



BE ACTIVE . . .

“Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity”



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Maine in Motion: Council to Launch Pedometer Project

On September 15, 2004, the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, Health, and Wellness, along with Governor John Baldacci and his executive staff, will launch a pedometer project entitled "Maine in Motion." This 12 week program is designed to help increase the level of physical activity in Maine people.

The kick-off will take place at the Kennebec River Rail Trail connection at Capitol Park in Augusta at 9:00 a.m. This pilot project has identified participants of all ages including Maine State Employees, a fifth grade class from Somerset County, Eastern Log Homes, Hannaford stores of central Maine, and a senior group, among others. This 12 week walking program will use pedometers and participant guides to assist these Mainers in getting more physical activity each day by tracking their steps and setting a daily goal. Along with the participant guide, weekly tips will be provided at each site. Upon completion of the program, those participants who return their activity log and evaluation forms will be eligible for prize drawings.

Research has shown that pedometer use promotes increased activity toward better health. Increased activity is a key element in obesity prevention and treatment. In 2002, more than half of Maine adults (59%) were considered overweight or obese, the highest rank in New England.

The *Maine in Motion* program will create opportunities for people in Maine to challenge themselves to be more physically active for better health. The pedometer is a useful tool that provides

immediate feedback and direct personalized information to the participant.

A Participant Guide has been developed for the program that was written in part by Dr. Karen Croteau, Associate Professor of Sports Medicine at the University of Southern Maine. Dr. Croteau has conducted research on the use of pedometers to increase the physical activity levels of adults in the workplace setting and older adults in an assisted living setting. A nutritional piece has been added to the guide provided by Amy Cotton, MSN, APRN, BC, Program Director for the Center for Healthy Aging, Rosscare, Bangor.

Maine in Motion is being implemented in collaboration with the Maine Bureau of Health, Medical Care Development, MAHPERD (Maine Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), Maine Cardiovascular Health Council, Winterkids, CATCH Program, Healthy AIM, Maine Public Health Association, and the Healthy Maine Partnerships.

Current sponsors for the program include The Stephen and Tabitha King Foundation, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, Eastern Maine Charities, Hannaford Supermarkets, Dead River Company, and Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute.

Phase II of the project will take place in March 2005. Interested persons/groups can participate in this phase by completing a registration form found on the Council's website (www.mainephysicalactivity.org). Registration will be available after February 1, 2005.



ACES (All Children Exercising Simultaneously)

On May 5, 2004 the Governor's Council was pleased to once again sponsor ACES Day (All Children Exercising Simultaneously). This is the 8th year that the Council has celebrated this event (and the 16th year of Project ACES, an international program that promotes physical activity).

This year 88 schools, four daycares, one YMCA and one YWCA participated in the event with over 22,000 students and staff taking part.

This was also the first year the Council distributed a resource manual to help schools plan the event. If you have not received a manual and would like one to help plan next year's event, it is available to download at the Council's website -- www.mainephysicalactivity.org/ACES/ACES.htm. Printed copies are also available for a \$5 shipping and handling fee and can be requested by calling 622-7566, ext. 230 or emailing dianec@mcd.org. The manual was a great help to those schools planning their first event.

Mark your calendars for next year: **May 4, 2005.**



Weld Elementary School

Maine's Children -- We Need Less of Them to Love

Maine's children need more than better education and better job prospects to have a better future. They need better health in general, but specifically they need to avoid becoming obese. Obesity in childhood is just another way for a Maine child to have a less bright future. In that regard it is no different from a poor education or having few prospects for a good job. It is a 'sentence' to a kind of prison of ill health, and another way for children in Maine to lose opportunity.

Obesity has a negative impact on a child's emotional health, markedly increases the likelihood they will become obese as adults, and can lead to early hypertension, diabetes, and heart disease. Left unchecked, the current generation of children in this state will not live as long as their parents have, because obesity will kill so many of them prematurely. They will be the first generation in Maine history to live shorter lives on average than their parents.

