

# Get ME Active

"Promoting Healthy Lifestyles Through Physical Activity"



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## The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan

The U.S. National Physical Activity Plan was introduced in May. Its vision is for all Americans to be physically active and that we will all live, work, and play in environments that facilitate regular physical activity. The Plan is intended to create a national culture that supports active lifestyles. Ultimately, this will improve overall health, prevent disease and disability, and enhance the quality of life for Americans.

The National Physical Activity Plan is a comprehensive set of policies, programs and initiatives being created by a private-public sector collaborative. Hundreds of organizations across the country will be working together to change our communities so that everyone can be active.

The Plan was launched by Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius, the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, American Heart Association, and the American College of Sports Medicine. Its recommendations are organized into eight sectors including business and industry, education, health care, mass media, parks and recreation, fitness and sports, public health, transportation, land use and community design, and volunteer and non-profit. Some of the recommendations included are:

- A national program to educate Americans about how to help themselves and others exercise more.
- More funding of research into how to get people to exercise.

- Including physical activity education in the training of all health care professionals.
- Making physical activity a patient "vital sign" that all health care providers assess and discuss with their patients.
- Including fields for tracking patients' physical activity in electronic medical records and electronic health records.
- Developing and implementing state and school district policies requiring school accountability for the quality and quantity of physical education and physical activity programs.
- Providing access to and opportunities for physical activity before and after school.
- Ensuring that early childhood education settings for children ages 0 to 5 years promote and facilitate physical activity.
- Prioritize resources and provide incentives to increase active transportation and other physical activity through community design, infrastructure projects, systems, policies, and initiatives.
- Advocate to local, state, and national decision makers for policies and system changes identified in the Plan that promote physical activity.

For more information about the U.S. National Physical Activity Plan, go to <http://www.physicalactivityplan.org>.

## Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to School

**L**et's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to School is a program aimed at increasing healthy eating and physical activity in the school environment. The program endorses the "5-2-1-0" message which emphasizes the importance of:

- 5 or more fruits & vegetables
- 2 hours or less of recreational screen time
- 1 hour or more of physical activity
- 0 sugary drinks, more water and low fat milk.

Through the use of the Let's Go! 5-2-1-0 Goes to School framework, schools, teachers, nutrition programs, and parents can create a healthier school environment. Participation is voluntary.

More information can be found at <http://www.lets-go.org>.

For more information on any of the events mentioned in this newsletter or about the Maine Governor's Council, check out our web page at [www.maineinmotion.org](http://www.maineinmotion.org); email us at [info@maineinmotion.org](mailto:info@maineinmotion.org), call us at 207-622-7566, ext. 230, or write us at 11 Parkwood Drive, Augusta, ME 04330.

## PE Assessed in Maine Elementary Schools

**I**n fulfillment of LD 1407, "An Act to Assess the Physical Education Capacity of Elementary Schools in Maine ...," the Maine Department of Education conducted a statewide survey of all Maine PreK thru 8 Physical Education teachers during January and February to assess current Physical Education capacities. The survey results were presented to the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs in March.

A total of 357 surveys were completed representing a 75.3% response rate and approximately 68% of Maine's 463 PreK thru 8 schools. Below are some key pieces of data extrapolated from the report.

- A significant majority of teachers (41.56%) reported a teacher-to-student ratio for PE classes as one teacher to 16 to 20 students.
- In terms of the delivery of physical education, the average number of minutes varied based upon grade level with students in the upper grades generally receiving more physical education instruction than students in the lower grades. Further breakdown consisted of:
  - 92.7% of respondents reported that students received PE for a "full year."
  - The number of days per week PE is offered is almost evenly

distributed between one and two days per week collectively representing 89.8% of responses.

- 56.46% of the sample reported the average minutes per class between 36 to 45 minutes with lower grades generally receiving less time than upper grade levels.
- 89.42% indicated that recess was scheduled during the school day, with 96.05% of these schools offering recess five days per week. Recess tends to be more common in lower grades than in the higher grades. Specifically, 98.6% of PreK thru 5 students receive regularly scheduled recess compared to 63.5% in grades 6-8.

