



Steeler Testifies In Child Obesity Hearings

Rashard Mendenhall Talks About Ways To Get Kids Active

POSTED: 10:24 am EST March 4, 2010 UPDATED: 6:42 pm EST March 4, 2010

WASHINGTON -- A Senate committee held a hearing Thursday concerning ways to reverse the child obesity epidemic in the United States, and Pittsburgh Steelers running back Rashard Mendenhall was among those who testified.

"We are recognizable figures for kids, just to see your face and your jersey -- they see you on TV all the time. I'm pretty sure not too many kids are watching C-SPAN, so it's a lot harder for you guys," Mendenhall said, drawing a laugh from the room.



He joined other experts in testifying before the [Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions](#).

Sen. Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said he hopes more star athletes will get involved as spokespeople.

"I think it's important to tell kids they don't have to be a running back, but they can do other things," Harkin said.

Mendenhall helped launch the [NFL's "PLAY 60" campaign](#), aimed at encouraging kids to get active for 60 minutes every day. Hines Ward and Troy Polamalu are also involved in Play 60.

"The NFL doesn't necessarily ask kids to play football for 60 minutes a day. We simply ask kids to play for 60 minutes," Mendenhall said in his testimony.



It's about finding something that you like to do that can keep you active, not just playing sports, Mendenhall said.

"Something I am personally interested in a lot is dancing, and I've taken numerous dance classes as a way to move myself," he said. "I have actually taught a couple of dance classes to high

schools in my area and stuff like that."

Mendenhall agreed with fellow panel members who suggested that ever-changing technology -- Internet, social networking, cell phones -- may be a culprit in obesity.

"When I was younger, none of that was around," he said. "And to even see your friends, you had to go outside, you had to go to the park, you had to run or ride your bike to somebody's house to see if they were at home."