

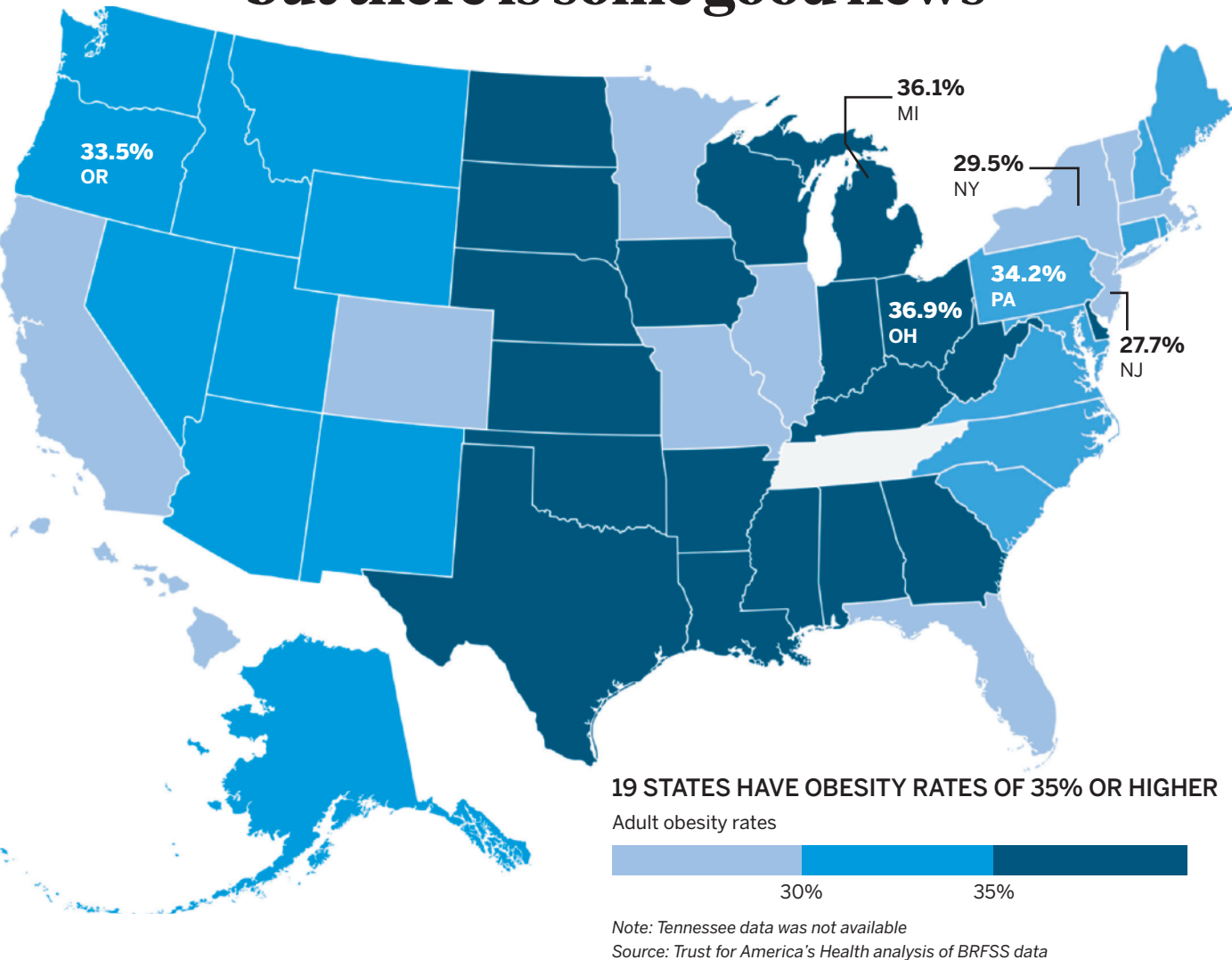


TOP 25 MATCHUP

MICHIGAN STATE BASKETBALL COACH TOM IZZO AND THE SPARTANS HOST NO. 14-RANKED ARKANSAS TONIGHT. THE RAZORBACKS ARE COACHED BY FELLOW HALL OF FAMER JOHN CALIPARI. B1

HEALTH

Obesity remains high in the U.S., but there is some good news



Fewer states had obesity rates of 35% or higher last year.

Jonel Aleccia Associated Press

For the first time in more than a decade, the number of states with rates of obesity of 35% or more has dropped, an encouraging sign that America's epidemic of excess weight might be improving.

But cuts to federal staff and programs that address chronic disease could endanger that progress, according to a report released in October.

Nineteen states had obesity rates of 35% or higher in 2024, down from 23 states the year prior, according to an analysis of the latest data collected by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC data was analyzed by the nonprofit group Trust for America's Health.

The group's analysis follows a CDC report last year that found that the overall rate of obesity in the U.S. is high, but holding steady, affecting about 40% of the population.

