



## **Editorial: Obesity Costs**

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Three out of every ten Alabamians eats too much.

Only Mississippi and West Virginia outscore us in obesity ratings.

Clearly, our food's better and we have better cooks than most states.

But we also have higher health bills.

And that's the problem.

We can't afford it anymore.

Medical expenses, free to most state employees, cost nearly \$2,000 more annually for someone who is obese.

Alabama ranks second in the nation in hypertension and fourth in type 2 diabetes, in part because of our obesity problem.

These ailments contribute to skyrocketing high costs.

If you are one of the 37 thousand plus state workers, you need to start demonstrating progress in slimming down or you will pay up - \$25 a month for insurance - beginning in January 2011.

If state workers don't get a free health screening next year, the \$25 monthly fee will start in January 2010.

Some say this is discriminatory. We think it is being practical. And potentially life changing.

With an extra incentive to live healthier, many of us may just do it.