



## 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](http://www.adph.org)

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## Scale Back Alabama kicks off fifth year

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### CONTACT:

Miriam Gaines  
(334) 206-5226  
Rosemary Blackmon, Alabama Hospital Association  
(800) 489-2542

“As a former dancer, now working at a desk job and progressing in age, I knew I had to do something to get healthier,” said Diana F. Green, Arts In Education Program Manager with the Alabama State Council on the Arts, who spoke at the kickoff event for the 2011 Scale Back Alabama. “I had let my health get completely out of control and was on medication for blood pressure and cholesterol. After participating in Scale Back Alabama, I was able to lose weight, exercise more and get off these medications.”

Scale Back Alabama is a statewide weight-loss contest designed to help Alabama fight its battle with obesity and to encourage participants to develop lifelong healthy habits. Green was just one of 30,000 people who participated in last year’s contest and who, like others, credits the contest with providing the accountability and healthy advice needed to learn to eat better and exercise.

The program, targeted to adults 18 and older, primarily focuses on the workplace and utilizes businesses, schools and other local organizations as weigh-in sites and local coordinators for the program. Louis Thornton, wellness director at Auburn University Montgomery, described how both students and faculty at his campus participated in the event.

“The AUM family really enjoys participating in the Scale Back Alabama Program,” Thornton said. “The potential cash rewards and prizes provide plenty of motivation, but in the process of trying to qualify for the rewards, the participants become intrinsically motivated and their improved lifestyle changes continue. The program is a big success at AUM.”

“It’s testimonies like those of Ms. Green and Thornton that keep us all going,” said Donald Jones, chairman of the Scale Back Alabama Committee and administrator of Marion Regional Medical Center in Hamilton, Ala. “This is purely a volunteer project that runs for 10 weeks each year, and we’re fortunate to have more than 350 local coordinators and almost every county participating. Best of all, it’s working.”

According to Jones, a survey of 2010 participants revealed that as a result of the contest almost 80 percent of the respondents had increased their exercise per week by up to two days, increased their daily intake of fruits and vegetables, and their consumption of dairy products.

“Alabamians simply have to get healthier if we’re ever going to be able to address our challenges with diabetes, hypertension and the other chronic conditions directly tied to obesity,” said Donald E. Williamson, M.D., State Health Officer. “Our goal is for Alabamians of all ages to embrace a culture of healthy choices as their normal way of life.”

Individuals interested in participating in the free contest simply go to a public weigh-in site with their team of four people, or a private one if their company is participating, to weigh in and register. Those who complete the contest on a team in which every member loses at least 10 pounds are placed in a drawing for one of three grand prizes, the top prize being \$1,000 per team member.

There are also other prize drawings for individuals who lose at least 10 pounds, regardless of their team’s success, and still other prize drawings for people who simply come to weigh. Those interested in participating can find a weigh-in site, along with additional information about the contest, at [www.scalebackalabama.com](http://www.scalebackalabama.com).

Scale Back Alabama is sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting from Barber’s Dairies and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama.