



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## 2014 Scale Back Alabama participants lose weight, adopt healthier habits

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For the last 10 weeks, more than 25,000 Alabamians have learned how to visit their local farmers' markets to buy fresh fruits and vegetables, spend less time in front of the TV, take a hike in the woods or mow the yard, and take the stairs. These men and women participated in Scale Back Alabama, the state's annual weight-loss competition and lost a total of 114,511 pounds, or 57 tons.

At a news conference, Gina McDonald, the contest spokesperson and the \$100,000 winner of NBC's Biggest Loser in 2013, praised contestants for their participation stating, "*Sometimes the smallest step in the right direction ends up being the biggest step of your life. Tiptoe if you must, but take the step.*" The Birmingham attorney also stressed that the word "diet" should be scratched from everyone's vocabulary and replaced with the notion of healthy habits--eating more nutritious foods and exercising.

Scale Back Alabama is a 10-week, statewide weight-loss contest designed to help Alabama fight its battle with obesity by encouraging participants to develop lifelong healthy habits. The free program is targeted to adults 18 and older, primarily focusing on the workplace and utilizing local organizations as weigh-in sites.

The public awareness program is sponsored by the Alabama Hospital Association and the Alabama Department of Public Health, with generous underwriting from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama.

#### Key statistics:

Total pounds lost – 114,511

Number of teams on which each team member lost 10 pounds – 431

Number of individuals who lost at least 10 pounds – 5,908

Counties participating – 65

Number of local coordinators - 431

Total teams participating – 6,338

Number of individuals participating – 25,352

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