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**Contact:** Lyndsay Carreno  
202.466.8700 [lyndsay@obesitycampaign.org](mailto:lyndsay@obesitycampaign.org)

### **New Study: Providing Healthy Meals in Schools Saves Billions**

Washington, DC – As American children head back to school, a study released today by the national accounting firm Ernst & Young for the Campaign to End Obesity found that the economic return on investment in providing healthy school meals is roughly \$108.4 billion over a generation. These savings are directly related to the health and education improvements that are demonstrated to occur when children eat more nutritious foods during the school day.

The study's authors note that improving the quality of school meals provides two means through which savings can be derived – lower health care costs and improved educational outcomes. In 2018, additional lifetime medical costs for each child suffering from obesity totaled \$21,000. Because elementary students who suffer from obesity are much more likely (75-90%) to suffer from obesity as adults, savings are achievable from preventing obesity in children, who are the more likely to avoid obesity and related diseases as adults.

Muir Macpherson, one of the study's authors and former Assistant Professor of Strategy, Economics & Policy at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business points out, "The economics of combating obesity in America are quite clear. We know that there are hundreds of billions of dollars that are potentially saved by eliminating or reducing excess health care costs associated with obesity in the United States."

"This study reconfirms what we know – which is that there is tremendous benefit from providing children with access to healthy foods during the school day making it critical that policymakers uphold critical policy approaches that make these foods available," said Scott Goudeseune, Chief Executive Officer of the American Council on Exercise and chair of the board of CEO. "This study reinforces the value of starting obesity prevention early and the tremendous value that comes from providing schoolchildren access to healthy foods. We can do more - and there are important opportunities to advance federal policies that can have a critical dual impact of promoting a healthier population through obesity prevention and treatment policies and saving money."

For more information on the study and the work of the Campaign to End Obesity, please visit <http://www.obesitycampaign.org>.