Despite these grim realities, more than 15% of Maine's children are now overweight, twice as many as were overweight in the early 1980s, and four times as many as in the early 1960's. The problem is - no pun intended - getting bigger all of the time, with a growing percentage of our children becoming overweight.

The potential 'life sentence' to ill health represented by obesity in childhood can be 'commuted' by the adults in our children's lives, by us. The treatment is not complex, it is not mysterious, it does not require sophisticated treatment programs. It simply requires us to find ways to reduce the number of calories our children eat and to increase the number of calories they burn off. That means less junk food,

fewer calories, less time on the computer or in front of the television, and more activity.

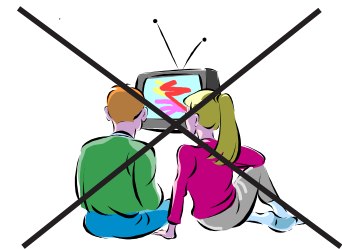
There are a few concepts in obesity prevention that ought to be rules in every child's life. First and foremost, no child ought to be having more than an hour of television or computer time per day. An hour. There is clear evidence of a linear relationship between TV/computer time and weight - generally the more time they sit in front of the screen the fatter a child becomes. The truth is simple, hard, and ugly.

Second, every child and adolescent should be playing sports of some kind. The more sports, the more physical play, the less likely a child is to become obese.

Third, no child should be drinking more than one small soda per day, if that. Every additional soda per day increases the likelihood a child will become overweight. So do other high sugar and high fat snacks. We cannot feed our children the calories of adults and expect them not to weigh as much as adults.

Together these three rules can be turned around and expressed another way: a child who watches a lot of TV, drinks several sodas per day, and does not spend a lot of time physically playing almost certainly will become obese. No responsible adult in Maine should be standing by and letting that happen.

By Erik N. Steele, DO, Co-Chair



For more information about the Maine Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, Sports, Health, and Wellness check out our web page at www.mainephysicalactivity.org; email us at gcpfs@mcd.org, call us at 207-622-7566, ext. 230 or 220, or write us at 11 Parkwood Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

On the Move With “March Into May”

Look good, feel good and get there for free is the objective of March Into May, a fun and easy 10-week physical activity program offered by the Healthy Portland Coalition, Public Health Division, Health and Human Services Department; City of Portland and the planning committee members. March Into May has been providing training to Portland work sites, schools, and organizations to run the program since 1999 and to date has increased its number of participants by 500%. This year the program ran from March 15 to May 21 and held an event to celebrate the accomplishments in June.

March Into May encourages Portland citizens to become more physically active. Participants set their own goals, which allows anyone to participate and be successful. Educational and motivational tips are shared at the start of the program as well as through weekly tips. Participants who complete 8 to 10 weeks of the program are also entered into a large prize drawing held at the final celebration. Some donated or sponsored prizes in the past have included bikes, kayaks, discounts/certificates, t-shirts, and more. March Into May is also structured to promote environmental changes that support increased physical activity. Each year the program continues to grow and provide training and program materials to participating sites at no cost.

Physically active people manage stress better, sleep better, and feel better. Physical activity can also enhance self-image, prevent illness, manage weight, and increase energy. For employers, work site health promotion is cost effective. Savings are related to increased productivity, decreased absenteeism, and lower health care costs. Community organizations can also benefit from increased morale and team building through shared activities. Schools benefit through more attentive students and improved academic performance.

March Into May participant testimonials:

- ★ “This is a wonderful program that got me started and has given me the motivation to continue and also to increase my exercising.”
- ★ “I have lost 20 pounds and eight inches.”
- ★ “It really brought a sense of community and got people together.”
- ★ “I loved that it was user-friendly.”
- ★ “It was great to hear the comments on weight loss and program completion...people also wanted to continue once the program was over.”
- ★ “The materials are well prepared and appropriate.”

This year March Into May had 74 organizations participating, reaching over 6,000 men, women, and children. If you would like more information on why MIM is so successful or how it can work for your organization, please contact Rick Fortier at Healthy Portland: 874-8618.


















MIM planning committee members are: *Aetna; Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition; Communities Promoting Health (PROP); Healthy Portland, Public Health Division, HHS Dept, City of Portland; Portland Schools; Portland Trails; Unum Provident; USM Employee Wellness.*

March Into May is sponsored by: Healthy Portland, with tobacco settlement money from the Fund for a Healthy Maine, through the Partnership for A Tobacco-Free Maine, Bureau of Health, Department of Human Services; UNUM Provident; Communities Promoting Health (PROP); Anthem Blue Cross & Blue Shield; Hannaford Bros.; Bay Club; and Olympia Sports.

**March into May was adapted from a program developed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

By Rick Fortier, Health Promotion Specialist, Public Health Division, Health & Human Services Department, City of Portland

Ways to Increase Your Physical Activity

-  Walk before or after school or work
-  Take a short walk after lunch or dinner
-  Get a buddy (family member or friend) to walk with you
-  Walk to meet a friend (rather than talk on the phone)
-  Take your dog for a daily walk (or a longer one than usual)
-  Park in the farthest space from the store or at the mall
-  Walk to the store, post office, school or work
-  Walk while talking on the cordless phone
-  Take the stairs instead of the elevator
-  Walk while waiting for an appointment
-  Avoid drive-through windows (get out of the car and walk in)
-  Socialize while walking with friends (rather than sitting)
-  Walk - don't ride - at the golf course
-  Use a push mower (rather than a riding mower)
-  Walk to the TV to change channels
-  Walk down extra aisles at the store
-  Do extra chores around the house

Legislative Fitness Day/Contest for Communities

April 6, 2004 marked the day for the Council's 4th Annual Legislative Fitness Day, which was held in the State House Hall of Flags. The purpose of Legislative Fitness Day (LFD) is to stimulate awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy and active lifestyle. Free health screenings were made available to participants and included blood pressure, cholesterol, strength, bone density, body fat analysis, and a computerized health risk assessment (Scorekeeper).

Governor Baldacci joined the activities by taking part in several of the screenings offered.

Sponsors of the program included MAHPERD (Maine Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance), The American Lung Association of Maine, Hannaford Supermarkets, FDI Medical, and the Maine Bureau of Health.

As part of LFD, the Council also held its 6th Annual Contest for Communities Award presentations. The celebration began with a brief welcome by Co-Chairs of the Council, Dr. Erik Steele and Joan Benoit Samuelson, and continued with Governor Baldacci addressing those present and stressing the importance of physical activity, especially given Maine's growing obesity problem.

Janet Smith, WVII-TV, Channel 7 Bangor, emceed the award ceremony and presented these recognition awards to the following:

[Adult Category](#) - Seacoast Management, Topsham

[Youth - School Category](#) - Maine Winter Sports Center Healthy Hometowns Ski Program, Windham

[Youth - Community Category](#) - Somerset Sports & Fitness Conditioning Programs, Skowhegan

[Special Populations Category](#) - WIC-Tivities, Biddeford

[Healthy Workplace - Small Business Category](#) - Bowdoin College Dining Services, Brunswick

[Healthy Workplace - Medium Business Category](#) - Wellness Team & Community Health Promotion, Bridgton Hospital

[Healthy Workplace - Large Business Category](#) - Central Maine Medical Center, Health and Wellness Service

[Community Category](#) - Health-Link, The Wellness Center of Maine Coast Memorial Hospital

The Council would like to take this opportunity to once again thank National Semiconductor for sponsoring the 2004 Contest for Communities celebration.

Mark your calendars now for next year's Legislative Fitness Day/Contest for Communities Award celebration which will be taking place on Thursday, **February 17, 2004**.

More information on Legislative Fitness Day and Contest for Communities can be found on the Council's website at www.mainephysicalactivity.org.



Governor Baldacci getting the results from his body fat analysis.



(L to R) Joan Benoit Samuelson (Co-Chair), Governor John Baldacci, and Dr. Erik Steele (Co-Chair) making opening remarks at Legislative Fitness Day/Contest for Communities Award celebration.



Members of Health-Link, The Wellness Center of Maine Coast Memorial Hospital receiving the award in the Community Category at the 6th Annual Contest for Communities Award celebration.