While the decline is positive, "it's too soon to call it a trend," said Dr. J. Nadine Gracia, president and chief executive for TFAH. And with recent federal funding cuts, staff layoffs and eliminated programs, "this potential progress is also at risk," Gracia said.

A U.S. Health and Human Services Department spokesman said that the administration is "encouraged by the new data showing progress in the fight against obesity."

"We are restructuring public health pro-



In adults, obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher. Body mass index is a calculation based on height and weight. AP file

grams to eliminate waste, reduce bureaucracy, and redirect resources toward real prevention," said spokesman Andrew Nixon.

The latest report analyzed data from the CDC's 2024 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, which uses annual telephone surveys to collect data on health behaviors and chronic conditions in U.S. states and territories.

It showed that 19 states had obesity rates among adults of 35% or higher, 22 states had rates between 30% and 35% and nine states had obesity rates of below 30%. The rates varied from a low of 25% in Colorado to a high of more than 40% in West Virginia.

Between 2023 and 2024, no state had statistically significant increases or decreases in their obesity rates, after 18 states saw significant increases in the previous five years, the report found.

Before 2013, no state had an adult obesity prevalence at or above 35%. By 2019, a dozen states had rates that high — and the number continued to climb.

In adults, obesity is defined as having a body mass index of 30 or higher. Body mass index is a calculation based on height and weight. Obesity is a chronic disease linked to a number of serious health problems including diabetes, stroke, cancer and heart disease.

It's not clear exactly what may be driving the apparent improvements in obesity. Wider use of drugs such as Wegovy and Zepbound — which target appetite and slow digestion — could be starting to show up in reported data, said Aviva Musicus, a science director for the Center for Science in the Public Interest, an advocacy group. Increased support for nutrition assistance programs during the COVID-19 pandemic might also be a factor, she suggested.

The report also details a broad range of federal, state and local efforts that focus on improving nutrition and boosting physical activity, said Solveig Cunningham, an Emory University global health expert who specializes in obesity.

"I think the report would argue that some of these interventions may actually be successful," said Cunningham, who was not involved with the research. "That would suggest that there are possibly ways in which we could prevent obesity at the population level, which would be a really, really big deal."

ELECTRICITY NEEDS

AG aims to slow DTE's rush to serve massive AI data center

The utility wants a quick state OK on the megadeal without a public hearing and outside scrutiny.

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LANSING — Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel is opposing utility DTE Energy's request to rush consideration of a deal to serve a massive data center for ChatGPT creator Open AI and other tech partners.

DTE asked state regulators on Oct. 31 to skip public hearings and swiftly approve power contracts for the facility — planned for farmland outside Ann Arbor and set to demand more power than a million homes — without formal scrutiny from outside groups.

Nessel argues more time and information is needed to verify other DTE customers won't be saddled with costs from the 1.4-gigawatt project in Saline Township — a massive addition to the grid.

Her office made the case Thursday in a 17-page filing with the Michigan Public Service Commission, which will review the contracts.

"Reducing electric bills and making energy affordable is essential," Nessel said in a statement.

"That's why I'm asking the Commission to hold a public hearing on this case — to make sure DTE customers are not stuck footing the bill for a data center that never comes to fruition, or uses far less electricity than projected.

"In either scenario, the massive cost of building the data center won't just disappear. The cost would be passed on to rate-payers, driving up bills for families."

SEE ELECTRICITY NEEDS, A3



The northwest side of U.S. 12 between Case Road and Willow Road in Saline Township is part of a site in which Texas-based Related Digital has proposed building a data center for partners Oracle and OpenAI, creator of ChatGPT. Jacob Hamilton, MLive.com

Full SNAP funds coming this month for Michiganders

After a scare, change comes from federal court.

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LANSING — Michiganders who receive SNAP benefits will receive their full allotment in the month of November.

One day after announcing recipients would receive partial food assistance in November, state officials announced they have directed Michigan's SNAP EBT vendor to begin issuing full benefits to recipients as soon as funding is received.

The change in direction stems from a federal court order issued Thursday by U.S. District Judge John McConnell of Rhode Island.

McConnell ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Service to im-

mediately issue full Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits for 42 million Americans who rely on them.

In his ruling, the judge said the USDA failed to consider the practical consequences associated with its decision to only partially fund SNAP.

McConnell said USDA officials knew there would be a delay in paying out partial SNAP payments and that they failed to consider the harm that would have on those who rely on SNAP benefits.

"We applaud Judge McConnell's ruling requiring FNS to issue full SNAP benefits for November," said Elizabeth Hertel, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

director.

"Many Michigan families depend on SNAP to help put nutritious food on the table, and (Thursday's) ruling ensures they won't be left wondering how they will feed their children — especially with the upcoming holiday season."

1.4M MICHIGANDERS RELY ON SNAP

Absent a successful appeal by the USDA, SNAP recipients who normally receive benefits on the third, fifth or seventh of the month should receive their full SNAP allotment within 48 hours of MDHHS receiving the funds, according to the state.

SEE FOOD ASSISTANCE, A3

