2. The obesity problem in East and Central Harlem is part of an epidemic affecting Manhattan, New York City, and the nation.

The prevalence of obesity among U.S. children has more than tripled since the mid-1960s; two-thirds of U.S. adults are now obese or overweight. This national epidemic has not spared New York City and its neighborhoods. Among children attending Head Start, the prevalence of obesity is similar in East and Central Harlem (27%), Manhattan overall (26%), and the city as a whole (27%). The same is true among public elementary school children, with obesity rates of 27% in East and Central Harlem, 26% in the borough of Manhattan, and 24% in New York City. Among adolescents and younger adults, the prevalence of obesity is similar in East and Central Harlem and New York City: 14% vs. 12% in high school students and 19% vs. 18% in adults aged 18 to 44. Geographic disparities in obesity prevalence are more pronounced among older adults, with higher rates in East and Central Harlem than in Manhattan as a whole: 39% vs. 19% in persons aged 45 to 64, and 40% vs. 20% in those aged 65 and older.