



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Five communities selected for Alabama Physical Activity and Nutrition Grant

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Five Alabama communities have been selected to receive grants of \$3,000 each to stimulate community-based physical activity and nutrition programs to reduce risks for overweight and obesity. Receiving funding will be Anniston, Birmingham, Greensboro, Millbrook and Montgomery.

Alabama was selected as one of eight states to receive funds through the Balancing InTake and Expenditure grant from the Chronic Disease Directors Association in early 2009.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "The funding will be applied to stimulate community-based physical activity and nutrition program planning, implementation, reporting and evaluation to reduce risks for overweight and obesity."

The Alabama Obesity Task Force money was received by the Alabama Department of Public Health and was distributed by the State Obesity Task Force. Members from the Obesity Task Force were instrumental in reviewing submitted applications and selecting recipients.

Fred Smith, with the Walking Club of Jacksonville State University, will use the money to expand current activities. Smith says, "The Jacksonville State University Walking Club is pleased to partner with the Alabama Department of Public Health on the BITE grant in partnership with local agencies and the communities in the development and acceptance of wellness and health education."

Bree Garrett, with the Jefferson County Childhood Obesity Task Force in Birmingham, plans to heighten awareness through the development of more promotion materials for local urban farm and low-income inner-city residents.

Garrett says, "The Jefferson County Childhood Obesity Task Force will soon begin to look at best practices of day cares around the country. We will develop best practices for Birmingham's day cares focusing on fresh food access and fresh food distribution. This will be a great project to use for the BITE grant. Once these best practices have been created, we will help day cares make these improvements step by step."

John Plaster and the Auburn University Rural Studio-Lions Park in Greensboro will add a walking trail in a community park. The Lions Park Committee is honored to receive the BITE

grant. The funds will allow Rural Studio students to build a walking trail for the City of Greensboro.

Choona Lang, with the Alabama Gem City Preparation and Community Awareness Walk in Millbrook and Montgomery, plans to develop a manual and offer training to low-income communities about the importance of churches providing physical activity and healthy nutrition.

Lang says, "We are excited to be a recipient of the BITE grant. This grant will give us the opportunity to expand our current health promotion and education project to a larger segment of Montgomery and the surrounding areas to ensure the message of healthy lifestyle habits is accessible."

Felecia Barrow, with "Seeds to a Healthier River Region" through the Montgomery Wellness Coalition, partners with rural county schools and local businesses to develop and improve local gardens and promote their goods to local restaurants.

"The Montgomery Area Community Wellness Coalition and River Region Steps is excited about the opportunities that will be afforded through the BITE grant. Seeds to a Healthier River Region will not only promote increased consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables in Lowndes County, but it will also increase socialization. Both young and seasoned citizens will be able to work together for the betterment of health and wellness for the total community. The recipients of the products harvested will, regardless of their socioeconomic status or whether they have health insurance or not, benefit. The collaboration with various partners from government agencies, to schools, to nonprofit organizations, to local business owners, will ensure that we continue to work together to improve health and access for all" says Barrow.

Planning and implementation of these selected community projects will begin July 1 and take place over 13 months.

The Alabama Obesity Task Force volunteers its time and energy for continued proactive support in helping communities make improvements. Established in 2004, the Obesity Task Force's goal is to reduce obesity in Alabama. Over the past four years, the task force members have aided Alabama community organizations partner to improve the overall health of community residents through encouraging physical activity and healthy nutrition.