



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Alabamians being asked to lose half a million pounds

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Starting Jan. 10, Roger Shultz, a finalist on last year's Biggest Loser Couples Show, is going to be coaching Alabamians in an attempt to shed a collective 500,000 pounds. As coach of the 2009 Scale Back Alabama statewide weight-loss competition, and a former University of Alabama football player, Shultz estimates "if we can double the number of people participating in the 2009 contest and if a little more than half of them finish the contest and lose at least 10 pounds, we'll meet our goal."

"The ambitious weight-loss goal is one that's critical to Alabamians, given that we are the third most obese state in the nation," stated Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "This is the third year we've hosted the statewide contest, and last year we had more than 40,000 people participate. The primary focus is encouraging people to lead healthier lives by eating better and exercising more."

Scale Back Alabama is a 10-week contest sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting from Barber's Dairies and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama. Teams of four can register for the contest and weigh in during the week of Jan. 10 – 16 at any one of the hundreds of public weigh-in sites across the state. In addition, many businesses and other organizations will be hosting private weigh-ins for their employees. Participation in the contest is free, and all individuals that complete the contest and lose at least 10 pounds will be placed in drawings for cash prizes.

"It's been great to watch the contest grow each year, and we believe that with the additional excitement Roger Shultz brings, we will more than meet this year's goal," said Donald J. Jones, FACHE, chairman of the Scale Back Alabama Task Force and CEO of Marion Regional Medical Center in Hamilton. "In addition to having a coach provide weekly weight-loss tips, we will be following four teams who've agreed to share their successes and their struggles." Both Shultz's tips and the spotlight teams will be featured online at www.scalebackalabama.com.