

# Initial Report on the Progress of Iowa Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition

December 1, 2008

## *The State of Physical Activity and Nutrition in Iowa*

Over 60% of Iowans are overweight or obese, increasing the prevalence of many chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and hypertension. Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables is one avenue to optimize nutrition, yet less than 20% of Iowans eat the recommended amounts. Engaging in 30 minutes of daily physical activity for adults and 60 minutes for children may reduce risks for cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes. Unfortunately, less than 50% of adult Iowans report meeting the minimum physical activity recommendations. (Iowa Dept. of Public Health (IDPH), 2007)

Obesity-related costs are staggering and may continue to rise if the prevalence of obesity increases. "Obesity costs the United States \$117 billion each year. Iowa's direct costs attributable to obesity were estimated from data from the late 1990s to be \$783 million (Medicaid and Medicare)." (IDPH, 2007)

## *Legislation*

HF 2539 established the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition. The charge of the Council is three-fold:

1. Assist with the development of a strategy for implementing the statewide comprehensive plan developed by the existing statewide initiative to increase physical activity, improve physical fitness, improve nutrition and promote healthy behaviors.
2. Assist the department in establishing and promoting a best practices internet site.
3. Provide oversight for the Governors' physical fitness (and nutrition)\* challenge.

## *Vision and Mission of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition*

The Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition recognizes the urgency for reversing the trend of unhealthy behaviors and will leverage new and existing partnerships to improve the health of all Iowans.

**Vision Statement:** *Iowa will be the healthiest state in the nation.*

**Mission Statement:** *Promote a healthier lifestyle through regular physical activity, proper nutrition and the development of healthy communities for all Iowans.*

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\*The Council felt it imperative to include a nutrition component in the challenge

***Governor’s Physical Fitness and Nutrition Challenge***

Iowa is the first state in the nation to have a Governor’s Council on both physical fitness and nutrition. Much consideration was given to developing a unique Iowa challenge that is fun, can be tailored to local cultures and will have a lasting impact. Emphasis should be placed on long-term change not solely a short-term contest. The ultimate goal of the Council is to have four challenges: individual, school, organizational and community. The organizational challenge will include worksites.

The Council recommends launching the individual Governor’s physical activity and nutrition challenge with the 2009-2010 school year. Priority will be given to elementary and secondary school children. However, the Council agrees that the scope should be broadened to include all Iowans. Criteria for the challenge will be based on 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans and the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and reflect the social ecological model for change, recognizing individuals, schools, other organizations and communities. It is valuable to encourage children to be active and eat well. It is better if their environment features healthy food choices and provides attractive and convenient physical activity options.

Each child will be recognized with an individual award. Organizations and communities will be eligible for incremental recognition for bronze, silver, gold and platinum efforts. The Council will act in an advisory capacity to Iowans Fit for Life staff with further development of the challenge and accompany resources and curriculum, including benchmarks and rewards, for advancing the school wellness policy through the challenge.

<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
Physical Activity	Individual, School, Organizational, Community	Increased number of Iowans meeting recommended CDC guidelines
Nutrition	Individual, School, Organizational, Community	Increased number of Iowans meeting recommended 2005 Dietary Guidelines
Behavioral	Individual	Decreased screen time (TV, computer), sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, etc.
Environment/Policy	School, Organizational, Community	Completion of strategies in school wellness policies; establishment of policies that improve access to healthy food and physical activity options

***Comprehensive Work Plan for the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition***

*Governor’s Council role in assisting with the implementation of the statewide comprehensive plan*

- ✓ The Governor’s Council participated in a prioritization activity that resulted in recommendations to Iowans Fit for Life work groups related to implementation strategies for communications, policy, and specific populations and settings including early childhood, educational, local community, worksite wellness, health care and older Iowans.
- ✓ The Governor’s award program will provide:
  - momentum for nutrition and physical activity efforts that will support *Iowa’s Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan*;
  - an ability to collect data on participation rates and behavior criteria met; and
  - a venue for collecting success stories and best practices for replication throughout the state.

*Iowa's Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan*

The Iowans Fit for Life program was developed in 2005 with funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and was charged with using a statewide planning process to develop a comprehensive state plan for prevention of obesity and other chronic diseases by addressing poor nutrition and inadequate physical activity. Iowa Department of Public Health staff and partners from community-based organizations, government, health care, private business, organizations focusing on health disparities, the state department of education as well as several local school districts, universities, nutrition organizations, physical activity organizations, and other professional organizations released *Iowa's Comprehensive Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan* in 2006. The plan outlines 10-year objectives, goals and strategies aimed at reducing and preventing the burden of obesity in Iowa through the focus areas of increased physical activity, improved healthful eating, increased breastfeeding, and decreased screen time. The Iowans Fit for Life partnership will complete a mid-course revision of the state plan in 2008-2009.

The evaluation of the state plan has also been strengthened since it was developed. Iowans Fit for Life Evaluation Committee was formed in 2007 to assist in guiding program staff in forming an evaluation plan for the comprehensive state plan. This committee and the Council will be essential to the mid-course revision of the state plan.

***Best Practices Internet Site***

*Governor's Council role in assisting with the establishment and promotion of best practices Internet site*

- ✓ The Council will develop a Web site for best practices that will integrate and link other governmental Web site initiatives. The Council will act in an advisory capacity to Iowa Department of Public Health staff with Web site development and maintenance.
- ✓ The Council sees the Governor's award program as the foundation for the development of the Web site and a mechanism to communicate the mission of the Governor's Council. But more importantly, the Web site offers an opportunity to share success stories of what works in Iowa schools, worksites and communities to improve nutrition and physical activity behaviors, collected through the awards initiative.
- ✓ The Web site will be the main portal for registering and administering the Governor's challenge.

***Next Steps for the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition***

It is important to understand the potential opportunities to integrate physical fitness and nutrition plans/challenges in Iowa. The Council will conduct a review of the existing programs including goals, objectives and evaluation plans. Content experts will be invited to meet with the Council to share expertise and perspectives as physical activity and nutrition efforts are developed. The school, organizational and community challenges will be developed to support the individual challenge.

## ***Support Required for Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Nutrition***

### ***Potential Funding Needs***

Approximately \$30,000 is needed to support the current activities of the Iowa Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Nutrition. The current activities include:

- 1) Creation and maintenance of the Council's Web site,
- 2) Meeting expenses to include facilitation fees, supplies, and reimbursement of Governor's Council member expenses.

To implement the Governor's Council for Physical Fitness and Nutrition Challenge, additional funding of \$100,000 for one Iowa Department of Public Health full-time equivalent and approximately \$50,000 or more for awards and incentives will be needed. Staff time will be used to:

- 1) Maintain, coordinate and process Governor's Challenge registrations,
- 2) Purchase and distribute award items for the Governor's Challenge participants, and
- 3) Promote the Council's efforts for individual, school, organizational and community challenges.

The governor or his staff may be requested to present Platinum awards for schools and communities meeting the top levels of the challenge.

### ***Council Members***

Dr. Gregory Peterson Des Moines  
Beverly Ahern Spencer  
Bret Altman Newton  
Jennifer Peterson, Windsor Heights  
Brian Tate Des Moines  
Dr. Casey Clor West Des Moines  
John Walling Des Moines  
Jenny Norgaard Ankeny  
Jim Hallihan Ames  
Diane Bartholomew Lamoni  
Curtis Linhart Des Moines  
Dr. Jennifer Hill, Pleasant Hill

### ***References***

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