exercise has demonstrated larger effects in most cases when compared to pharmaceuticals.
- **Mental Health and Brain Function:** Movement is a proven tool for reducing anxiety and depression, improving sleep, and protecting the aging brain. Regular physical activity stimulates the brain's own waste-clearance system, reducing the buildup of proteins linked to Alzheimer's disease.
- **Military Readiness:** Data from a recent study show that 77% of American youth (16 to 24 years of age) aren't qualified for military service without waivers. The good health and human performance of armed forces personnel remain central to the defense of the United States and its allies.
- **Current Participation Gaps:** Recent data shows that only about 47% of U.S. adults meet federal guidelines for aerobic activity. Even more concerning, sedentary lifestyles among youth contribute to a nearly 20% obesity rate in children, threatening the long-term health of the next generation.

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Conclusion

Physical activity is a fundamental pillar of public health. By passing H.R. 6121, Congress will ensure that our national health policy is guided by the best available science, providing every American with the roadmap they need to lead an active, healthy, and productive life. ACSM strongly urges the Committee to support this common-sense, life-saving legislation.

References and Sources

1. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).** (2024). *Health and Economic Benefits of Physical Activity.*
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3. **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM).** *Exercise is Medicine® Initiative: Supporting Physical Activity in Clinical Care.*
4. **National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).** *Percentage of Adults Meeting Physical Activity Guidelines: United States, 2020-2024.*
5. **The Lancet Public Health.** *The Global Economic Burden of Physical Inactivity: A Analysis of Healthcare Expenditure.*

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