MAHPERD, in collaboration with the American Heart Association (AHA), will be using this and additional information obtained from the assessment to create a "Report Card" on the status of Physical Education in Maine.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education and AHA recommend that schools provide 150 minutes of instructional physical education for elementary school children, and 225 minutes for middle and high school students per week for the entire school year.

## 5-2-1-0 Goes to School Symposium

**T**he 5-2-1-0 Goes to School Symposium took place on April 1st at the Hilton Garden Inn in Auburn. The theme for the symposium focused on, "Let's Keep Going," with a variety of presentations about sustaining health initiatives.

The keynote presentation was given by Dr. Victoria Rogers who urged symposium participants to identify teams and establish policies that would

sustain health initiatives in each of their school districts for the future. Greely Middle School presented a session on GeoMotion which utilizes technology and music to engage students in physical fitness activities. Both Falmouth Middle School and Kennebunk Elementary School shared tools and successes with integrating physical activity and nutritious food choices throughout the school day.

# Council Member Profile

## Lynn Lavorgna-Landry

Lynn Lavorgna-Landry has been an appointed member to the Governor's Council since 1999 and has been co-chair of the Maine Fitness Awards Committee for the past eight years. She has 18 years of experience with providing worksite wellness service to organizations such as Fortune 500 companies in Southern Maine. She is currently the Business Health & Wellness Manager at MaineGeneral Health in Augusta. Lynn manages the employee health & wellness program for 3,800 MaineGeneral employees as well as 10 area businesses in the Kennebec Valley region.

Lynn is an active council member of the ME Worksite Wellness, board member of the Healthy People of Kennebec Valley, and a member of the Maine Cardiovascular Health Council. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Community and School Health Education with a minor in Exercise Science from the University of Maine at Farmington, and has a Masters in

Business Administration from Husson University. Lynn is also nationally certified as a Health Fitness Specialist from the American College of Sports Medicine and a certified personal trainer from the American Council on Exercise.

Growing up in Western Maine, Lynn learned to love the outdoors and developed a passion for health and wellness. Lynn believes that health and wellness are lifestyle decisions. She has committed herself to helping individuals to incorporate health and wellness into their own daily lives. Working as a personal fitness trainer for the past 20 years, she is enthusiastic and dedicated to promoting health and wellness. Lynn enjoys spending time with her family, traveling, and recreational sports such as skiing, tennis, and exercise.



## Council Events (continued)

May 5<sup>th</sup> dawned sunny for **ACES Day** (All Children Exercising Simultaneously). This year 108 sites took part with a total participation of 26,862. ACES Day is a global event where youth exercise simultaneously for at least 15 minutes (typically around 10:00 am).

*"We had the most perfect day. As I looked at all of the students, I saw great big smiles on their faces as they danced. Some students told me that this was their most favorite day of the whole year. They loved being outside exercising and having fun. Classroom teachers thought that ACES Day was wonderful, and they were encouraged to learn the dances. Some told me that they think we should do more of it ..."* - Lyseth Elementary School, Portland

**National Employee Health and Fitness Day**, was held on May 19<sup>th</sup> at 51 sites throughout Maine. Over 4,000 employees took part in the event.

*"I want to thank you for your support and encouragement of the good health and well-being of our work force. We didn't let the weather dampen our spirits on this our 'Special Day.' We began our event with the reading of the Proclamation ... held two team stretch breaks, a Safety and Wellness Scavenger Hunt, as well as supplying a Certified Personal Trainer and Sports and Clinical Exercise Specialist ..."*  
- Rumford Mardens

## Winter/Spring Council Events Held

February 9<sup>th</sup> marked the date for this year's annual **Legislative Wellness Day** at the Hall of Flags. Over 400 free health screenings were conducted for legislators, state house staff, and the general public.

