



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

www.adph.org

Alabama Obesity Task Force to join Alabama Communities of Excellence

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Miriam Gaines, RD

(334) 206-5226

Heather P. Whitley, PharmD

(205) 348-1333

The Alabama Obesity Task Force, a volunteer group interested in preventing and reducing obesity in Alabama, was recently provided the opportunity to join the Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE).

Miriam Gaines, the chair of the Obesity Task Force and director of the Alabama Department of Public Health's Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, says, "The task force is honored to join the action of ACE and looks forward to functioning as a resource for community leaders in their efforts to lower the incidence and prevalence of obesity in individual communities."

ACE, created in 2002, is a comprehensive approach to economic and community development with partners from the private sector, governmental agencies, utility and construction companies, as well as universities and other interested groups, working together to successfully aid Alabama's smaller communities in their efforts to plan, grow and prosper. As quality of life issues such as healthcare and wellness are vital to a community's success, the Alabama Obesity Task Force was invited to partner with ACE.

"We welcome the Obesity Task Force as a member of the ACE Associates Council. Healthcare and wellness programs are an important component of a successful and vibrant community. This partnership will help provide Alabama's communities with the information they need to help reduce and prevent obesity in their areas --- thereby improving the quality of life for each citizen," said Stacey Bryan, ACE state coordinator.

On Sept. 30 ACE will hold its annual community kickoff at the Renaissance Hotel in Montgomery. This daylong event will feature speakers on a variety of topics selected to aid communities in enhancing their quality of life and building a better community. In addition to the seminars, the program will provide participants with one-on-one time to meet with representatives from various organizations, such as the Alabama Obesity Task Force, to discuss the potential programs and services available for use in their communities.

Anyone interested in building a better community may register for this event by paying the appropriate fee and completing a registration form. Advance registration is required with the deadline of Sept. 18. A discount is available for registration before Sept. 4. For more information

on the event, including a registration form, please visit the ACE Web site at alabamacommunitiesofexcellence.org.

The Alabama Obesity Task Force's mission is "Working toward the prevention and reduction of obesity for a healthier Alabama." City leaders interested in additional information should stop by the task force's exhibit during the ACE Community Kickoff. Several board and task force members will be present to provide information and assistance to parties interested in lowering the prevalence and slowing the incidence of obesity in their communities.

Michael Jackson, a member of the task force board and president of The DuBois Institute, said, "We encourage community leaders interested in improving the rate of obesity to get a copy of the state plan and implement environmental and policy changes at the local level."

The Alabama Obesity Task Force meets in Clanton quarterly. Additional information can be found on its Web site <http://adph.org/obesity/> or at the ACE meeting on Sept. 30.