AN ACT creating the task force on obesity prevention and management.

WHEREAS, Kansas is experiencing an obesity epidemic among adults and youth; and
WHEREAS, Obesity constitutes a grave threat to the health and well-being of our nation, as rates have risen dramatically over the past decades with particularly strong impact on diverse and disadvantaged communities; and
WHEREAS, The United States now has the highest rate of obesity among all developed nations; and
WHEREAS, Unless industry, the public and the government work together to address the issue, three in four Americans will become overweight or obese by 2020; and
WHEREAS, Data from 2007 shows that 31.1% of Kansas children are overweight or obese; and
WHEREAS, Over the past three decades, the childhood obesity rate has more than doubled for preschool children aged 2-5 years and adolescents aged 12-19 years, and it has more than tripled for children aged 6-11 years; and
WHEREAS, At present, approximately nine million children over 6 years of age are considered obese; and
WHEREAS, Physical inactivity and poor nutrition comprise the second leading actual cause of death; and
WHEREAS, Overall, 65% of high school students watched two or more hours of television on an average school day, displacing physical activity and increasing caloric intake during viewing; and
WHEREAS, Overweight and obesity lead to increased risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, some cancers, osteoarthritis, other health conditions and chronic diseases; and
WHEREAS, In Kansas, as well as the United States, minority populations are disproportionately affected by overweight and obesity and the resulting complications; and
WHEREAS, Healthy eating and physical activity have been proven to reduce one's risk for developing preventable chronic conditions and improving overall physical and mental health; and
WHEREAS, Overweight and obesity are causing tremendous increases in
WHEREAS, Promoting healthy lifestyles will support family stability since children are severely impacted by disease and death of family members; and

WHEREAS, It is of vital importance and in the best interest of the people of the state of Kansas that the current needs of our youth are addressed in a comprehensive and meaningful manner to plan now for Kansas' healthy economic future: Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:

Section 1. (a) There is hereby created the Kansas task force on obesity prevention and management, hereinafter referred to as the “task force,” within the department of health and environment. In addition to any legislative appropriation, the task force may apply for, accept and expend grants and private donations from any source, including federal, state, public and private entities, to assist the task force in carrying out its functions.

(b) The duties of the task force shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Recommend ways to promote the recognition of overweight and obesity as a major public health problem in Kansas that also has serious implications for Kansas' economic prosperity.
2. Review data and other research to determine the number of Kansas' children who are overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.
3. Identify the contributing factors to the increasing burden of overweight and obesity in Kansas.
4. Recommend ways to help Kansans balance healthy eating with regular physical activity to achieve and maintain a healthy or healthier body weight.
5. Identify and research evidenced-based strategies to promote lifelong physical activity and lifelong healthful nutrition, and to assist those who are already overweight or obese to maintain healthy lifestyles.
6. Identify effective and culturally appropriate interventions to prevent and treat overweight and obesity.
7. Provide policy recommendations to improve healthful nutrition and physical activity for our youth, especially in areas where they congregate such as schools, after-school programs, and community and youth centers.
8. Provide recommendations for parents, caregivers, health care providers, youth leaders and other youth-based programs to encourage and support healthy eating and increased physical activity to promote family strengthening and family stability.
(c) The task force shall convene for its first meeting no later than August 1, 2012. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the task force shall be appointed by the secretary of health and environment. The department of health and environment shall provide such administrative assistance as may be requested by the task force. The task force may adopt such rules of procedure as are necessary to facilitate orderly conduct of its business.

(d) The task force shall submit a report, including proposed legislation if necessary, to the governor, the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate, on or before November 1, 2013. Such report shall include a comprehensive state plan for implementation of services and programs in the state of Kansas to increase prevention and management of the disease of obesity in children and an estimate of the cost of implementation of such a plan.

(e) All departments, boards, agencies, officers and institutions of the state and all subdivisions thereof shall cooperate with the task force in carrying out its purposes pursuant to this section.

(f) All members shall be reimbursed for necessary and actual expenses incurred for traveling and subsistence in the performance of serving on the task force from the legislative appropriation to the department of health and environment.

Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its publication in the statute book.