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual **Maine Fitness Awards** Celebration was held on April 27<sup>th</sup> at the State House Hall of Flags. Governor Baldacci provided opening remarks as well as assisted in the presentation of awards. The awards recognize Maine people who are involved in promoting physical activity at the local level. This year's award winners were:

- Youth - School Category: Kennebunk Elementary School
- Youth - Community Category: Cub Tracks Triathlon - EMMC/UMO/Kohl's

- Special Populations Category: Exercise and Conditioning for Easier Living (U-ExCEL), University of New England, Biddeford
- Community Category: State of Maine, ME First Program
- Lifetime Achievement Category: Jim Lawler, Auburn
- Healthy Workplace - Small Business Category: Valley Distributors, Inc., Oakland
- Healthy Workplace - Medium Business Category (tie): Martin's Point Health Care, Portland AND New England Rehabilitation Hospital of Portland
- Healthy Workplace - Large Business Category: MaineGeneral Medical Center, Augusta

(continued next column)

# Exercise for Depression and Anxiety

by Roger Park, MS, AT-R, CO

The other day I noticed a Maine registration plate that caused me to think about our short winter days. It read "Sunshine." Sunshine - a vivid reminder of summer's light which invigorates Pine Tree State citizens - zesty brightness that catapults Mainers out of the winter doldrums. Increased exposure to light and longer sunlit days encourages even the most seasoned indoor dwellers to get busy and feel better about life.

However, even unusually strong doses of light and seasonable warm temperatures do not shine well on those who suffer from depression and anxiety disorders. Many of these individuals have to rely on medications such as setraline (Zoloft) and imipiriline, along with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) in order to control the effects of these serious disorders. As helpful as many of these medications are, they can produce serious side effects which can blunt their positive outcomes. The quest for symptomatic relief sometimes begets another wave of problems that can complicate life for sufferers of anxiety or depression.

It seems that a ray of sunshine in the form of high energy exercise has now been added to the list of interventions for mild to moderate depression and anxiety. According to a recent article in American Family Physician (Vol. 81, No. 8, pp 981-986), exercise has become a reliable adjunctive therapy for depression and has produced a level of clinical effectiveness similar to CBT and medication. In the study, "Exercise, Yoga, and Meditation for Depressive and Anxiety Disorders," S. A. Saeed and his collaborators noted that exercise has emerged as an effective and legitimate treatment choice for adult depression. This paper - a meta-analysis of many complex, scientific investigations on exercise and its role as a treatment regimen, noted *positive* improvement in symptoms after regular bouts of aerobic exercise for those who endure depression and anxiety.

Indeed, many studies to date - solid scientific work that includes random, statistical trials involving

control groups, have turned up evidence that points to regular exercise as a safe intervention that is virtually side-effect free. Moreover, many investigators noted that the greater the exercise stress or load (aerobics and weight training) the greater the benefit in terms of symptom relief. High energy workloads produced "greater reductions of depression symptoms" than non-aerobic or resistance training forms of exercise, according to the authors.

Exercise is a shining example of self motivated intervention - with caveats. To view aerobic exercise or progressive resistance (strength) training as side-effect free is unrealistic. Even well guided individuals who set out on well-planned and expertly coached regimen can experience post-exercise soreness or injury. Believe me, it doesn't take much to induce heel pain (fasciitis) or Achilles tendonitis in a 50 year old body that has lounged on the front porch for too many summers! If exercise sounds like an exciting and viable option, it is best to get your physician's approval before embarking on the journey toward fitness as a treatment regimen.

Researching scientific evidence in well run, peer reviewed studies is a good beginning. The next step, after physician approval, is to enlist the help of an exercise professional to safely map out a plan of action.

In order to pursue this alternative treatment, courage and perseverance seasoned with patience is necessary. The option of exercise over medication sounds thrilling but it requires hard work and a bit of suffering in its own right. For the depressed individual, this option might sound overwhelming. However, if it is undertaken with the aid of professionals and the encouragement of trusted friends or family members, it is possible to enjoy the benefits that increased activity affords. In fact, the journey towards fitness may redefine the meaning of overall health for sufferers of depression and anxiety disorders.

Whether we suffer from depression or not, it is hoped that we might *all* let the sun shine brightly on our summer days as we pursue healthy, happy, and more active lives.

## A New Focus on Adaptive Education

With funding received from the Maine Department of Education, the Governor's Council will integrate adaptive physical education into its work plan for annual activities. Adaptive Physical Education is an individualized program created for students with disabilities in order to ensure safe and successful physical education opportunities. All students are entitled to physical education including physical fitness, motor fitness, fundamental motor skills and patterns, aquatic skills, dance skills, individual, group games, and sports (including lifetime sports). For more information, go to the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Position Statement titled, "Eligibility Criteria for Adapted Physical Education Services." The position statement is available at <http://www.aahperd.org/naspe>.